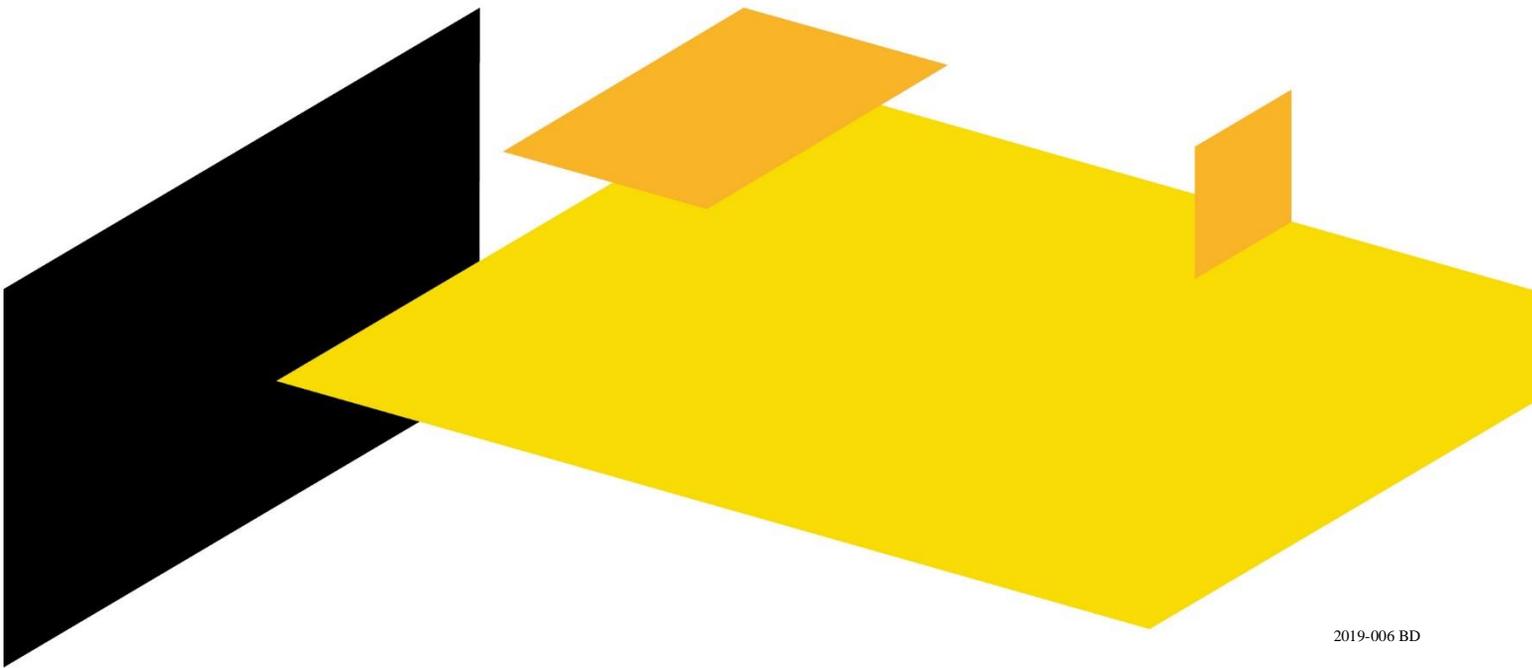Guidehouse

Department of Health and Human Services

RPA + Analytics for Financial Management

July 27, 2018

2019-006 BD

Introduction

As we head into Fiscal 2019, Federal financial management (FM) offices are challenged in more ways than ever. In addition, seemingly harder to find financial management staff continue to spend lots of their limited time doing mundane and monotonous tasks. While the work is often repetitive and rules based, it is still prone to human errors. Even small mistakes can compound into time consuming corrections or worse, cause compliance issues that show up in audit findings.

Federal FM organizations need to transform and digitize to keep up with the increasingly fast paced, dynamic environment that's required today. Fortunately, emerging and promising innovations are becoming available that are leading the way to increased performance and compliance and will motivate a new generation in the workforce in these changing times.

Empowering your staff with powerful automation tools to do their high volume, structured tasks will free up the team to focus their attention on higher value, more rewarding work that they've been forced to neglect. Robotic Process Automation (RPA) software is easily installed at the User Interface level, and when properly deployed, eliminates human error, increases efficiency, and provides immediate value. An RPA supported workforce is capable of working 24/7, requires limited to no oversight, and can scale with speed, agility, and resiliency. Using RPA allows organizations to operate more efficiently, reduce costs, increase accuracy, compliance, and auditability.

Our Scalable Solution Drives Mission Success

Introducing RPA bots alone is not the answer and efforts to do so have ended with poor results. What we've learned is that there is no such thing as a one size fits all enterprise approach and what's most critical is the need for an internally self-sustaining, scalable solution.

Our proposed solution combines the critical, in system, power of advanced analytics with the UI level automation of RPA to provide our clients with an "always on" platform that allows them to realize their ultimate value. When the financial management team makes use of this platform, deploying new analytics skills and optimization techniques, they'll find a new seat at the table helping drive the agency mission.

RPA + Analytics Pilot

An RPA + Analytics pilot will allow the organization to test out this powerful solution, while also resulting in a flexible, scalable model which can be further implemented across multiple operating divisions. Only when leadership has realized the benefits of an automation + analytics approach should the pilot effort move into production.

