RPA for a More Efficient Back Office

Content

Abstract

Sales or production might be the divisions that help an enterprise grow and expand, yet back office is the foundation for operational success. An efficient back office ensures the health of a business and allows it to focus on core competencies. In an attempt to streamline this crucial function, many organizations have been turning to technological advancement, especially RPA - as a quick and easy approach to operational optimization. This case study provides a closer look at how automation shall be deployed for back-office activities to secure the best results.
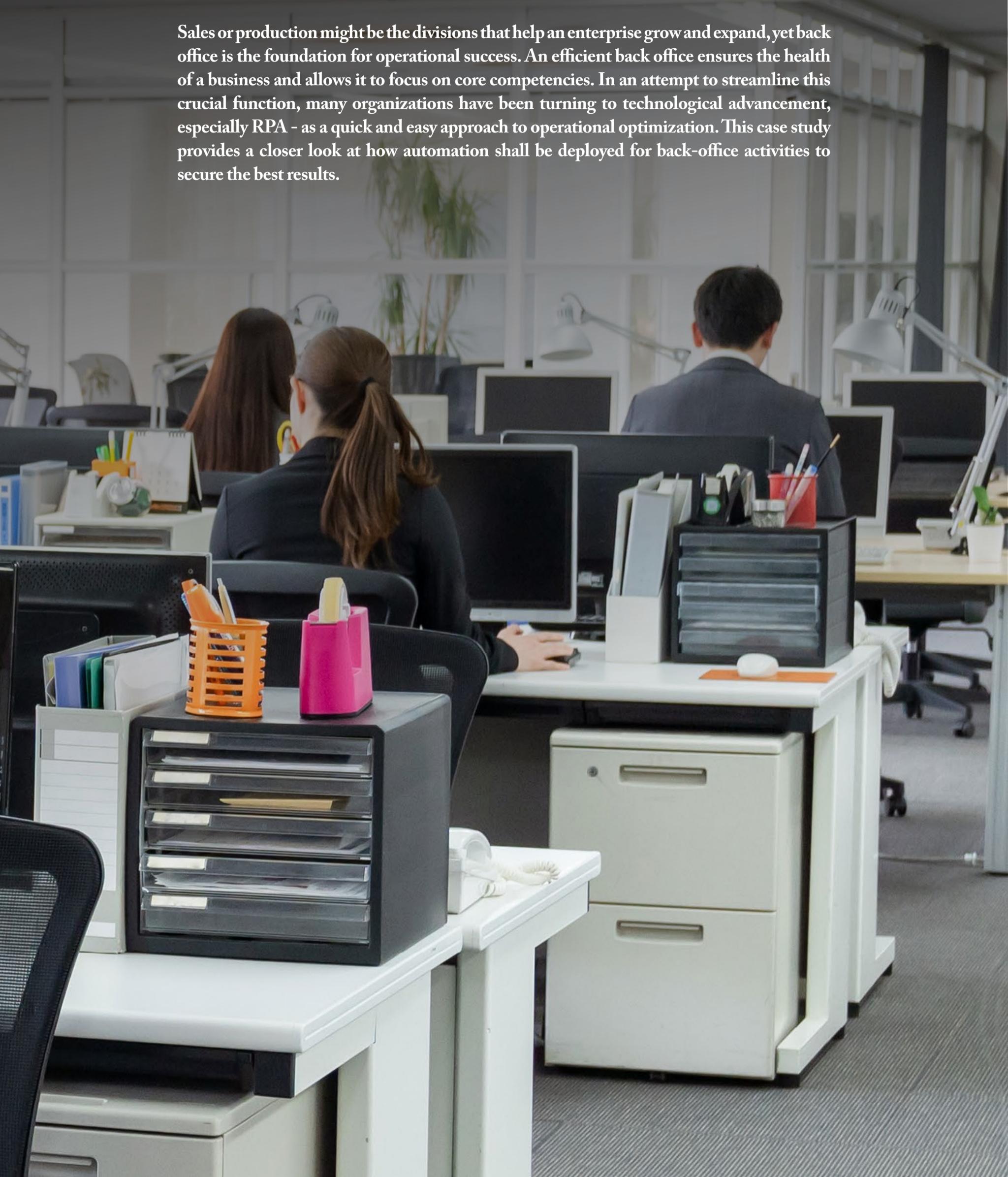
"We want it, but we don't know how"

Our client is a system integrator headquartered in Japan, owning 14 branches across the country and in 7 other nations. The company implements multiple projects per month, putting a massive workload on back-office departments such as procurement, finance, recruitment, administration and so on. Since all the tasks were still conducted manually, mistakes and inaccuracies were inevitable, especially at peak times like the end of the month, quarter or year. The efficiency, therefore, remained a huge concern for managing levels.

