Automation Anywhere (AA)

Review From A Customer

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From IT Central Station, the leading review site for enterprise technology solutions.

Review by a Real User

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WHAT IS OUR PRIMARY USE CASE?

We use it for backoffice processes. We are part of a shared service, so we do billing, credit, collections, and those types of processes.

HOW HAS IT HELPED MY ORGANIZATION?

We have done close to 50 projects in the last three years. AA improves our speed as far as moving files goes. It also helps in getting people prepared to work on a daily basis. We have a lot of jobs that run at night so that when people come in in the morning, everything's ready to go for them. For example, we have two very separate systems which need to talk to each other. It sounds very simple, but we have a job that takes a file from one system and loads it into another. But it has to do that close to 1,500 times in the middle of the night. It's a job that used to be done manually by 150 people in 150 different markets. Now, it's something that's done during the night, and when they come in it's all completed. So it was a very simple task, but there was a lot of volume. It has saved everybody a lot of time and it has saved a huge amount of manpower. It saves us thousands of hours a month. It's also very useful as far as interacting with employees. Employees can kick off jobs on an as-needed basis rather than scheduling them. It's always very helpful to have a tool that's interactive with the employees.

WHAT IS MOST VALUABLE?

One of the most valuable features is object cloning, the ability to get into websites and do things faster. I also like its usability. It's pretty easy to learn, pretty quick to get things taken care of with it. Our average developer is up within 30 days. We have our own training program. We don't use anything from AA for training. We've been doing it long enough that we created our own. In addition, the user interface is easy to use. It's fairly user-friendly when you don't know anything about it and open it up for the first time.

WHAT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT?

The scheduling is a little difficult at times. Rather than setting up individual instances, it would be really nice if we had the ability to set repetitive jobs easily. Right now, if you want a job to run every 15 minutes, you have to schedule it a lot of times. I'd rather have the ability to just say 'run every 15 minutes.' There could be some improvements made in the Control Room. I really like the concept of the application that they've got, so you can now access the Control Room from a mobile device, but there's only a lot of potential, there's not a lot of functionality there yet. That would be a great place for it to be able to expand, so you could have full functionality of the Control Room through a mobile device. And in general, I would like to the solution to get into more machine-learning/AI. I know that the IQ Bots are looking to go there, but there's definitely a lot more potential there as well.

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FOR HOW LONG HAVE I USED THE SOLUTION?

I have been using Automation Anywhere (/products/automation-anywhere-aa-reviews) since February of 2016.

WHAT DO I THINK ABOUT THE STABILITY OF THE SOLUTION?

We haven't had any problems with the actual application going down. We really haven't had any issues. We have issues with third-party products going up and down, but we've never had AA just stop.

WHAT DO I THINK ABOUT THE SCALABILITY OF THE SOLUTION?

We're a small user, so we haven't had any problem with scalability. We've talked to a lot of people who have used it on a much larger scale. For us, it's very easy to add TaskBots. We're more than satisfied with the scalability. We're always looking for expansion of the solution within our company. We use most of the commands available. There are very few that aren't applicable to what we're doing. We're always trying to get the solution into other departments within the organization itself. We use it a lot within the shared services, the area which we own. But outside of the company, we have several projects that are not within the shared service and we're always looking to talk to the other departments and get them involved. We have 25 bots, meaning 25 licenses. Our core team that does development has four people plus a project manager.

HOW ARE CUSTOMER SERVICE AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT?

Tech support has greatly improved. Three years ago we didn't necessarily have the best experience, but over the years they've gotten better. As a side note, we go through a third-party first, through ISG. That's through how our service model works. Then ISG gets AA involved if they can't answer the question. We don't necessarily directly contact AA. Most of it's through the third-party provider, and then AA eventually. ISG is great. We really haven't had a lot of problems. When we implemented version 11.3, we went so quickly - we went with it right when it came out - that there were a few questions that ISG wasn't aware of yet because it was so new. We went to AA through ISG and they were able to answer the questions right away. But for the most part, ISG is very on top of it, and we don't need to engage AA.

IF YOU PREVIOUSLY USED A DIFFERENT SOLUTION, WHICH ONE DID YOU USE AND WHY DID YOU SWITCH?

This is our first go in the RPA world. We had an internal resource, somebody within the company who had seen Automation Anywhere used in other companies. That person introduced us to the concept and, from there, we did some research and saw that that's where the market was going.

HOW WAS THE INITIAL SETUP?

The initial setup was pretty straightforward. I did it myself and I'm not an IT guy, so it wasn't super-difficult. It took me a couple of hours, including configuration. Our IT team set up the actual virtual machines themselves, but the installation was done completely by me. Our implementation strategy was that we started super-small. At that time, we started with five bots and the Control Room. It wasn't overly difficult. I just followed the documentation provided to install the service and configure everything.

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WHAT WAS OUR ROI?

Our initial project had to have an ROI, and that's why we started small. We have never not had a yearly ROI. We've always greatly exceeded the cost of, or the investment in, the tool. In terms of how much it's saving us, I don't want to be quoted on the exact amount, but it's more than millions of dollars a year.

WHAT'S MY EXPERIENCE WITH PRICING, SETUP COST, AND LICENSING?

We purchased AA through ISG and have done both annual renewals and a multi-year renewal, the latter recently. It has been very easy to add bots on an as-needed basis. There are no additional costs from Automation Anywhere, but there is obviously the infrastructure costs for the VMs.

WHICH OTHER SOLUTIONS DID I EVALUATE?

We definitely evaluated lots of different options at the time. Of course, it came down to Blue Prism or to AA. We went with AA because of the feature set, the way that the development was laid out. And support was also a factor. We were much more interested in States-side support.

WHAT OTHER ADVICE DO I HAVE?

Any company in today's environment would be foolish not to implement RPA. There are definitely different types of use cases where you could spread it out amongst the organizations and let them do their own thing. We have chosen to keep it centralized and have been pretty successful in doing it. But everybody should be using an RPA in some capacity. I would absolutely recommend specifically Automation Anywhere. Our experience with the solution has been a ten out of ten. I can't speak to the other tools because we haven't used them, but we're very satisfied with what we have.