

RPA and the future of Recruitment

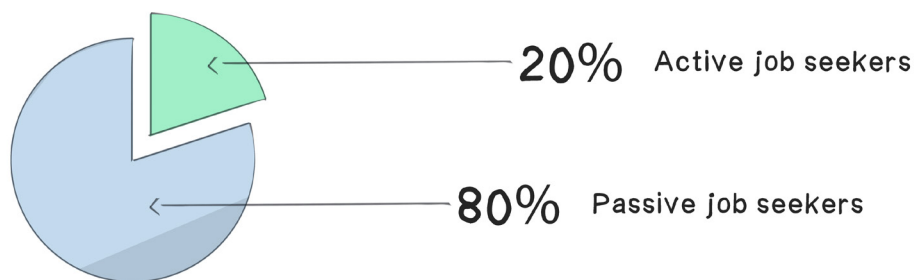
Recruitment Marketing Automation Series Handbook

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1. The Changing Face of Talent Acquisition

Right now, at this very minute, recruitment and hiring are undergoing a tectonic shift. The era of using traditional recruitment methods like recruiting agencies and posting on job boards is quickly coming to an end. Why? Because the global shortage of skilled labor has put modern job candidates in a position of unprecedented leverage, in which the most skilled candidates can be as picky as they like when it comes to choosing their place of employment. If you fail to make a positive impression with your employer brand and your EVP, you risk losing out on qualified hires who opt for jobs elsewhere.



For many companies, the most plausible solution to this ongoing conundrum is to concentrate a large percentage of their resources on what had been, until now, a largely untapped resource: passive job candidates. Unlike the roughly 20% of candidates who are actively seeking out new employment at any given time, the passive 80% can't be readily reached through job boards like Craigslist and Indeed. Likewise, they don't work with recruitment agencies. Nonetheless, the overwhelming majority of them would switch jobs if the right opportunity presented itself.

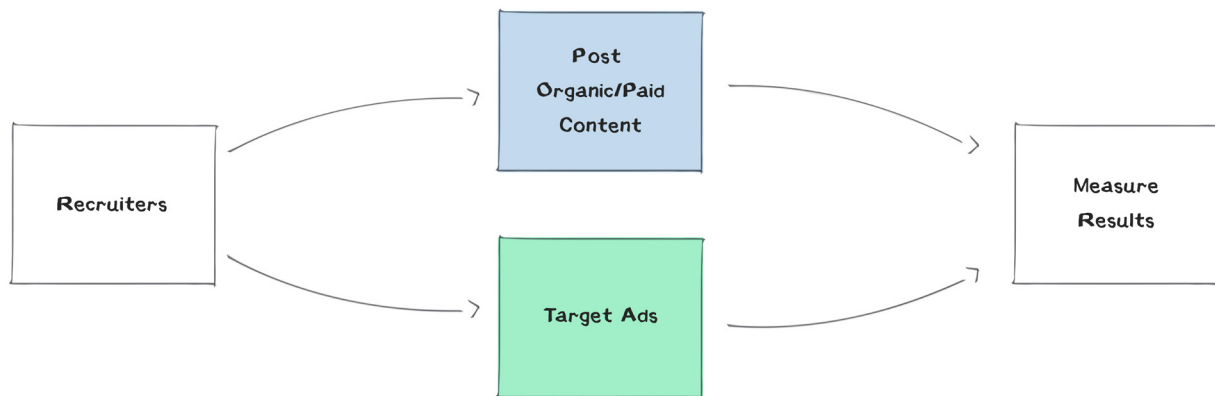
The question you have to ask yourself as a recruiter is this: how can you make sure that these candidates realize that the opportunities they're being offered with your company are "the right" opportunities? How can you not just familiarize passive job candidates with your employer brand, but get them to associate that brand with an exciting EVP (employee value proposition) and consider taking a job with your company?

For many businesses, answering these questions has involved taking a page out of traditional marketing's playbook. Instead of relying on traditional hiring methods, recruiters are increasingly using tools like social media and paid search results to familiarize passive candidates with their employer brands. And there's good reason to expect results from these strategies: Facebook alone boasts more than 2 billion users, which means that any passive job seekers you might be targeting are already likely to spend their time there.

Studies also show that most job candidates will take a company's social media presence into account during their research into where to apply. Thus, social media already plays a role at every stage in the applicant funnel—it's just a matter of taking control of the image you present there. A positive, engaging, and carefully targeted image can help you to position yourself as the employer of choice within your field.

Like we said, there's good reason to expect results from these new strategies, but there are also challenges that will need to be overcome if recruiters are to implement them effectively.

Specifically, recruiters need to find a way to post organic and paid content, target ads to particular audiences, and measure their results across a whole host of web channels—many of which don't have native scheduling or tracking capabilities—all in a manner that's even remotely time-efficient.

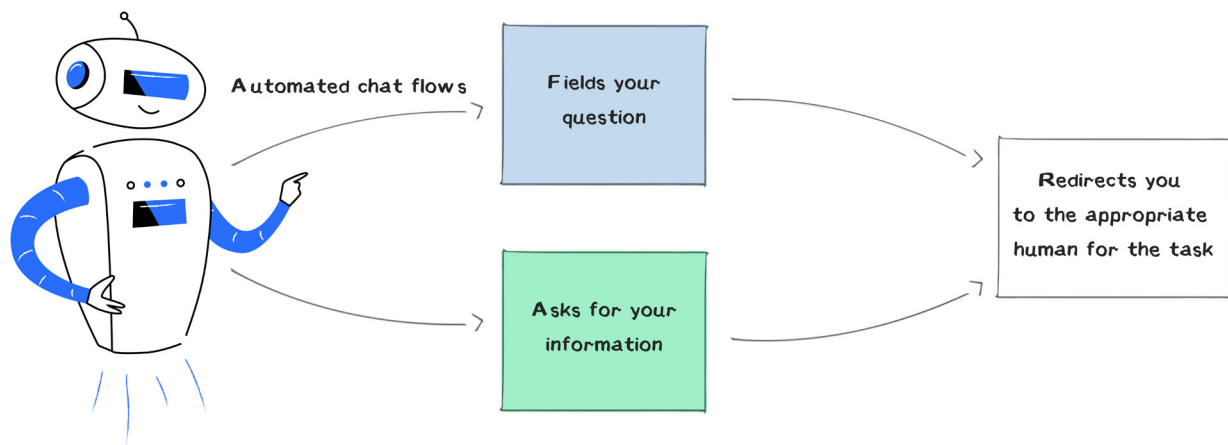


Traditional marketers have been working on this issue—the issue of making this social media activity much more feasible from a time-management perspective—and the approach that many have landed on is marketing automation, i.e. workflows in which the scheduling and tracking of social media ads and posts is in some way automated to save marketers time and empower them to make data-driven decisions. If they're going to be effective in this increasingly competitive talent market, modern recruiters need to do the same.

At SmartDreamers, we've worked to give recruiters these capabilities, and in this eBook we're going to explain how we've automated crucial recruitment marketing tasks, and how this level of automation will benefit recruiters. But before we can take a deeper dive into what these technologies mean for recruitment marketers, we first need to talk about robots.

