

Success Story | RPA at schwaben netz

New Heights in Process Efficiency Only a Few Steps Away

**Nativion Digital automates meter reading entry
at schwaben netz gmbh**

At German utility schwaben netz the days of manual meter reading entry are counted. Looking ahead, smart digital assistants will assume this role, saving the organization approximately 285 hours – thanks to Nativion Digital.



Digitization forces companies to not only reinvent entire business models, but also to redesign most business processes. Gas distribution utility schwaben netz is no exception. Until recently, meter readings were maintained in workflow management system Modwork. For further processing, all relevant meter data had to be manually transferred to industry solution SAP IS-U. With 36,000 readings a year, time and resources were consumed by routine work, eliminating capacity for value creation. Nativion Digital experts for automation tasks came to the rescue.

A Digital Friend in Need is a Friend Indeed

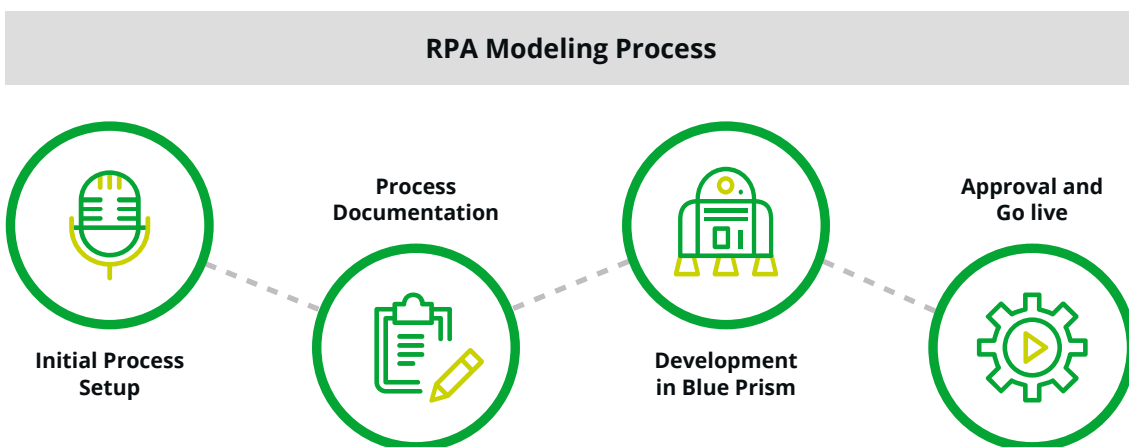
Project initiation began with the goal to reduce the manual effort involved with meter reading processing. To accomplish the task at hand, Robotic Process Automation (RPA) stood out as the magic word due its ability to provide relief to the team in their day-to-day work. Behind the scenes of RPA, software provides programming and training capabilities to capture repetitive system activities. As soon as the automated process is activated, productivity increases drastically, data accuracy is ensured, and process consistency is tracked. At schwaben netz this automation project was considered an excellent opportunity to pilot RPA in the organization, and to learn about its benefits and potential use for other applications.

Process Documentation and Development Iterations

Together with the project leads at schwaben netz and schwaben erdgas, Nativion Digital documented the RPA requirements. The categories of identified meter reading scenarios set an annual target of 24,000 meter readings fewer to be transferred manually. The project plan outlined the following five consecutive steps.

- 1) Process review and documentation
- 2) Process modeling
- 3) Software development
- 4) Evaluation and testing
- 5) Transition to production

The outlined RPA development approach uses iterative steps to ultimately reach a maximum degree of automation in production.



Step-by-Step Instructions Guide the Robot

A well-documented process is a key factor to a successful implementation of robotic software. This preparation activity reflects a deep and common understanding of current processes, and in addition serves as the starting point to pursuing enhancements through automation. schwaben netz selected ten key meter reading processes, of which each underwent a detailed analysis conducted by Nativion Digital experts. The instructions the software must follow are defined step-by-step with complex decision logic mapped to clear if-then relationships. “The collaboration with the colleagues at Nativion Digital turned out to be very constructive and targeted. We always understood the priorities and the project progressed nicely,” recaps Isabel Vogel, Division Manager Network Billing at schwaben netz.

From 45 to 1 Second

While the process logic was still being analyzed and finalized, the team could already begin RPA modeling and learning. For this exciting project phase, Nativion Digital provided the RPA Platform. With system provision and operation in experienced hands, schwaben netz did not incur any additional infrastructure cost. Three weeks and 166 process steps later, the digital assistant could autonomously execute key tasks of the meter reading process: whether it be scheduled regular readings, intermediate readings, interim billing, or a supplier switch, the RPA solution covered all scenarios.

From this point forward, the handling of meter readings is done automatically, giving employees the needed time to dedicate to value-adding activities. The degree of automation achieved with the introduction of RPA reached an impressive 87.5%. The manual effort in the overall process was reduced from 45 seconds to a mere one second – each case now completing in only 14 seconds. “Taking on meter reading to pilot RPA was quite a bold move. However, I am more than satisfied with the result. Not the least thanks to the professional project support and implementation by Nativion Digital. I’m positive, there’s more RPA to come,” assures Andreas Bissinger, project sponsor and Division Manager Corporate Development and IT at erdgas schwaben.

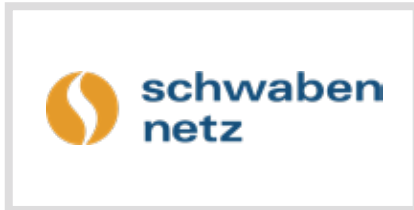
What’s Next: After the first RPA project proved to be well-received within the organizations of schwaben netz and erdgas schwaben, other business processes are being selected for automation with RPA in 2021.

Do you want to make your processes more efficient? Contact us!

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About schwaben netz gmbh



German utility schwaben netz gmbh is a subsidiary of erdgas netz gmbh and operates the largest regional natural gas distribution network in Swabia and Upper Bavaria. 113,500 customers, including those of subsidiary Erdgas Kempten-Allgäu GmbH rely on the competency of its 190 employees. They provide safe and reliable gas supply and consulting services for energy systems, paying particular attention to the environment and sustainability.

About Nativion



Nativion Digital is an IT consulting company with a focus on Robotic Process Automation (RPA). Nativion Digital's offering automates customer processes with high process volumes. It ranges from pure platform operation via standardized robots to individual implementation and manual processing of the controlled processes. The result: higher employee satisfaction and increasing data quality with significantly lower processing costs. Since January 2021, the billing service provider E-MAKS, part of the Thüga Group, has held a stake in Nativion Digital and is focusing on the potential of RPA technology within the utilities industry. Nativion Digital is part of the globally active Nativion Group with more than 500 employees.

Hard Facts

Company

schwaben netz gmbh

Headquarters

Augsburg, Germany

Industry

Energy, Utilities

Products & Services

Distribution

Employee

190

Website

www.schwaben-netz.de

Nativion Digital Packages

Robotic Process Automation (RPA)



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- Vienna

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- Winterthur

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