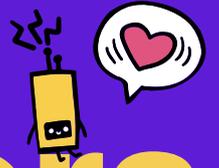


**BOTS &
PEOPLE**



Use Case Public Tenders



Automate happiness



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Public contracts: Never miss a tender again

Companies are under increasing pressure to accelerate the digital transformation. Choosing the right automation technology is half the battle. Robotic Process Automation (RPA) is far from the only automation technology. New ways to use RPA in collaboration with other technologies, such as APIs, are gaining popularity.

RPA

RPA stands for "Robotic Process Automation" and describes the automation of processes, through digital software robots (bots).

This is also the case in the following example, which deals with the automation of the Aumass platform and its tenders.



The Basics

RPA bots perform routine tasks that are actually done by humans by interacting with applications through their user interface. On the other hand, APIs - also called interfaces - are used to connect software systems and enable direct communication. Since the interface hardly changes with each new system version, API-based connections are very robust.

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API

An API makes it possible to exchange data between software and program parts.

The interaction of both automation technologies - RPA and API - can automate complex processes end-to-end. For example, RPA tools are better able to transform data captured with optical character recognition (OCR) into the right formats for applications like SAP. From there, API integration can then improve the flow of data into other business processes.

Automation blueprint for all public tenders

In principle, local and state governments, the federal government, special-purpose associations and utility companies must put contracts out to public tender. In addition to the 16 state portals, there are a large number of other procurement portals. Every year, public contracts worth around **500 billion euros** are awarded in Germany. This can be a very lucrative business for companies if the tenders are consistently kept under review. The

emphasis here is on the “if”, because time and again potentially lucrative contracts get lost in the day-to-day business (more on this in the next section). Despite recurring misses, public tenders are a big and often underestimated topic for many companies when it comes to process automation. The following therefore shows how Aumass eProcurement can be automated using RPA and an API interface to never miss tenders again.

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A lot of potential: the use case in detail

In the electronics environment, around 1,200 tenders are published via the Aumass eTendering platform every year. The orders put out to tender, e.g. for 300 iPads or 500 laptops, can quickly add up to between 80,000 and 250,000 euros. An order of magnitude that is more than appealing even for a well-known German electronics retailer - as in this use case. Nevertheless, monitoring hundreds of public tender portals is a challenge even for large companies.

80 – 250k

This is how high a tender in the e-commerce sector can be. You don't want to miss out on that!

The present company did not have a system that alerted to new relevant tenders, so that monitoring of the portals was only sporadic when an employee thought of it. In the absence of central coordination, it even sometimes happened that two, three or four employees participated in one and the same tender with different offers completely independently of each other.

One step at a time

To change this untenable state of affairs, the electrical retailer commissioned the Berlin based startup Bots and People to solve the problem. First, the individual steps necessary to retrieve an order from Aumass eTendering and feed it into the company's own system were analyzed. Next, Chrome, Excel, and Zendesk customer service and CRM sales software were used to identify the applications that were involved in the process. Once all the tools were identified, these concrete steps followed to automate the Aumass process:



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Step 1: Identify the process

Every hour, the Aumass bot should automatically log into the portal, search for relevant tenders, download the information, and post it centrally within the company. As part of the automated participation in tenders, a specific group of employees should be centrally informed about relevant tenders for the company via the Zendesk ticket system without having to log into the portal themselves. In order to avoid duplicate bids in

the future, it should also be possible to see who is processing which orders and for which tender a bid has already been submitted.

Important:

The process definition is not yet about the software decision. In the case of the Aumass platform, the process was first determined, then the existing or non-existing interfaces/APIs were examined, and only then was a

choice made regarding technology and software based on the findings. An incorrect or poorly thought-out choice can quickly jeopardize even such a lucrative project as the automation of the Aumass platform.

Step 2: CPV-Codes as lifeline

The purpose of Aumass as an eProcurement platform is to organize a media-independent, electronic, interactive and complete handling of tenders, awarding and procurement