2. What is Robotic Process Automation?

Now, when we say robots, what we really mean is Robotic Process Automation, or RPA. RPA is a process by which rote and repetitive tasks are carried out systematically by programmable “robots.” You may have seen this technology at work in automated chat flows on your favorite websites: the robot fields your initial question, asks for your information (a task that has to be carried out for every interaction), and then lets you know that you’re being directed to the appropriate human for the task.

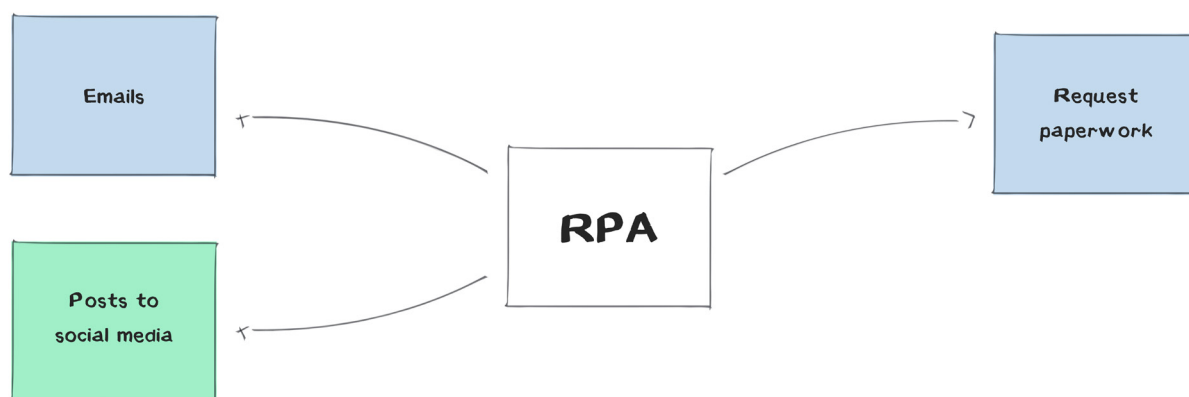


Nothing too fancy is really going on here, but RPA is cutting out a number of time-consuming steps that a human would otherwise have to repeat over and over again during the course of a day, month, or year.

One of the canonical examples of this in HR is the implementation of chat bots on a corporate website that can carry out simple conversations with visitors in order to either collect some basic information (like a CV or a resume) or to more efficiently reroute the user’s queries to the correct person within the company. Again, this might not sound like much, but by automating the first few exchanges

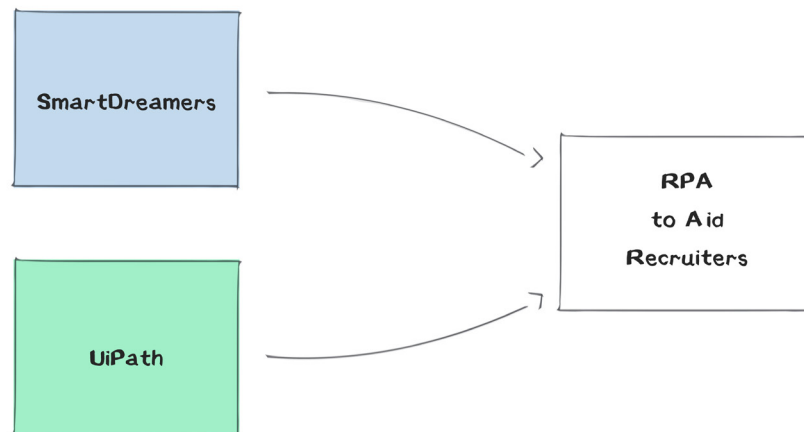
in every online customer or candidate interaction, businesses can recoup valuable minutes that can quickly add up to hours and even days of productive time.

Though RPA and AI—another potentially impactful technology—are often brought up in the same breath, it’s crucial to draw a distinction between them. Unlike many AI workflows, RPA can usually be integrated into a company’s existing software environment; this makes it ideal for the automation of the kinds of repetitive tasks that happen over and over again in the life of a business: sending boilerplate emails, posting to social media, requesting paperwork from new hires, etc. If it’s something you could ask an intern to do on his or her first day, you can probably automate it.



Keep in mind that RPA is optimized for low-level tasks, which means that, conceptually, it’s not a tool for replacing or reshaping the work done by recruiters in their fields. Rather, it offers the potential to make recruiters better at their jobs by giving them the time to home in on tasks that reward creativity and insight: broad strategic strokes, crafting creative employer brand messaging, connecting and engaging directly with candidates, etc.

One of the world leaders in this technology right now is UiPath, a company that's recently gained notoriety as Romania's first startup with a billion-dollar valuation. As it happens, UiPath is a client of ours, and together we were able to brainstorm some ways that RPA could make life easier for recruiters.

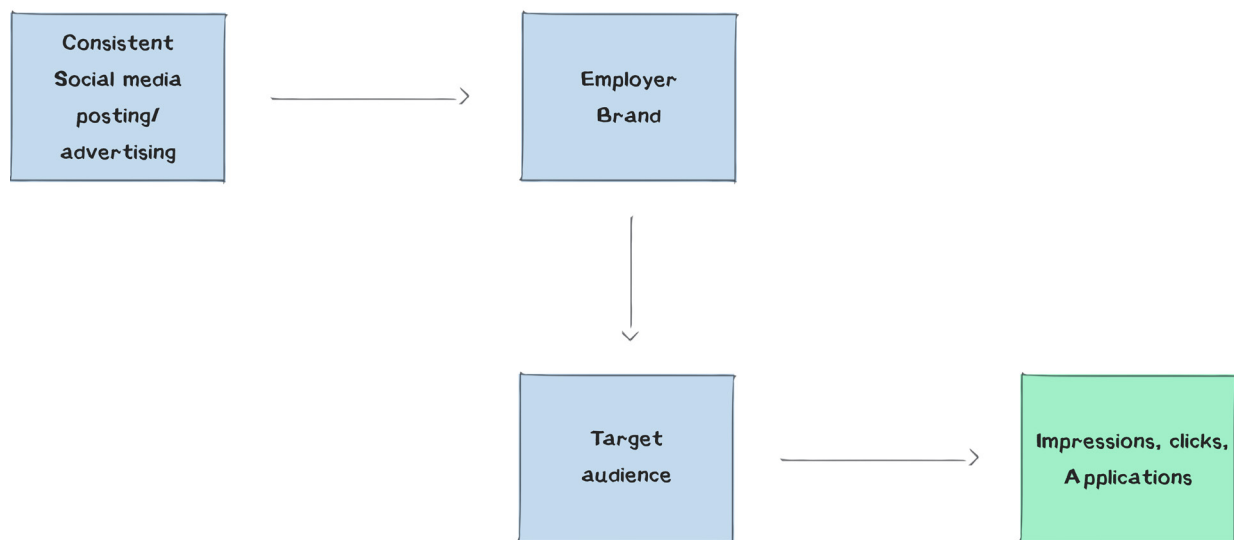


Given some of the challenges of recruitment marketing that we discussed above, we were determined to find a means of using RPA to streamline tasks that would otherwise consume inordinate amounts of recruiters' time.

We believed that, by combining our expertise in the field of recruitment marketing with their world-leading RPA abilities, we could reduce the number of repetitive, menial tasks that HR departments had to complete on a daily basis. In so doing, we would be improving the capabilities of recruiters around the world, who would all of a sudden find themselves with more time for creative, people-centric work.

