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Digital & Technology

Deloitte with AstraZeneca RPA

AstraZeneca wanted to deliver a step-change in productivity that would enable it to manage current and future workloads without adding to its cost-base, compromising quality, or jeopardising compliance. In an Industry-first, Deloitte leveraged Robotic Process Automation (RPA) to show AstraZeneca how this ambitious objective could be achieved.

Around the world, AstraZeneca Patient Safety teams manage around 100,000 Adverse Event (AE) reports relating to their medicines every year. An Adverse Event (AE) is described as "any untoward medical occurrence" in a patient receiving a medicine. These events include everything from so called "non-serious" side effects such as nausea to more serious events such as reports of malignancy. Following up with healthcare professionals to understand reported event(s) as completely as possible is a mandatory legal responsibility of pharmaceutical companies and a critical component of benefit-risk evaluation that helps regulators continually monitor the safety and efficacy of the medicines we take.

In 2016, AstraZeneca's AE follow-up process was largely manual, in common with the pharmaceutical industry as a whole, with patient-safety teams completing paperwork and following up on reports with letters and emails to patients and physicians. Deloitte approached AstraZeneca proposing to deliver a

RPA solution capable of automating the follow-up with healthcare professionals and patients on reports of Adverse Events (AEs). As a compliance process under constant scrutiny from the regulatory authorities, any RPA solution for automating AE follow up would need to undergo full computer systems validation to demonstrate regulatory compliance before deployment – something for which there was no precedent in the industry.

AstraZeneca recognised the potential of RPA and partnered with Deloitte to develop a solution to share with the industry and set a precedent for this critical area. Deloitte brought industry insight and digital transformation expertise from across of its organisation, to develop a fully validated, industry-first RPA solution for AstraZeneca in just six weeks.

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In doing so, Deloitte delivered a step-change in productivity, allowing AstraZeneca to free up resources to focus on value-adding activities, and manage future workloads without increasing costs, compromising quality, or jeopardising compliance. The solution has improved job-satisfaction for AstraZeneca patient safety teams, and is believed to improve response rates from healthcare professionals. Pharmaceutical companies, their regulators, and the patient population can now have greater confidence in the safety and efficacy of marketed medicines.