There are multiple pilot options, none of which include investing in the software. The RPA software, priced on average at $10,000 per bot, only is incurred if the RPA bots are in production. A typical 12-week pilot approach to support your organization is represented below. This particular one includes the Agile development of three automated processes, intro to RPA training, Data Analytics training for the FM staff, the buildout of an Automation Pipeline and the development of bot metrics to report automation progress. This example includes about four support resources for approximately $250,000.
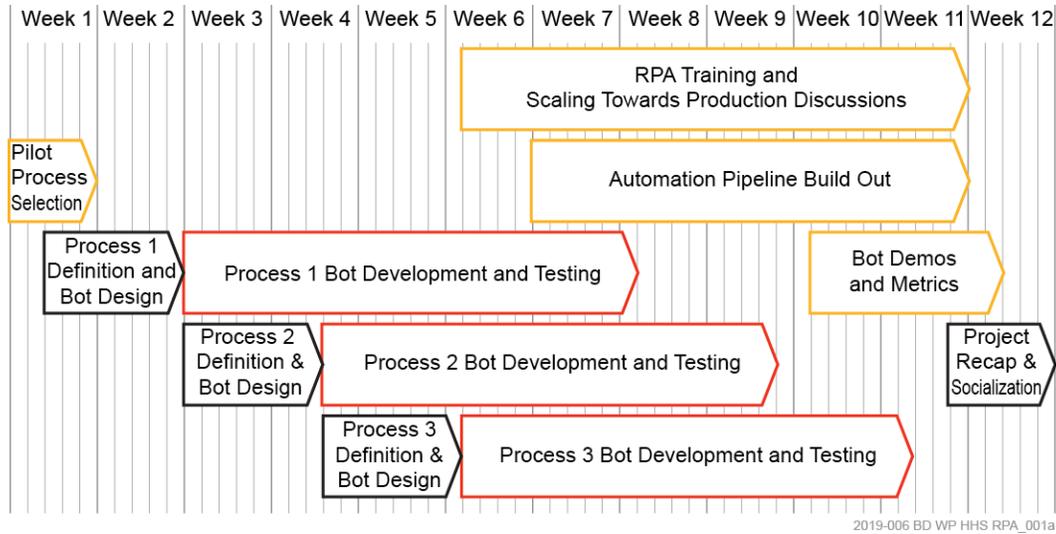
Figure 1. RPA Pilot Example

Repeatable Analytic Approach

Guidehouse LLP (formerly PricewaterhouseCoopers Public Sector LLP) provides a structured yet flexible RPA approach. Utilizing this iterative framework, our team of skilled developers will assist your team in identifying and assessing actionable processes, developing an automation strategy, employing optimal RPA + Analytics tools, and, most importantly, instituting a solid security, governance and accountability foundation.

One of the critical differentiators in Guidehouse's approach is our Agile RPA Lifecycle. Larger, more complex processes are broken up and released periodically after thorough testing. This method allows the team to build confidence in their efforts and share early wins with leadership. This method has also proven to be more reliable when troubleshooting exceptions.

Our point of view is that the deployed robots are just new members that are added to your team and we provide the critical support. Without the best use of analytics, proper governance, security and accountability, a full RPA program has a limited chance of success.
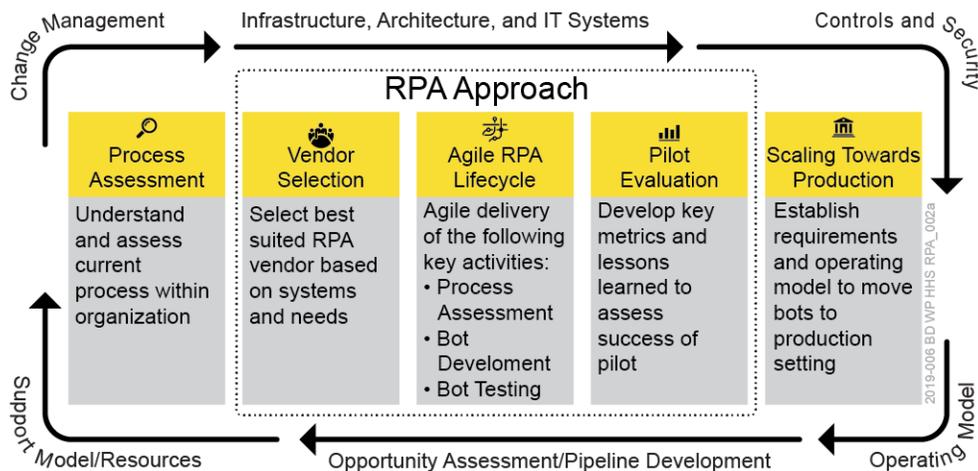

Figure 2. RPA Agile Approach and Operating Model

2019-006 BD

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Page 2

Potential HHS Applications

RPA + Analytics can enable HHS to test the real possibility of automation related to the following processes:

- **Automating ATM –** Internal and external source ATM updates
- **Feeder System Reconciliations –** Counts and amounts recons (between source and target system interfaces)
- **Travel Voucher Processing –** Increase accuracy and processing time
- **FBwT Reconciliation –** Automate the SOT, SOA vs FMS 6652 recon
- **Data Act Submission –** Detect data quality issues ahead of broker

Deploying Guidehouse's Agile RPA approach will assist HHS in achieving a cross-domain data and information sharing platform. Linking disparate data sources and applying advanced analytics techniques will provide HHS the capability it needs to continuously create efficiencies in its processes. This effort perfectly aligns with HHS Strategy 3.A2 "pilot new and improved best practices throughout HHS to identify scalable solutions," and help HHS identify best practices and document opportunity to create efficiency. Guidehouse will work with HHS management to prepare the workforce for what lies ahead.

Contact Information

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2019-006 BD

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Page 3