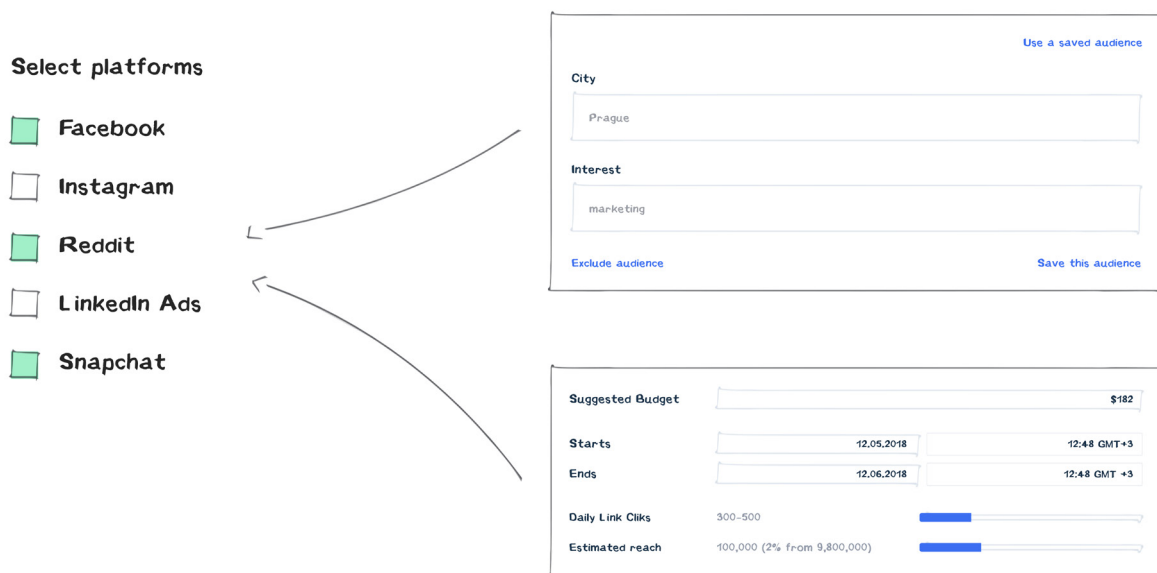
3. No API? No Problem!

To succeed in an incredibly competitive talent market like the one we're experiencing now, recruitment marketers need to be more disciplined and deliberate than ever. Consistent social media posting and advertising are critical to getting your employer brand in front of the right people and gaining the impressions, clicks, and applications that your recruitment funnel thrives on.



This shouldn't be a tremendously tall order, but the schedule of your average recruiter makes it difficult to ensure that she can be in front of her computer and ready to send out social media posts and activate advertising campaigns at exactly the same time every day of the year. Luckily, many sites, like Facebook, offer you the ability to schedule posts in advance. Still other sites offer APIs that will let you institute the same functionality on your end. But what about the sites that offer neither? How can you achieve your desired level of consistency without any tools available for doing so?

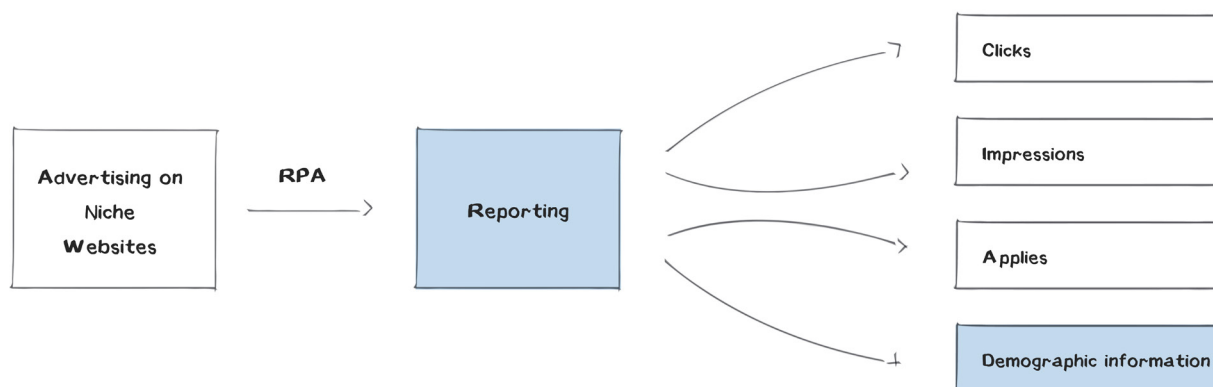
This was the first application for RPA in recruitment that UiPath and SmartDreamers sought to tackle. Using RPA workflows, we found that we could circumvent the limitations being presented by sites that would otherwise fit awkwardly into recruitment marketing gameplans. Rather than being tethered to a computer at a particular time every day to post on niche channels with no scheduling options, these automation flows made it possible to treat even sites with no infrastructure for doing so the same way that you'd treat a platform like Facebook, i.e. easily scheduling posts for when you're going to be away from your computer.



Rather than being beholden to the limitations of a given platform, recruiters could incorporate their desired platforms into existing automated workflows. But scheduling isn't the only issue that crops up for recruiters when they don't have convenient API integration on their employer branding channels. This, too, seemed like a job for RPA. By implementing an RPA-based approach to these sites, SmartDreamers and UiPath have been able to bridge the reporting gap that would otherwise stand in the way of successful recruitment efforts.

Again, totting up the performance numbers for a particular ad is the kind of task that a human could perform, but it would be extremely tedious and time-consuming. So tedious, in fact, that it wouldn't be realistic to actually expect anyone to do it. Thus, where previously a lack of available APIs would, for practical purposes, mean little to no usable data could be collected from these websites, now robotic processes can step in and act as an intermediary to gain the kind of information that recruiters are looking for.

As a result of these efforts, SmartDreamers and UiPath have been able to offer users a level of reporting integration on small, niche websites that would be virtually impossible without RPA. Even on platforms that have no API integration and no data reporting to speak of, our users can gain insight into the ways that their advertisements are (or are not) driving traffic and bolstering their talent pipelines. This can include information like clicks, impressions, and applies, in addition to demographic information: i.e. the same type of data that Facebook and Google already offer.

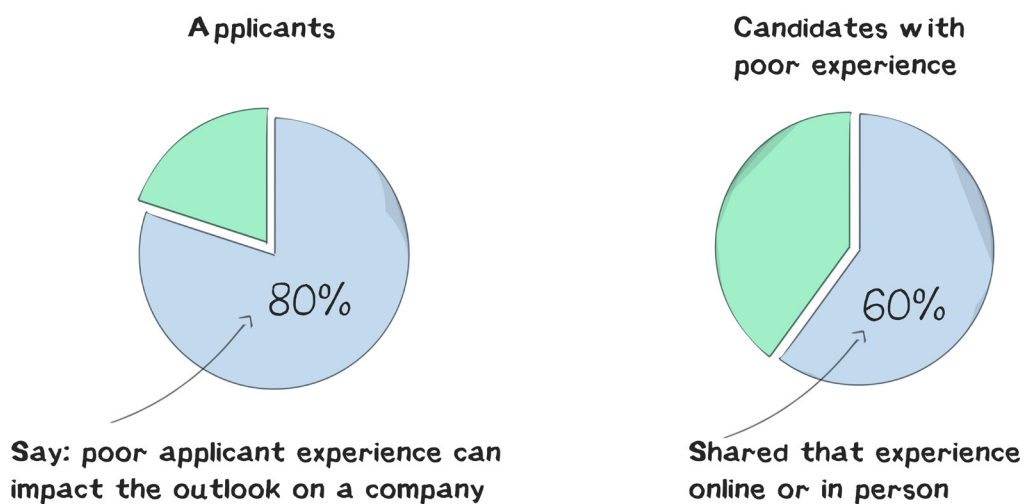


This means that you can compare the efficacy of your employer branding efforts across different platforms and figure out which ones are reaching the right audience and which ones are either missing the demographic mark or failing to resonate. From here, you can arrive at actual ROI comparisons between particular ads, channels, CTAs, etc., meaning that you can begin to get much more data-driven in your decision making.