From experiences and expertise in IT, the Japanese enterprise soon realized RPA might be the key to the problem. However, at that time, it had no exposure to this new kind of automation, no comprehensive understanding or know-how on the benefits and capabilities of RPA, and hence quite struggled to find a starting point. With a long-lasting collaboration over the years, the company decided to partner with FPT to actualize their automation vision for back office.
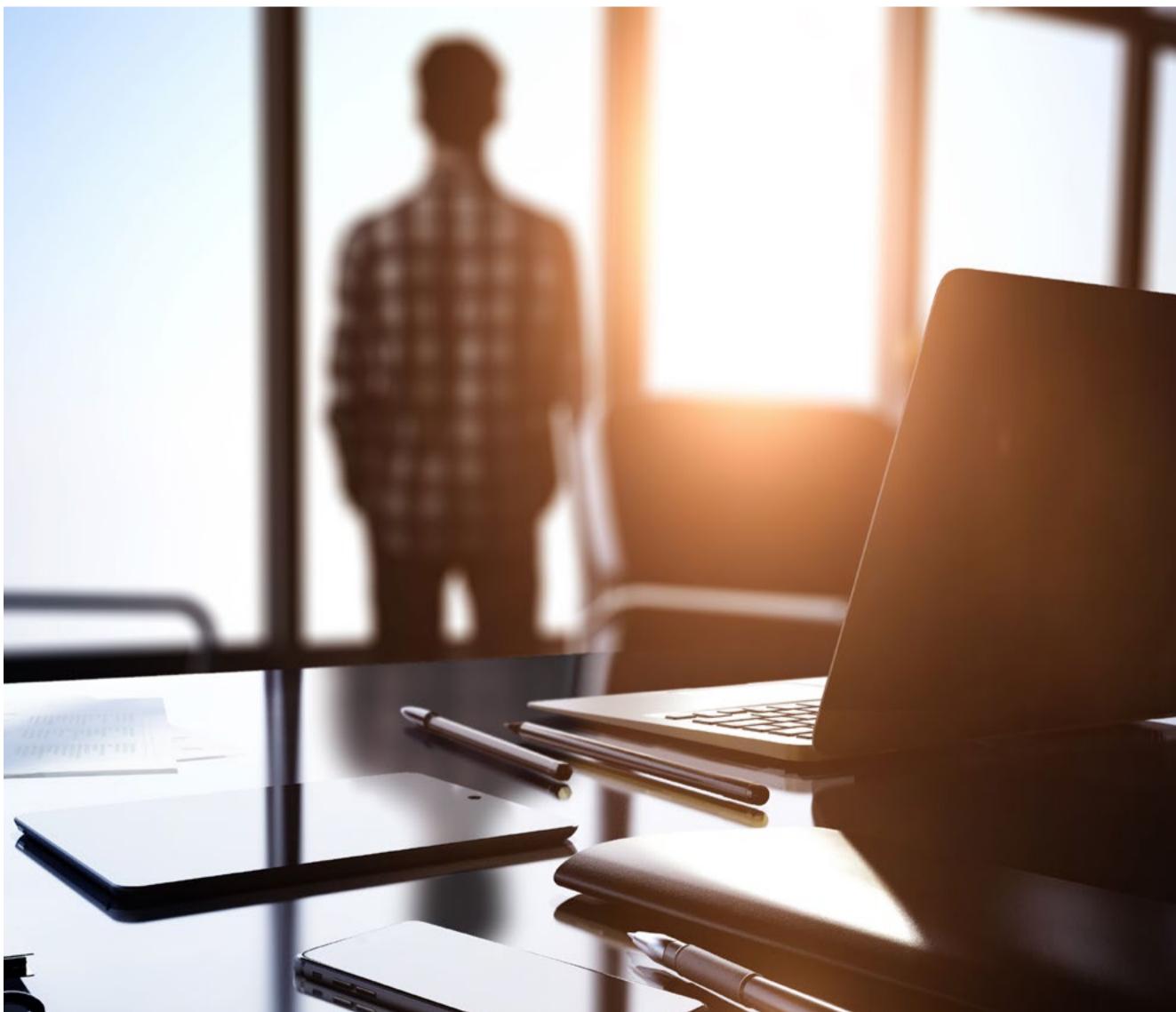
Two Stages of Transformation

To fully leverage the power of RPA, FPT's taskforce team divided the project into two phases: Assessment and Implementation.

