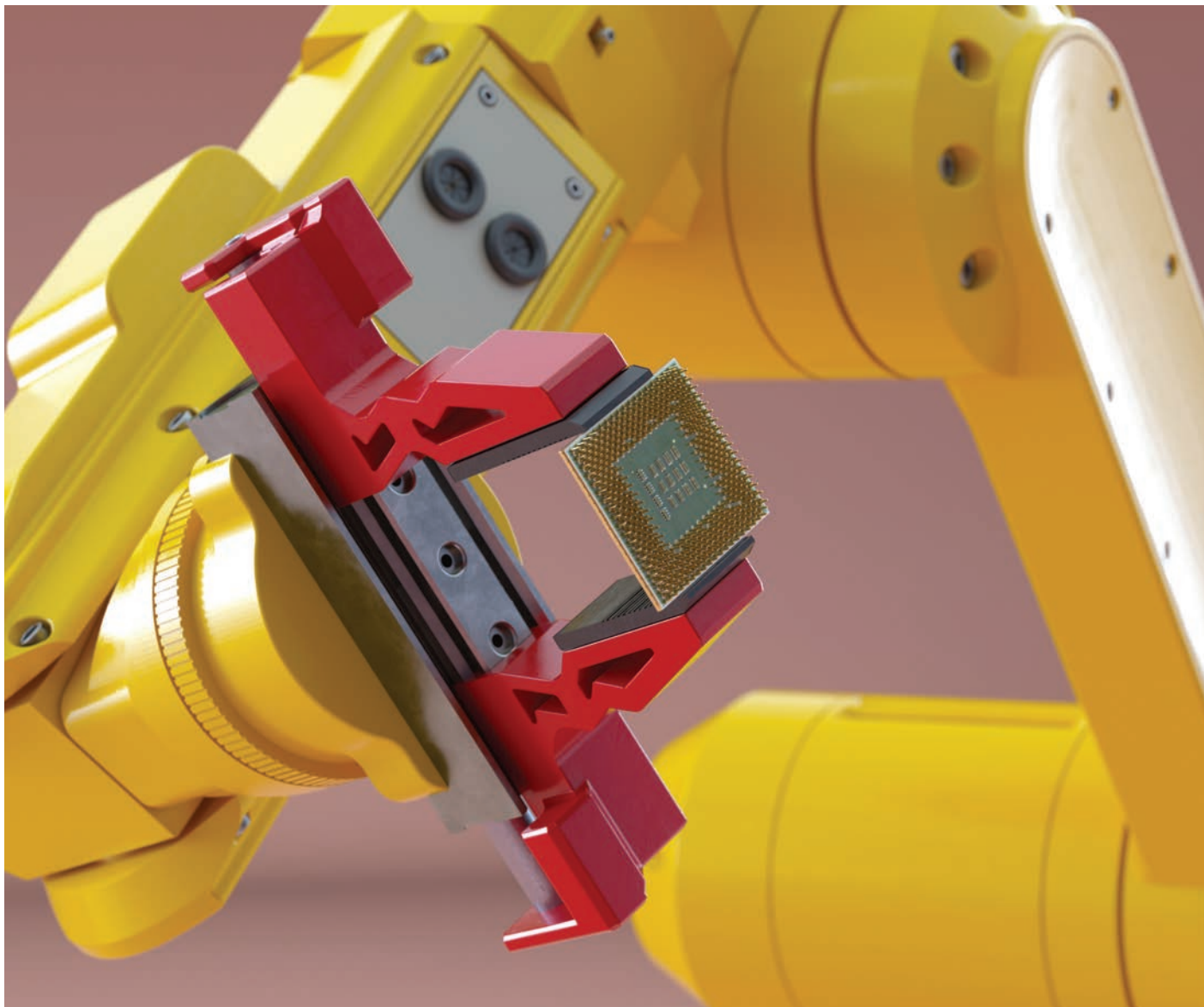


AUTOMATING UP TO THE SUMMIT

Abstract

Overcoming difficult process challenges to reach the peaks of efficiency and productivity can be an arduous yet rewarding journey. And automation only makes the journey easier and even more rewarding. The VP of a telecom giant discovered this truth when his organization partnered with Infosys BPM. Their improvement initiatives utilized assisted automation which enabled with savings of over \$3 Mn, apart from other strategic benefits and a global-level award win.



Of cliffs and challenges

In early 2020, Jim Scott, the VP of a US-based telecom giant was worried with the performance of his organization's sales business model. With presence across the US with multiple products and complex processes, Jim was responsible for leading the organization to establish and grow a new business channel.