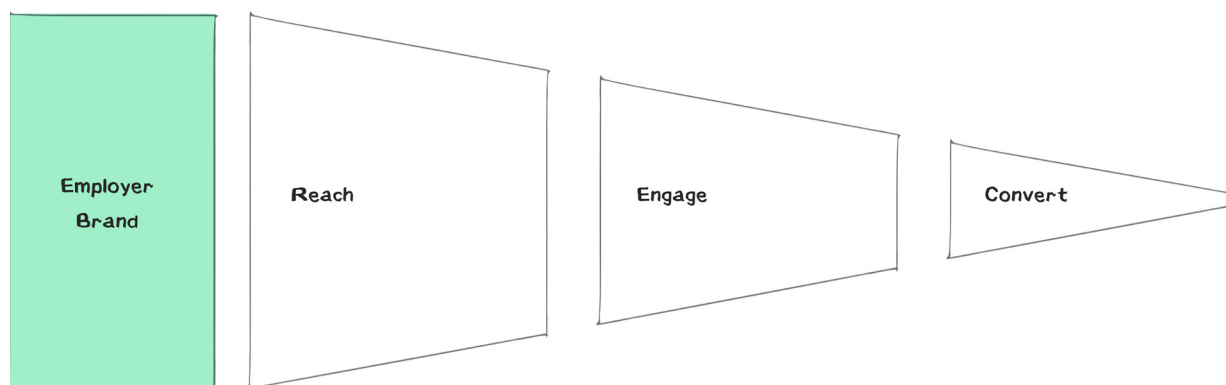
What's the best channel to spend your ad budget on? These numbers should give you a pretty clear idea. What are the characteristics of content that succeeds in engaging your candidate personas? Let the robots tell you! With this information in tow, you're that much closer to making your overall strategic vision a reality. An employer brand can seem like a nebulous thing, but the data collected through these RPA-powered processes can make it concrete and legible.

4. Recruiters Are People Too!

For all of this talk about robots and automation, it's useful to be reminded that at a fundamental level, talent acquisition is all about people. The difference between success and failure in this industry often comes down the ability of HR departments to provide a delightful experience for their applicants and potential applicants. People want to be treated with respect and have their value recognized and affirmed—nowhere more so than in a competitive talent market!



To wit, more than 80% of applicants say that poor applicant experience can drastically impact their outlook on a company. Of the 60% of candidates who have had a poor experience at some point, the vast majority shared that experience online or in person. By contrast, simple acts of courtesy, like providing interview feedback or updating people on their application status, can greatly increase the likelihood that candidates will be willing to apply for future positions with the same company—even if they're rejected the first time around.

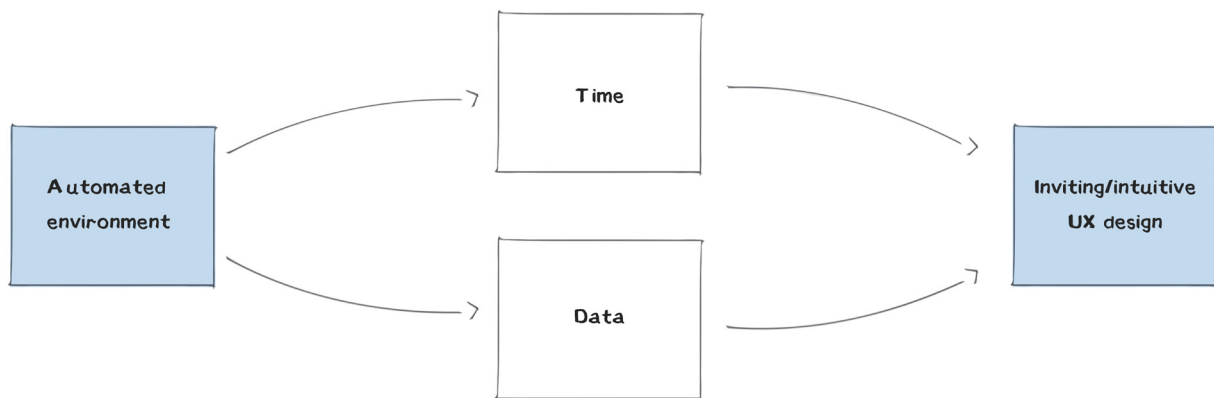


So yes, as a recruiter or hiring manager your job is to create and spread an employer brand that's optimized to reach, engage, and convert top talent in your industry. But that doesn't mean HR departments can let the technical requirements of talent acquisition get in the way of the human side of the equation.

In this way, when we talk about robots, we're really talking about people: people whose time has been freed up to concentrate on interfacing directly with job candidates, nurturing potential talent leads, or crafting an applicant experience that will delight job candidates and keep them from dropping out of the applicant pipeline. It's not simply that with demands on your time you're more able to focus on human-centric activities; it's that RPA can empower you to bring new tools and insights to bear on those activities.

Let's take job landing pages as a representative example: as a recruiter, you want to direct your potential applicants from any post or advertisement to a landing page that will give them more information about the position and convince them to submit an application.

This is a task that rewards inviting and intuitive UX design (UX being a subset of applicant experience more broadly), and in an automated environment you certainly have the time to take UX concerns seriously and give them the attention they deserve. But you also have the data to ensure that your decisions are actually improving applicant experience.



Not only can you figure out the click-to-apply rate from platforms like Facebook and YouTube, you can also make an apples-to-apples comparison on that KPI and others from smaller niche channels. In this way, you can answer a few questions: is there a big difference in the likelihood that a given candidate will apply based on where she encountered the ad? If so, does that mean that your existing landing page isn't appropriately tailored to a particular persona or demographic? How well does ad performance affect landing page performance?

If you've been performing A/B tests on these pages, you'll be in an even stronger position to make smart, qualified decisions about your applicant flow going forward. By the same token, you can use

data collected from your ads across the web to assess what the most effective wording for your employer brand messaging is, and make sure that you incorporate those insights into your one-on-one communications with candidates. This way, they'll be sure to get a healthy dose of what interests them about your brand whenever they hear from you—helping them to stay engaged and delighted throughout the process.