- Assessment: In order to identify and prioritize potential processes to be automated, our team dug deep into the enterprise's operation and provided consultation on the roadmap for RPA deployment. This stage also enabled employees' awareness of automation capabilities and benefits, thereby preparing necessary skills and psychology for upcoming changes.

Preparation ⟩ Approaching ⟩ Gathering ⟩ Evaluation ⟩ Planning ⟩ Agreement

Figure 1: FPT's assessment methodology

The ideal processes for RPA shall be ones that are rule-based, repetitive, in high volume and stable. A process repository template, consisting of process assessment metrics was sent to the client to collect data on the targeted processes. Upon the given information, two parties hold a Q&A meeting to discuss further the current situation and eliminate misunderstanding and confusion. From a pool of possible candidates that can be automated, our team, once again, gathered feedback and analyze operation flow of the enterprise to identify which process shall be prioritized to produce immediate impacts on the whole performance. After careful and thorough consideration, 6 processes across various departments were chosen to deploy RPA.

Aiming to deliver the optimal RPA solution for the client, automation experts from FPT spent a great amount of time observing, documenting and analyzing every single step of chosen processes. Since RPA only accelerates the speed and reduces human involvement in a functionality, it cannot perform any magic if the process itself is messy and not optimized. Hence, one among key responsibilities our team pay special attention to is providing consultation to the customer on streamlining the workflow.

Two Stages of Transformation

• Implementation: This is when to convert all preparation into action. In order to ensure cost-efficiency for customers, the offshore working model was applied, in which all the communications were conducted via online and tasks were performed on Cloud.
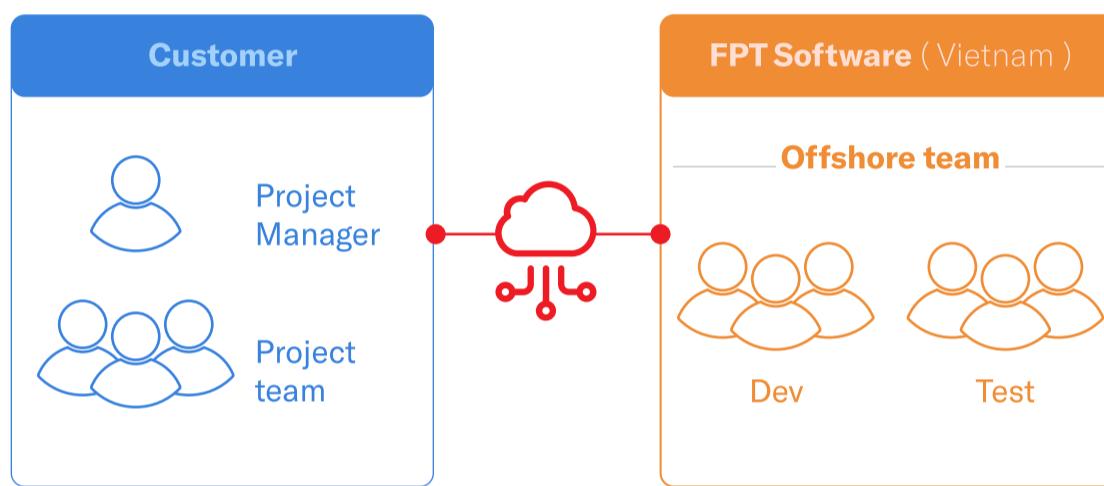