The idea of the sales business model was to reach emerging business markets through a reseller program. It aimed to run with minimal headcount and a 'no touch' approach, seeking to cut down cycle time and provide their solution providers with an edge in the reseller market. However,

the model was unable to meet its stated objectives and the processes were not fine-tuned as per the model's requirements, and needed intensive manual effort.

Thus, a situation of overall lack of efficiency prevailed. Front-end ordering had separate roles for data collection, order creation, and provisioning entries, taking over 10 days to provide order numbers to customers. Even their simple products had to go through over 160 manual tasks before they could be sent for provisioning. This overall lack of efficiencies led to a high headcount for the processes and delays in end-to-end order completion.

Jim's business priority was to enable solution providers to deliver faster services to end users, and so the business model was initially designed to be lean. Yet, when fast-paced growth started bringing in over 3500 orders every month across multiple product lines and many systems, more employees were added to service the growing demand.

Jim needed to drive efficiencies, increase productivity, and drive automation across his organization. He neither had the bandwidth nor the required capabilities to carry these out, which further added to his already strained situation.

Surveying the landscape

Jim's organization and Infosys BPM had been partners for close to a decade, with Infosys BPM providing robust ordering, billing, and back-office support to their indirect sales channels. With the knowledge of this trusted partner's capabilities, Jim connected with his point of contact at Infosys BPM, Lenin Craig. Post a detailed discussion between them, Lenin shared his evaluation of existing challenges and probable solutions.

As their ordering support partner, Lenin gathered his team and proactively initiated efforts to apply process improvements and

automations, seeking to reduce cycle time without increasing headcount, to help with Jim's objectives.

Lenin deployed a specialized automation development team to work together with Jim's operations team on the improvement project. The team first carried out assessments of all the ordering processes to define the problem statements and gather requirements. The study revealed several areas that needed to be addressed:

- Complex and non-standardized processes

- Lack of inefficiencies with multiple data variables and manually intensive processes
- Cycle time delays with the orders being processed by different teams, requiring multiple hand-offs
- Low productivity with solution providers being constantly added and additional products being launched, which demanded for an increased bandwidth

Beginning the automation journey. Jim and Lenin's teams took the below approach:

- Idea generation: Conducted regular ideation sessions with order managers, subject matter experts, and team leads, while also exchanging and reviewing the generated ideas with key stakeholders.
- Root cause identification: The workshops helped the team identify several business focus areas for improvement, and team members utilized root cause analysis, Lean, and Six Sigma methodologies to understand and address the issues in each of these

areas. The team also subjected each shortlisted improvement idea to impact analysis, prior to its implementation.

- Standardization: The team identified commonalities across product lines and functional processes, and standardized those tasks that enabled driving efficiency and improvements. All these transformations involved significant re-engineering of process steps.
- Automation: Lenin assessed and reviewed the benefits of automation with Jim and his stakeholders,