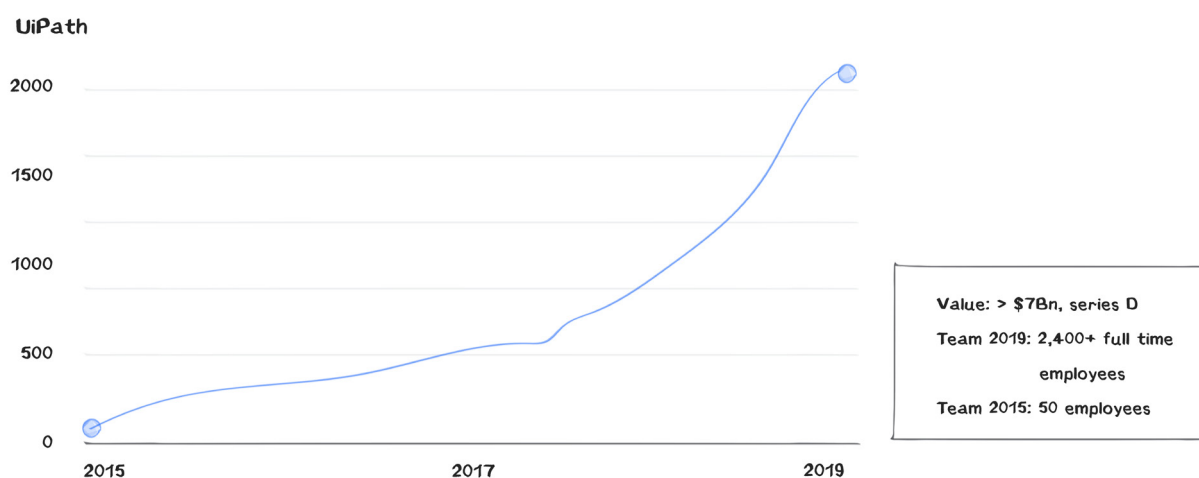
As even more creative and human-centric time is freed up, and you continue to gain a better understanding of your own recruitment ecosystem, you can even use your time to refine your automation strategy. If you can find additional areas where RPA would add value and save time, you can create a positive feedback loop of process automation and bolstered efficiency. In this way, RPA can have an ongoing impact on your recruitment marketing strategy long after the initial integration period.

5. Case Studies

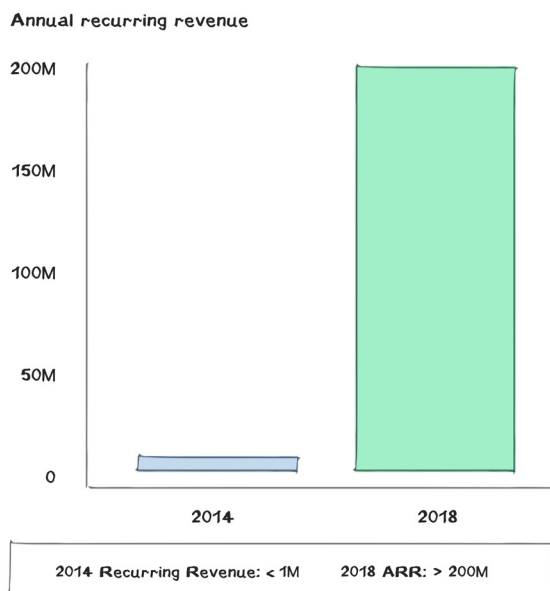
Up to this point, our collaboration with UiPath to bring RPA into the world of recruitment and talent acquisition may have seemed a little bit too theoretical or academic. Now that we've got the basic concepts that drive our collaboration out of the way, let's look at a few concrete examples of SmartDreamers' customers using RPA-empowered workflows to attract and convert more, better job applicants. Fittingly enough, we'll be starting with UiPath itself.

UIPATH: PAVING THE WAY TO HYPERGROWTH

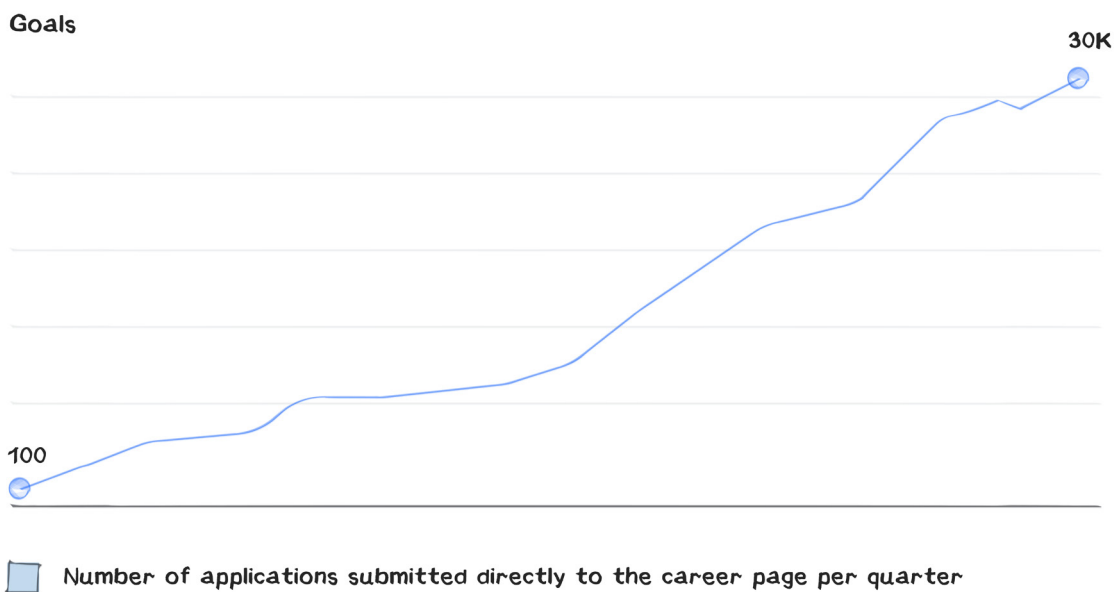
Like we said above, UiPath is a leading player in the world of RPA. They boast outfits like NASA, General Electric, Lufthansa, and many others as customers. Valued at over \$7Bn, series D, UiPath currently has a team of 2,700 people (2400+ full timers), a forty-fold increase from their group of just 50 employees back in 2015.



As recently as 2014, UiPath had less than \$1M in recurring revenue. In just 4 years, the company has grown its ARR to over \$200M, making it the fastest growing B2B software company in history.



This unprecedented level of growth came with certain challenges. Specifically, they needed to hire great people as quickly as possible, and they knew that old-school recruitment solutions like job boards and recruitment agencies weren't going to cut it.



