

Prefer being experts in social security than in Excel or IT

Robots are taking over many administrative tasks of Robidus. Employees can, therefore, devote more time to advising and supervising customers.

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Rik Verhoog

Business Unit Manager

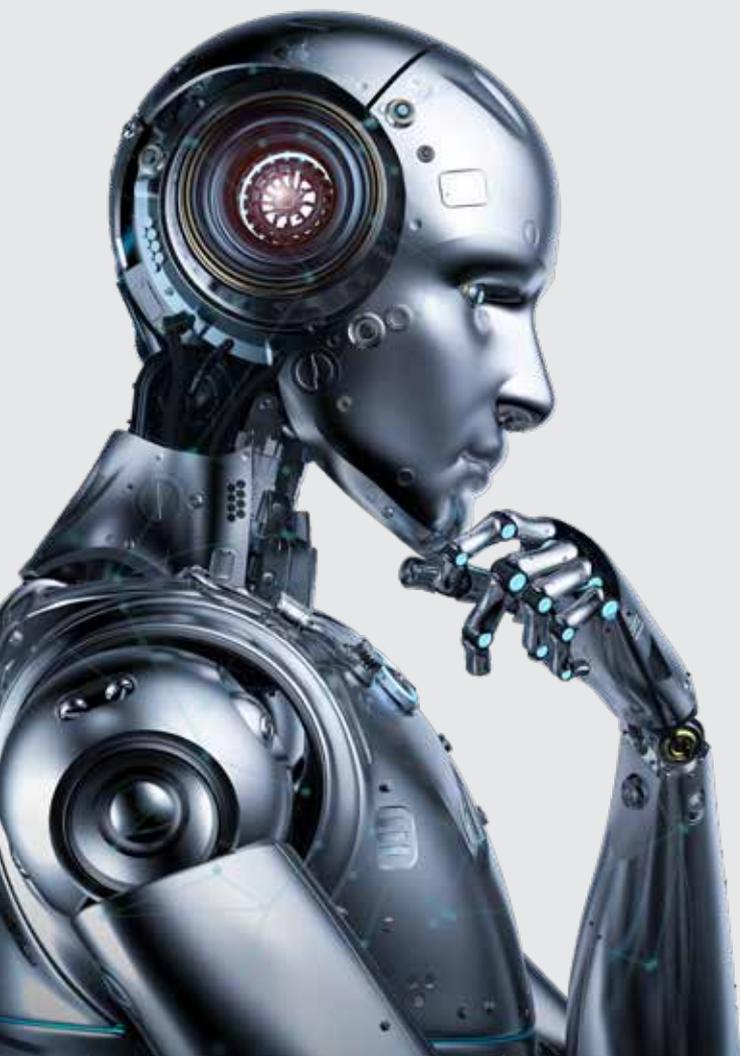
SV Service Center at Robidus

Robidus accompanies larger employers and employees in matters of absenteeism, sickness, and social security. This involves (financial) obligations such as wage repayment and reintegration in case of sickness, employability of partially incapacitated employees, and assisting employers and employees in taking measures to prevent sickness absence. Under The motto “work is the best form of social security,” Robidus helps employers in reducing their financial risks and employees in working on recovery and returning to work.

Robidus has 350 employees. The Head office is in Zaandam.

Situation

Robidus’s services include many administrative tasks like registering and supervising absences and complying with legal obligations. This implies large volumes of data entry in systems and many standard activities. Rik Verhoog, the Business Unit Manager of the Social Insurance schemes (SV) chain explains, “Control processes are necessary, but (they) cost colleagues a lot of time, while customers don’t notice it. Time is better spent when advising customers and answering questions. I sometimes say: ‘I prefer being an expert in social security than in Excel or IT.’” Moreover, Verhoog aims to facilitate continuous development for his colleagues. He explains, “That’s why we want to automate low level work in our current back-office systems, possibly with robots. Then our colleagues have more time for other activities, such as customer contact. This is also important because Robidus is growing rapidly and has several vacancies. Automation and robots allow for shifting of work, so that our current team can absorb part of our growth.”





Challenge

With a background in IT, Verhoog has done the market research needed to explore the possibilities of robotization. For example, he learned that Capgemini had already done several successful projects with the Blue Prism robotic process automation (RPA) software platform.

Verhoog elaborates, "With Capgemini, we made a small-scale pilot with three processes between December 2017 and February 2018. Capgemini has a model to select those processes according to criteria such as size, amount of operations, time of employees, and time for building the robot. One of our processes is uploading large incoming files to the various customer files. Now colleagues do that by day manually, which costs them many hundreds of man hours a year. It would be ideal if the robot takes over these tasks at night."

Solution

Based on the Capgemini model, Robidus and Capgemini have combined these processes step by step and have written the business case. Verhoog explains further, "Asking for each step: can we automate this, can we put in a robot, or should it be done by hand? For example, we mapped out two of the three selected processes and streamlined them in some areas. This is necessary, because when you robotize it is sometimes more convenient to put process steps in a different order than with manual processing. These two processes were then processed by Capgemini in Blue Prism and delivered as automated processes."

Result

Verhoog sums up the outcome with, "The result of the pilot was as expected. The results were positive. "Therefore, we decided to continue with the automation project. And, above all, we wanted to involve our colleagues. At a kick-off in March 2018, we made our vision concrete: the strong growth of Robidus, low level work by robots, recruiting new employees, and - at the same time - the grow of our colleagues. No one loses his job. Everyone is needed. In groups, colleagues have themselves appointed processes to automate or robotize and fill in their value for our customers. That has brought us a lot."

At the end 2018, Robidus had robotized 10 different processes. Verhoog explains this with, "The robots provide a saving of 10 to 12 FTE, only by working in a different way. As less interesting work is done by robots, our employees can grow to more attractive, more substantive work, they can serve more and more customers, and Robidus needs to recruit fewer people. I see profit everywhere."

Cooperation

Rik Verhoog was very pleased about the cooperation with Capgemini. He says, "They (Capgemini) came in with knowledge and experience and were flexible and creative with us. Partly thanks to their contribution, the automation process has been initiated at Robidus. We are nearly independent now. Capgemini is no longer directly involved after the last 10 processes in 2018. However, it is agreed that this year we will at least organize a session in which we show them how Robidus has arranged its operations with RPA. I expect this to be an instructive exchange for both parties."

Experiences and lessons learned

According to Rik Verhoog, several valuable experiences have been gained in the automation projects:

- Start by streamlining the process in which you want to deploy the robot.
- Know where to go with a process. Consider what the value is for the customer and how you can promote it with a robot.
- Don't try to connect a lot of different systems with one robot.
- Know when to stop. If you are not able to do all the steps, dare to stop and think "then this is good enough." Remember: "The better is the enemy of the good."

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