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DO THE ROBOT: PROCESS AUTOMATION'S LATEST AVATAR

A Conversation With Kannal Outsourcing CEO Paul Raymond Raj.



"Customers are always looking for quick and flexible solutions." – Paul Raymond

ROBOTIC Process Automation (RPA) is essentially a software application that is designed to automate manual human actions taken to complete a computer-based task. It automates rules-based and repetitive human intensive business processes.

In today's highly complex business environments, there are many boring, complex, demanding and repetitive computer-based tasks that are carried out by a human to complete a process. This could be in the areas of sales and invoice processing, inventory management, customer relationship management, claims processing, human resource administration and even report generation.

BENEFITS OF RPA

"Clearly because RPA is designed to perform repetitive clerical processes, it is able to offer economies of scale," says Paul Raymond Raj, CEO of Kannal Outsourcing – a regional outsourcing player based in Malaysia.

According to The Institute of Robotic Process Automation, RPA can give organisations cost savings of between 25-50%. In addition, with the repetitive clerical work out of the way, the organisations' workforce is now focused on value-added and strategic tasks.

Paul Raymond says: "Customers are always looking for quick, flexible and easily scalable solutions. RPA promises just this. It's designed to be non-invasive such that custom programming or direct integration coding is not required. Instead the RPA software application integrates on the front-end to promote a pass-through of data

between multiple systems. It is also able to handle changing environments, movement in buttons or icons and other variants."

A recent article in *The Wall Street Journal* in May 2015 pointed out how US firm Pilot Travels Centers used to hire 80 clerks and salespeople spending 3,200 hours a week tracking and paying for orders for thousands of goods.

Today after RPA, there are only 10 such employees working 400 hours a week performing the same volume of work.

Set up in 2007, Kannal is an outsourcing service provider in the areas of business & knowledge processes, human capital and IT services.

He says: "We provide solutions that improve operational outcomes for our customers by 'simplifying processes' with cutting edge technology.

"Keep it simple and keep it straight. This is our philosophy. This philosophy is embodied in our three primary pillars of outsourcing service provision, namely Business Process Outsourcing, Information Technology Outsourcing and Knowledge Process Outsourcing."

NEW INROADS FOR KANNAL

Traditionally the company's focus has been on the Banking, Financial Services and Insurance (BFSI) and the Telecommunications segments of the market. However, with the introduction of RPA as a key service provision, Kannal has now gained inroads and visibility into new market segments. Its clients now include those from the oil and gas, airlines, pharmaceutical and automotive industries.

Being headquartered in Malaysia, Paul Raymond is convinced of the country's strengths as a Global Business Services (GBS) destination. "I think it is well documented that the attractiveness of Malaysia being a GBS destination in terms of our financial attractiveness, people skills and business environment has encouraged MNCs to set-up their presence here in Malaysia. We are able to provide multilingual competency, good physical infrastructure & utilities, and strong government support through agencies such as Multimedia Development Corporation (MDeC)."

Is demand outpacing supply in terms of talent pool availability in Malaysia? "Absolutely," says Paul Raymond.

"We do have quality talent but we need to be working on a far larger pool of dynamic workforce to remain competitive as a nation. Our government through MDeC, Outsourcing Malaysia and Talent Corp are addressing this pressing issue with several key initiatives to promote global business services as a viable career choice. I believe we will be able to bear the fruits of our labour through these initiatives."

He also said Kannal is very fortunate to be guided closely by MDeC ever since the company was awarded MSC Status almost seven years ago. "They have conducted various dedicated programmes over the years to assist and grow companies like us, especially with the current ongoing Entry Point Projects 2 (EPP2) programme, which is to facilitate the growth of local outsourcers in terms of market expansion, funding needs, market access and the promotion of industry dialogue."



Is demand outpacing supply of talent pool in Malaysia?