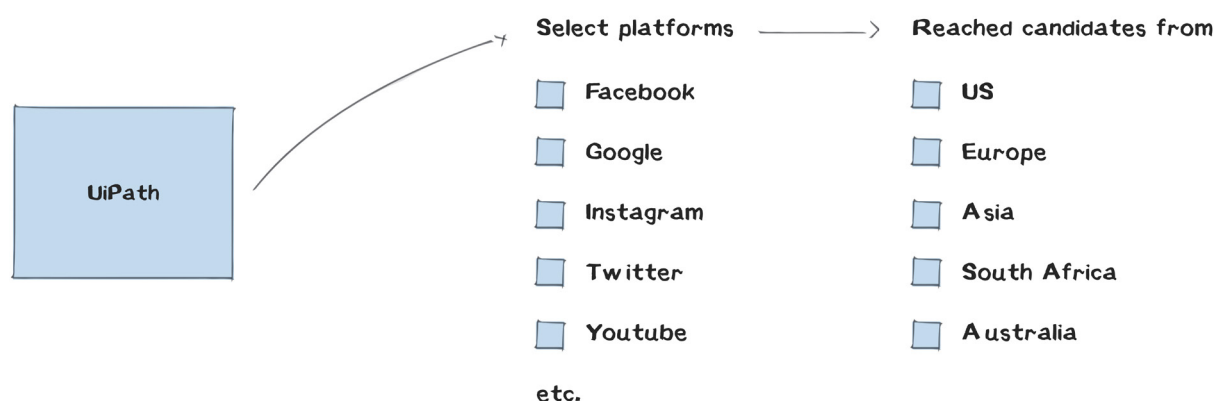
Their goal was to increase the number of applications submitted directly to their career page from 100 to more than 30K per quarter. How did they intend to accomplish this? By building up their employer brand gravity.

Employer brand gravity, for those that might not have encountered the term before, refers to a given company's ability to draw users into their applicant funnel.

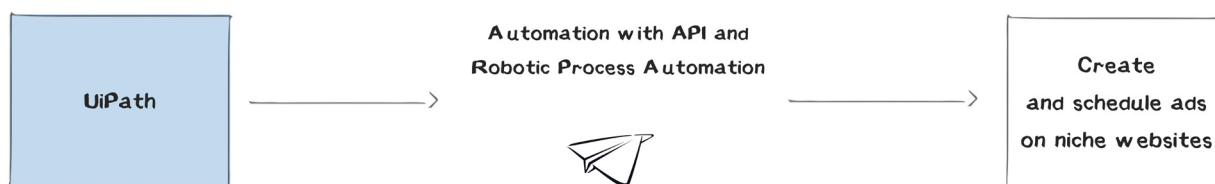
A business with a lot of employer brand gravity will get applications not just from ads posted across the web, but from candidates who have specifically sought them out online. This can be achieved through a combination of strategies, usually involving a mix of inbound (blog content or other organically-searchable employment-focused content) and outbound (social media advertising and other paid outreach across the web).

For UiPath, the plan was to build employer brand gravity by selecting a broad array of advertising channels aimed at different demographics.

With SmartDreamers Advertising, UiPath was able to reach candidates in the US, Europe, Asia, South Africa, and Australia on widely-used platforms from Facebook and Google to Instagram, Twitter, Youtube, WeChat, Line, and many others.



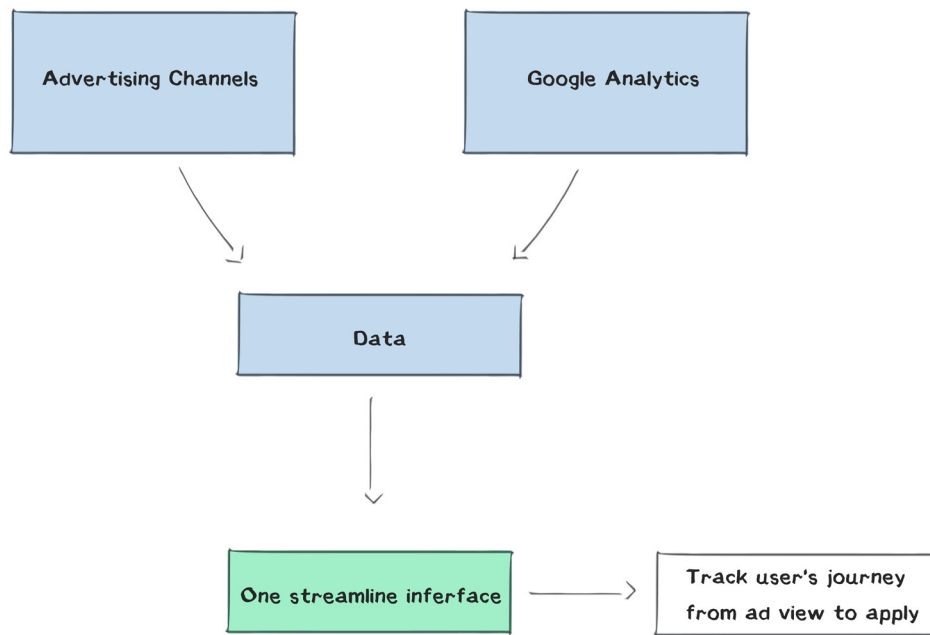
Some of these sites had functionality for scheduling posts in advance, but many didn't. In fact, many didn't have usable APIs at all, which meant that our platform had to bridge the gap between UiPath's recruitment advertising strategy and the technical challenges of carrying out that strategy efficiently. Ultimately, we were able to use RPA to empower UiPath to create and schedule ads on these niche platforms from the same centralized command center they used for larger sites like Facebook and Twitter.



This meant that, rather than finding a wide discrepancy in the ease with which they could post on their various channels, they were able to roll out a multi-channel strategy quickly and easily.

Not only that, but RPA helped empower analytics integration across even the least API-friendly channels, giving UiPath the ability to refine their strategy and approach as they went.

They were able to combine data from various advertising channels and Google Analytics information into one streamlined interface, and thus track each user's journey from ad view to apply.



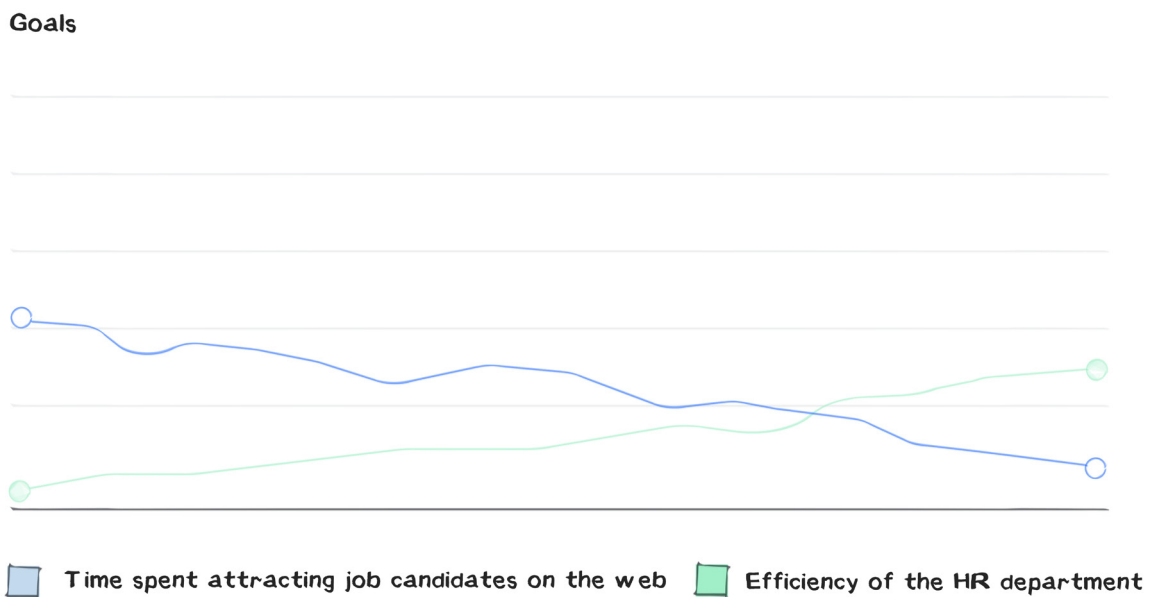
SmartDreamers also integrated with their ATS (Jobvite) to make sure that the entire recruitment software ecosystem worked smoothly. And the results speak for themselves: just 1 year after joining forces with us, UiPath is generating more than 50K applies per quarter, with their career page producing more new hires than any other source. This has helped them grow their team from 50 to more than 2,000 in the course of a few years.