Figure 2: Working model

akaBot- FPT's self-made RPA solution was chosen for deployment. With numerous advantages such as available on different environments, mini solutions tailored for domains and enterprise's functionalities, end-to-end services, the solution is expected to relieve the client's stress of working with multiple vendors while quickly transforming its manual tasks at a reasonable licensing cost. Specific steps that akaBot was deployed are exporting data from SAP, SharePoint and Share folder, synthesizing data into a final report and then notifying the person in charge via emails.
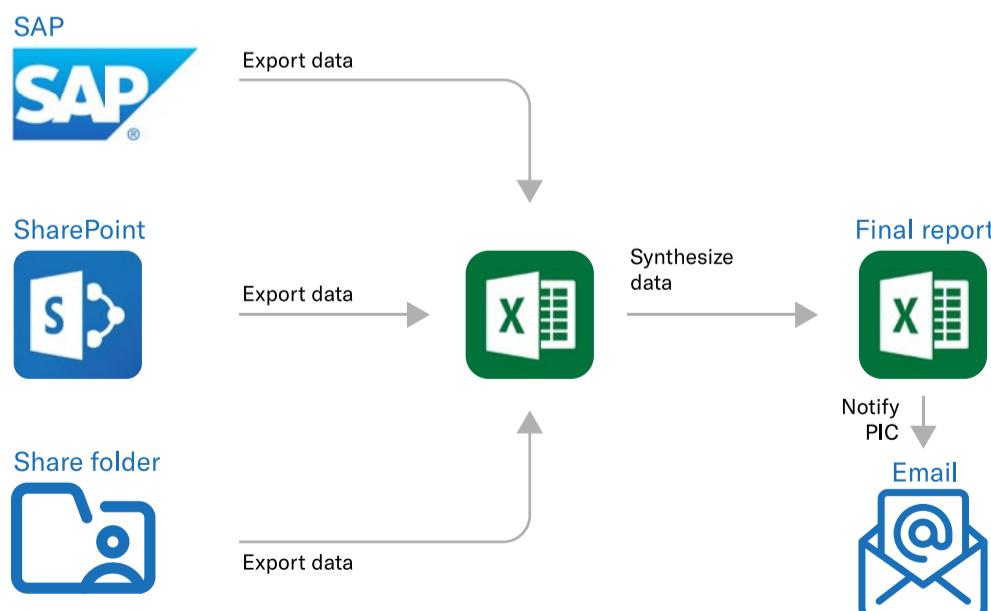

*Figure 3: Automated steps by **akaBot***

Not All Good Things Take Time

After four weeks, **FPT's akaBot team** officially completed the project. The impacts can be witnessed overnight. The appearance of automation software has reduced 75% of effort on month-end reporting and 85% of processing time. Report accuracy is also significantly improved as those robotics employees are less error-prone than human workers, available 24/7 and never becomes exhausted.

Unlike the client's concern that RPA deployment would create disagreement or negative responses from staff, who might be afraid that automation could replace themselves and steal their jobs, the employees showed unexpectedly welcoming attitude to the change. It is likely that robotics colleagues have freed them up from tedious and monotonous tasks, allowing them to focus on more interesting and crucial missions. Both managing and operational levels were satisfied with the project, and looked forward to similar projects in the upcoming time.

FPT Software is part of FPT Corporation, a technology and IT services provider headquartered in Vietnam with nearly US$1.2 billion in revenue and 28,000 employees. Being a pioneer in digital transformation, the company delivers world-class services in Smart factory, Digital platforms, RPA, AI, IoT, Mobility, Cloud, Managed Services, Testing, more. FPT Software has served over 700 customers worldwide, 83 of which are Fortune 500 companies in the industries of Aerospace & Aviation, Automotive, Banking and Finance, Communications, Media and Services, Logistics & Transportation, Utilities, Consumer Packaged Goods, Healthcare, Manufacturing, Public sector, Technology and so on.

Developed by FPT Software, akaBot is a comprehensive Robotic Process Automation (RPA) solution that leverages the power of "robot assistants" to replace humans in performing repetitive, rule-based tasks. akaBot allows integration with AI and OCR to automate business processes without interrupting the existing IT system.

Since the first launch in 2018, akaBot has been providing automation solutions for more than 20 global clients from various industries: Banking, Retail, Manufacturing and Logistics, etc. We have helped businesses to cut down up to 60% of operation costs, increase productivity by up to 80% and reduce processing time up to 90%, while ensuring the highest security compliance. In 2020, akaBot ranked among the top 6 RPA platforms worldwide by Software Reviews. The prestigious Stevie Award also announced akaBot as the Gold Winner in the Innovation in Business-to-Business Products & Services category.

For further information, please contact: **contact@fpt-software.com** or **support.akabot@fsoft.com.vn**

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