

Case Study

French Duncan Hotel Accounting

November 2020

fdintelligence 
We make time.

How we used bots to save
11,200 hours (or 466 days)
per annum for this client.



How we helped French Duncan Hotel Accounting.



Background.

- French Duncan Hotel Accounting (FDHA) works with clients to provide an software-based financial management system, that is not only run and managed by accounting professionals, but that provides valuable business insights to help improve overall performance.
- Their solution brings together various forms of financial information into one digital platform, such as:
 - income,
 - banking,
 - accounts payable,
 - payroll management and
 - accounts receivable.
- The Hotels team has expanded rapidly over the last two years, to currently over 50 employees.
- Some of their clients include:



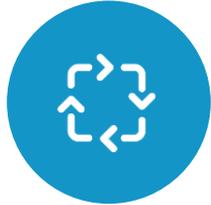
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What we did.

- As a growing business the challenge for FDHA was that their skilled team of accountants were spending lots of their time on repetitive, time consuming tasks instead of applying their experience to the tasks that required judgement, knowledge and insight.
- Robotic Process Automation (RPA) was identified as a key opportunity for the business; a way to reduce the manual, time consuming repetitive tasks which the experienced team of accountants were processing each day.



Impact we had.

- We implemented Robotic Process Automation (alongside some Artificial Intelligence) which has automated these manual and repetitive parts of their processes.
- Within the first 3 months, we delivered 2 robots and automated 3 key processes.
- This has given over 11,000 hours back to the business to allow employees to concentrate on high value tasks that add real client value and improve the customer experience.



How we did it.

- We took a top down approach and engaged with the senior stakeholders to establish the goals and how success was going to be measured.
- A three-phased approach was adopted to assess, qualify and deliver Intelligent Automation.

“FDI has helped us examine our processes from the bottom up – enabling us to focus on key deliverables to assist our clients navigate the very choppy waters of the hospitality sector.”

Ian Bremner, Managing Director
French Duncan Hotel Accounting

Our Three Phased Approach.

Assessment

A number of opportunities were identified as potential candidates for automation. An assessment tool was used for each process to measure against:

- suitability criteria; how suitable is the process to be automated, including whether the process is stable (i.e. doesn't alter);
- frequency,
- volume,
- processing time and;
- quality of data.

From this we identified the top three processes that had the greatest automation potential with the highest ROI.

Qualification

This phase involved performing "deep dive" interviews with Subject Matter Experts (managers in these areas and the team who regularly undertake these tasks). This allowed our team to map out the exact process, detailing all exceptions or anomalies which a robot may need to navigate.

Once qualified, a business case for each process was written detailing all benefits, time to implement and cost for final sign off.

A detailed Solutions document was then presented as the final description of exactly what will be delivered.

Delivery

A robot is developed to automate each tasks, and fully tested code is produced ready for implementation.

The client was kept informed during every step, with us presenting working solutions every 2-weeks (because the project was run in a series of 2-week "sprints").

By following this methodology it kept everyone informed, gave the team confidence that the robots were going to be able to deliver, and allowed them to start thinking about operational restructuring when the process automations go live.

Outcome

FDHA now runs Robotic Process Automation across the Accounts Receivable and Accounts Payable processes.

The company is now reviewing all processes to see where other opportunities for automation exist. It is even considering changing existing processes by taking an "automation first" mindset.

"The robotic automation of standard and repeatable processes will allow more time to be devoted to value-add activities, such as interrogating key variances and providing actionable client insight.

On top of that it has also materially strengthened our internal control framework by minimising risk of human error with high volume, repetitive tasks, providing a full audit trail and log of tasks processed."

Giancarlo Porrelli, Operations Director
French Duncan Hotel Accounting

Efficiency of building in blocks.

- Throughout the project the team built the robots out of 'blocks' of code, with in essence each block performing an individual functions that would be required across various tasks (e.g. on 'block' might be a system login).
- In doing this they soon build up a library of these 'blocks' which can be reused in other robots.
- This means quicker development on subsequent robots, because these building blocks could be reused. This also means that if anything changes in the future (e.g. login details), then this one 'block' would need to be changed once and it works across all automated processes.

We make time.

We: identify process.

Supplier Statement Reconciliations

- FDHA receive statements in every day from client suppliers (e.g. hotel's laundry company) which must be processed.
- It takes up to 40 minutes to complete and requires a great deal of manipulation to get all of the information into one place.
- This data is then added into an Excel document, and manual lookups introduced to verify the status and document number.
- From there the individual needs to manage all of the exceptions according to specific criteria.

Daily Bank Statement Reconciliation

- Every day staff need to reconcile information in their finance software with the client's downloaded daily Bank Statement
- This is time consuming, as staff needed to log into the bank system, download the Statement data before then both creating and then changing Excel files before they could be imported.

Daily Revenue Uploads

- This process required staff to consolidate daily income data from email attachments that first had to be saved into network folder locations.
- There is a large amount of data manipulation required to get all the relevant information into one place and in the correct format.
- Daily income and expenditure are recorded in a master Excel file, portions of which are imported into the finance software.

Make: solutions delivered.

Solution

- The robot captures the Excel statement from the email and uses logic to determine how it should be processed.
- It then grabs customer account information from their system, analyses it, and uses set rules to make decisions on how to act.
- This data is collected into a reporting platform which shows which statements have been dealt with by the robot, but also flags any exceptions which require human intervention (if any exist).

Solution

- The robot now automates all of this.
- It securely logs into the bank system, downloads the bank statements, manipulates and resaves the Excel file and inputs this directly into the software system.
- This new process is much quicker, less error prone, and more compliant than the previous process. Data files are also downloaded for auditing purposes.

Solution

- The software robot speeds up all this considerably.
- It opens the emails, grabs the attachment and automatically renames and saves this into the right folder.
- It then manipulates the data into the correct format and layout finally triggering the upload.
- As with other robots, it tracks all this so staff can easily see what it has done (& any issues it has encountered).

Time: saved.

4,000

hours saved per annum.

Robot speed and accuracy has also helped FDHA exceed Service Level Agreements.

5,000

hours saved per annum.

Average handling time reduced by 82%.

2,200

hours saved per annum.

“The automation has been fantastic. It has saved my team a great deal of time spent on everyday tasks which can now be redeployed to deliver the value add for our clients.”

Lorna MacClare, Operations Manager, French Duncan Hotel Accounting



We make time.

What this client said:

"In the current economic climate it is more important than ever to have the most efficient processes possible – our clients not only expect this but now demand it. By implementing the robotic automation of manual processes we have been able to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to efficiency as well as a tight internal control environment. FD Intelligence has helped us examine our processes from the bottom up – enabling us to focus on key deliverables to assist our clients navigate the currently very choppy waters of the hospitality sector."

Ian Bremner, Managing Director
French Duncan Hotel Accounting

"The automation has been fantastic. It has saved my team a great deal of time spent on everyday tasks which can now be redeployed to deliver the value add for our clients."

Lorna MacClare, Operations Manager
French Duncan Hotel Accounting

"Like many businesses we haven't always had the time to step back and challenge our underlying processes as we would have liked, and that is where FD Intelligence have really helped us move forward. The robotic automation of standard and repeatable processes will allow more time to be devoted to value-add activities, such as interrogating key variances and providing actionable client insight. On top of that it has also materially strengthened our internal control framework by minimising risk of human error with high volume, repetitive tasks, providing a full audit trail and log of tasks processed."

Giancarlo Porrelli, Operations Director
French Duncan Hotel Accounting

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