With a steady stream of quality applicants coming right to their career page every month, UiPath is poised to continue sustainably along this trajectory. Without a recruitment marketing strategy that could streamline processes with RPA, there's a good chance their hiring operations would still be struggling to keep up with the company's astronomical growth rate.

GENPACT: HOW TO SAVE TIME AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE

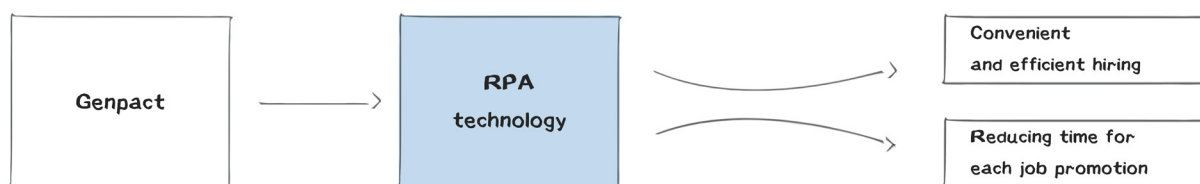
For the past 20 years, Genpact has managed to build a solid reputation as a leading provider of digital solutions for customers in a wide range of industries. The company now has nearly 80,000 employees on its payroll, and a recruitment process designed to attract the best candidates and strengthen their employer branding across the web.

Genpact turned to SmartDreamers looking for an innovative solution to make achieving the above-mentioned goals quicker and more convenient.



Specifically, their goal was to reduce the amount of time that recruiters spent attracting job candidates on the web, in order to bolster the overall efficiency of the HR department. After all, posting across a variety of different channels, setting ad budgets, tracking applications and click-rates, and performing other rote tasks associated with recruitment marketing can easily become problematically time consuming.

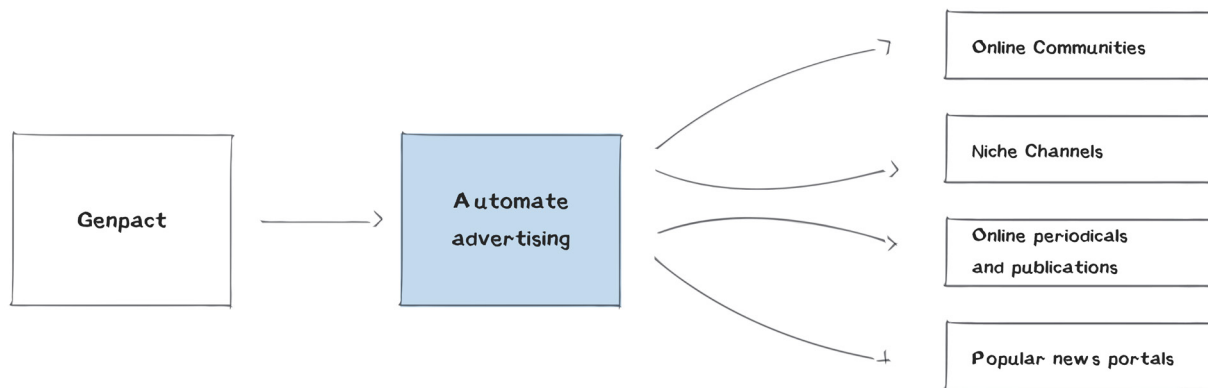
Thus, while Genpact would wind up implementing the same RPA-based technology that UiPath used, they would do so with a very different end-goal. Whereas UiPath was interested in scaling their talent acquisition to keep pace with their meteoric growth, Genpact, already a large, global company, was seeking to leverage RPA technology into more convenient and efficient hiring. Rather than focusing on the sheer number of qualified applicants, Genpact was also particularly interested in the time it took recruiters to promote each open position.



So, like UiPath, Genpact began rolling out recruitment advertising campaigns across more than a dozen online channels, including major social media sites like Facebook and YouTube. Here, the added ease and efficiency that's inherent to SmartDreamers' automation solution was again bolstered by RPA processes designed to connect them to platforms that wouldn't otherwise offer the level of ease and integration that's so crucial to efficiency.

Because of the nature of Genpact's corporate structure, they had the added challenge of effectively targeting a large proportion of bilingual and trilingual candidates.

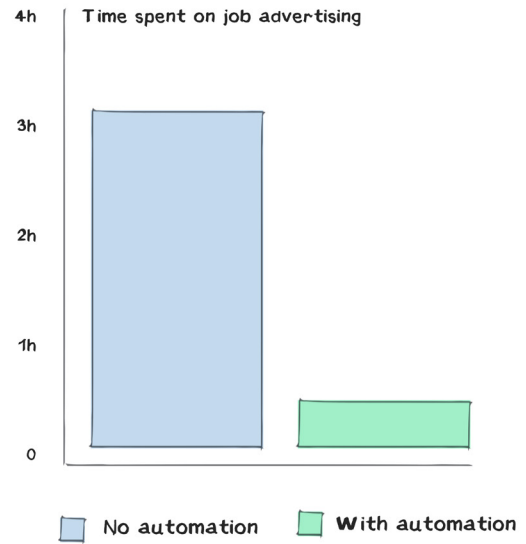
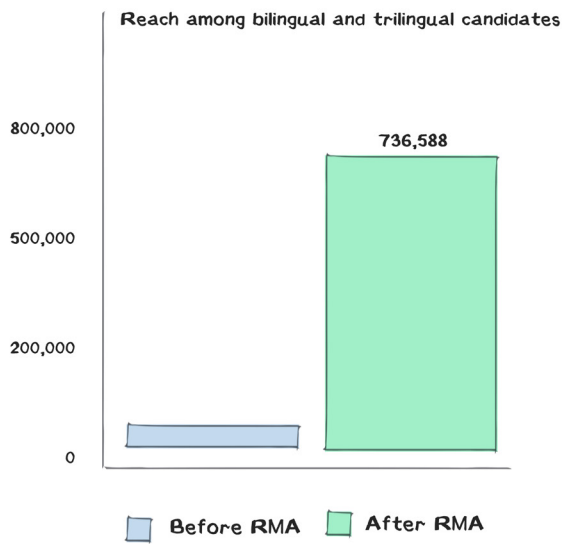
Ultimately, Genpact was able to automate advertising on a whole host of channels, including online communities, niche websites, online periodicals and other publications, and popular news portals.



Genpact’s recruiters were able to schedule campaigns across all of these various sites with just a few clicks and measure their success via easy-to-read visualizations and reports. They were able to reach a wider pool of applicants than ever before, all without increasing the effort required to implement their strategies.

As a result, the time spent by recruiters on rote, repetitive tasks dropped off considerably.

What do we mean by “considerably?”