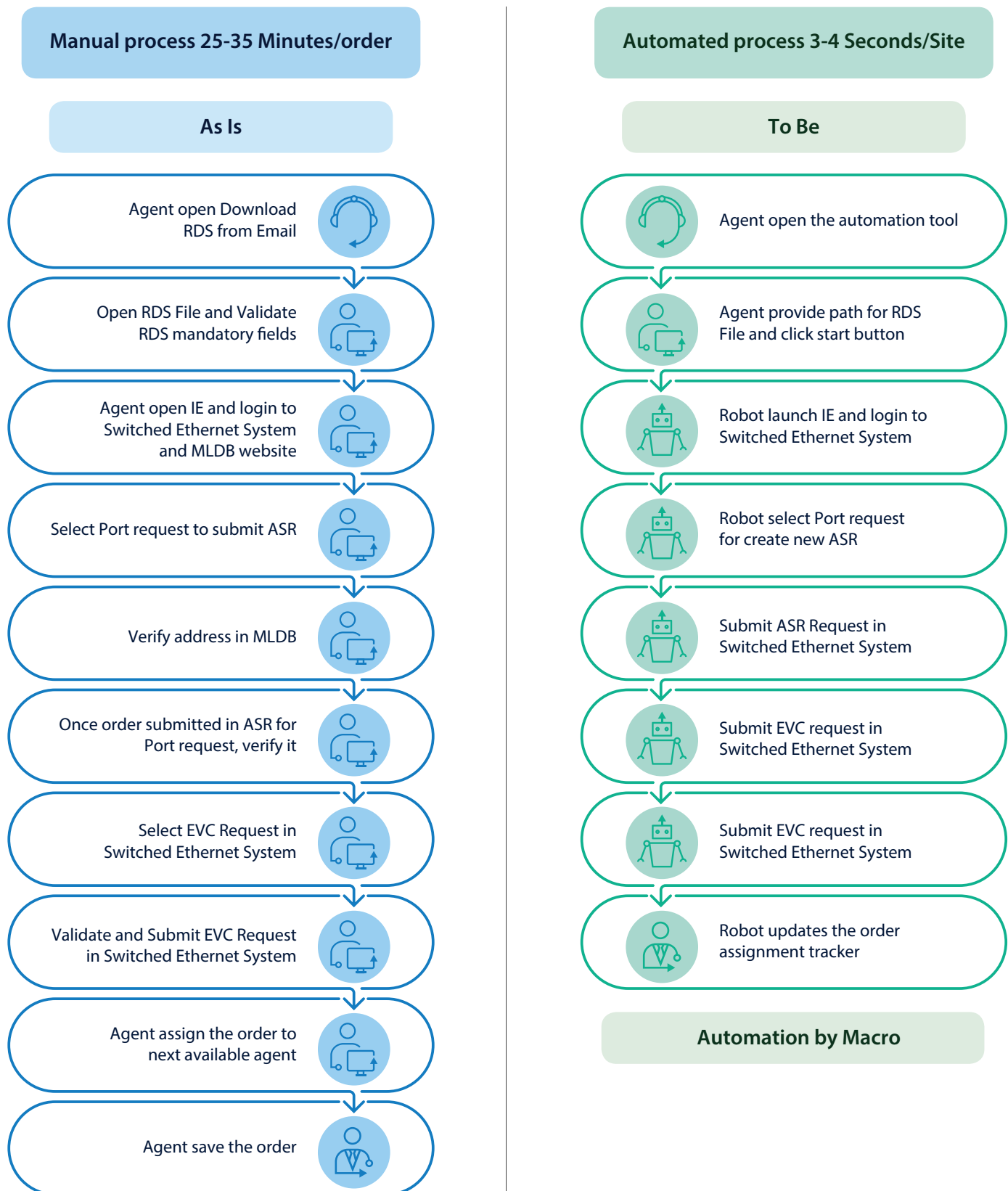
and gained the sign-off. The team developed, tested, and implemented the proprietary automation tool, AssistEdge across several key processes.

- User acceptance testing: After designing, developing, and finalizing all the process solutions, the team conducted user acceptance testing, prior to deployment and pilot runs on the operations floor. The large-scale changes also needed documentation and training for the ordering teams to work with the re-engineered processes.



The graphic below of a sample automated process depicts the tremendous efficiency gains that could be realized through the implementation of automation.

As Is – To Be workflow



During the development and deployment of the solution, it was difficult to collaborate between the development and business teams. To break the ice, the Infosys BPM development team co-located with the operations team, which enabled operations staff to experience the effectiveness of automation and have real-time conversations with process experts

to generate alternate ideas. Further, it was challenging to obtain IT system accesses for the Infosys BPM automation developers. To mitigate this, Lenin and Jim made necessary changes to the contracts and built a solid business case to obtain the needed access permissions.

Based on his past experience, Lenin knew that any automation fallout would force

the team to restart the process, which would result in losing huge time and effort. He and Jim decided to build trigger stages at different process milestones to act as checkpoints and help resume the process right from the point of any automation fallout or failure. This ensured to avoid the need to restart the process from scratch.



The spectacular view from the summit

By the end of the automation journey, Jim and Lenin had carried out 17 improvement initiatives. These enhanced the efficiency of the order management team and

improved utilization from 67% to over 90%, while also saving manual effort of 21 FTEs across products. The productivity gains avoided additional costs and enhanced

the capacity of the team by 3100 hours annually.

Key benefits



In addition, automation reduced front-end cycle time across products by over 50%, and enhanced average productivity by over 20%. In sum, Jim was able to gain savings of over \$3 Mn for his organization. Further, the cycle time improvement from 4 days to 2 days in front-end ordering, positioned the business model well with solution providers, and back-office service

automations provided them a competitive edge.

The success of the initiative gained multiple accolades for Jim, both within and outside of his organization. Jim was lauded by key stakeholders, especially for the solution's ability to enable the business to continue to scale up without

growing resources proportionally. For this solution, Jim and Lenin's organizations were recognized with a globally acclaimed and one of the most prominent awards in the industry, underscoring the fact that the view from the summit of achievement is always worth the journey it takes.

**Names have been altered to preserve privacy of the people involved.*

For more information, contact infosysbpm@infosys.com

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Navigate your next

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