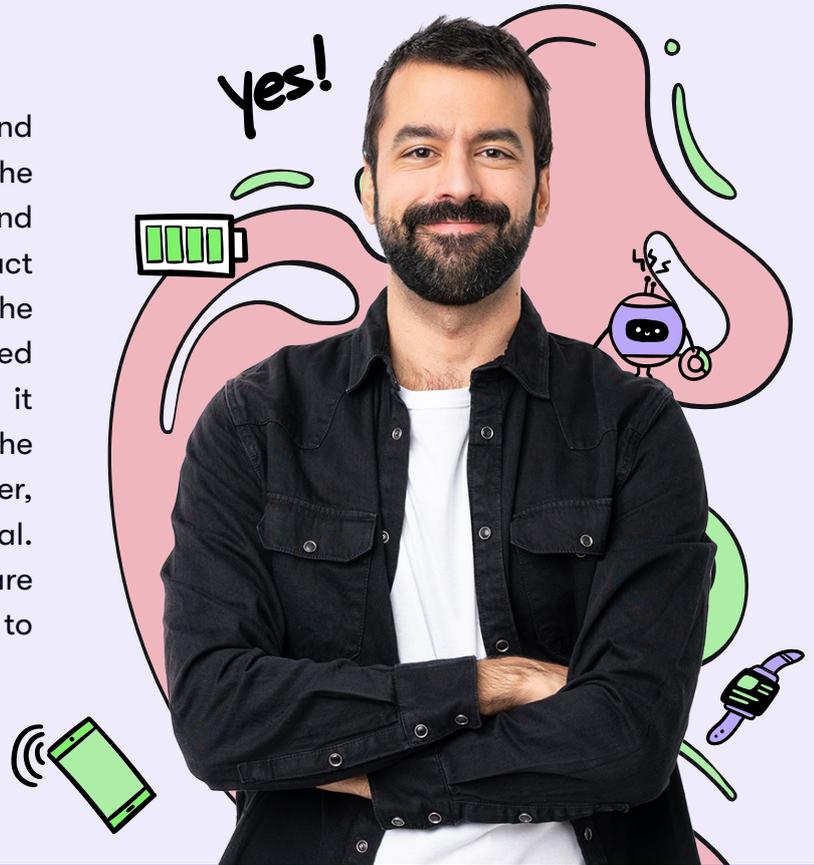
processes. When modeling the process, the first problem to be solved was how the so-called Aumass Bot can identify the relevant tenders on the procurement portal. Helpful in solving the problem proved to be the classification for certain groups of goods, the CPV code, which is uniform in public tenders. The CPV code is a common EU vocabulary for public procurement (CPV = Common Procurement Vocabulary) for describing the subject of the contract.



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Together with the departments, Bots and People created an Excel list containing the CPV codes for individual product groups and articles. CPV codes for individual product groups and items. The bot logged into the Aumass eProcurement platform and searched the platform for each CPV code, which it copied from the Excel list. In addition to the relevance of the RFP to the electrical retailer, the timeliness of the RFP was also critical. The Aumass bot has the ability to compare the tender end date with the current date to exclude expired tenders.



Step 3: Transfer results

Since there was no way to retrieve the data from the Aumass procurement portal via an API interface and transfer it directly to Zendesk, Bots and People had opted for a hybrid solution to automate the process, consisting of Robotic Process Automation (RPA) and API integration. Once all relevant information was extracted on the Aumass platform by the bot, the data had to be transferred to Zendesk via API interface.

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The bot is able to retrieve images, single words or sentences, specifically adapted to the customer's request from the Aumass eTendering platform. In the case of the electronics retailer, the bot even created a so-called "tag" when creating the tickets. This had the advantage that employees had all relevant public tenders immediately available in their Zendesk portal with the help of internal forwarding.

Step 4: Measuring automation success

Thanks to the hybrid solution, the electrical retailer no longer misses any tenders on the award platform. He can now submit a bid for every relevant tender and thus at least maintains his chance of being able to realize orders from tenders worth between 80,000 and 250,000 euros. In addition, there is an enormous gain in efficiency in the processing of public invitations to tender, as invitations to tender are not processed and submitted twice and three times, possibly with different prices, which ultimately also means a reputational gain for the authorities.



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Without any loss of time, e-commerce can take care of the interesting tenders, since all the necessary information comes together in a central system and can be processed immediately by the employees. It is important to make the monetary successes measurable. In the case of the bot, successes can be achieved by simply increasing the number of participating alerts via response times from the time the alert is posted to the time it is processed. In this way, success stories can provide further automation and increase acceptance in the workforce.

Focus on people

In addition to the hard success factors, which can often be expressed in numbers or euros, there are also the soft success factors: these include, for example, employee satisfaction. In the case of the electrical retailer, individual employees only logged on to the Aumass platform sporadically and sometimes did

double work. This is frustrating in the long run. In this case, the use of RPA and API automation did not cost any jobs, but, among other things, ensured greater appreciation and more efficient work for the employees involved.



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Aumass as a blueprint

The presented hybrid solution for the Aumass eTendering platform can be used for any tender platform. Any company, from large corporations to craftsmen, can benefit from the multitude of public tenders with this solution, since it can be applied to any portal and the query is completely automatic. The logic of such automation can thus be applied to many other public tender portals, similar to the Aumass platform.



Aumass as a blueprint

To name a few as examples:

- German Public Procurement Portal
- German eVergabe
- Deutsches Tender Gazette
- Vergabe24
- and many more

Given the volume of tenders and the high monetary potential, it is well worth automating these processes. Why should they still be done manually when there is an easier and error-free solution?



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The use case was planned, executed and accompanied by Bots and People and is considered a success story for process automation within the company - a large German e-commerce for electronic devices. The example can be applied to all public tenders in general, but its content relates specifically to the Aumass eTendering platform.