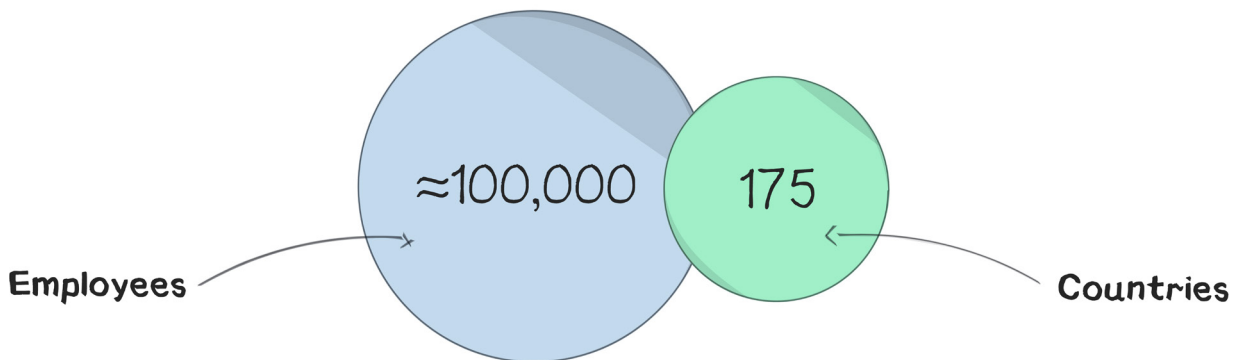


With the help of our RPA-powered software, Genpact achieved a 736,588 reach among bilingual and trilingual candidates and spent 80% less time promoting jobs across the web.

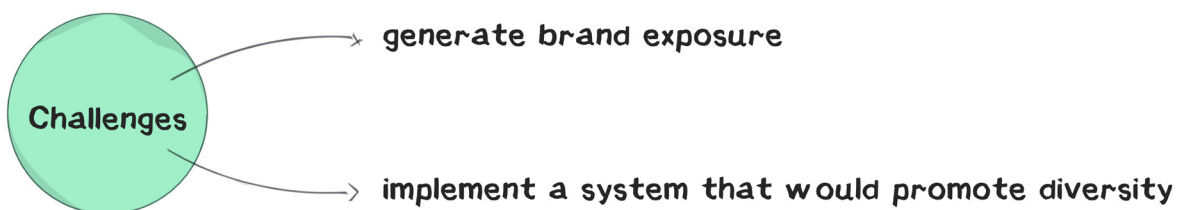
With all of that time that would have otherwise been spent laborious navigating the ads infrastructure of a host of far flung websites, Genpact’s HR team was suddenly in a position to spend their time on more impactful activities.

EATON: THE POWER OF AUTOMATION

The last of our case studies focuses on EATON, the internationally known power management company. EATON boasts almost 100,000 employees working in 175 countries. Considering the size of the brand and its operations, EATON was struggling to find enough competitive candidates despite recruiters' extensive efforts to reach them.



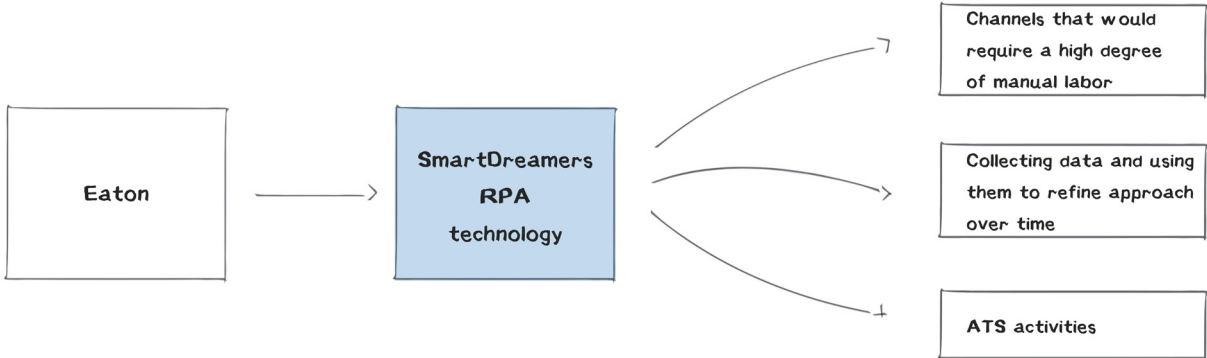
Thus, the first part of EATON's challenge was to generate brand exposure among highly-qualified candidates in order to meet their increasingly large number of vacancies. The second part of their challenge was to implement a system that would promote diversity in their hiring.



Of course, reaching diverse people is, in many ways, a matter of using diverse methods. This meant that it was crucial for the company to move off the beaten trail. Not only did they stand to benefit from turning their attention away from job boards and onto

web platforms that attract the attention of passive job seekers, they were also poised to take advantage of diversity within the online channels themselves. Moving beyond the job boards, they started in on an attraction campaign that targeted a whole host of different channels, aimed at making sure that they could reach candidates from all walks of life and diverse geographical regions.

As with our first two case studies, EATON’s efforts were greatly aided by RPA. They were able to connect to channels that would have otherwise required a high degree of manual labor to utilize, while collecting data from those same channels and using them to refine their approach over time.



Not only that, but SmartDreamers was able to use RPA to automate processes connecting their ATS to their larger recruitment marketing efforts. Now, instead of setting budgets and posting ads without being able to see updates to active job listings, recruiters were given full visibility into ATS activities. The result was a decreased risk of posting ads for jobs that had been closed, meaning that more money and time could be saved—all while keeping diversity and brand exposure front and center.

6. Conclusion: The Future of RPA in Talent Acquisition

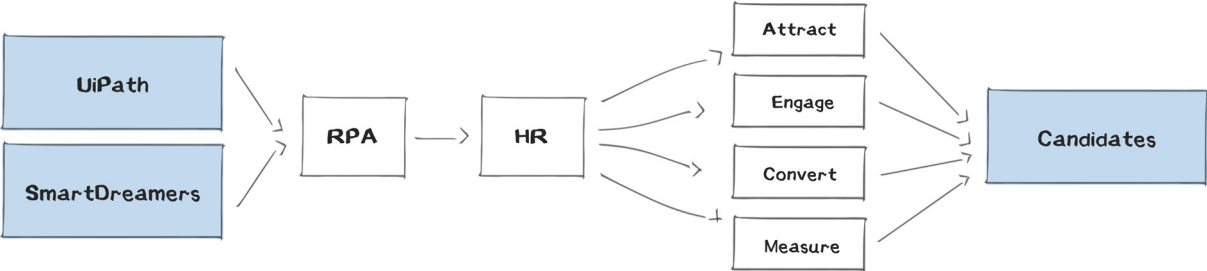
As recruitment marketing and talent acquisition continue to change and evolve, the technology that powers them will have to change just as quickly. Methods that once seemed cutting edge will become standard practice, and tools that were once ubiquitous will be replaced by technology that's more efficient and better suited to changing realities.

We believe that this increased rate of change can be a good thing. Not only that, but we think that new technology will, paradoxically, help to put the focus of the HR industry back on human activities: human activities like interacting face-to-face with job candidates and coming up with big, exciting ideas that can make a difference for your business or field.

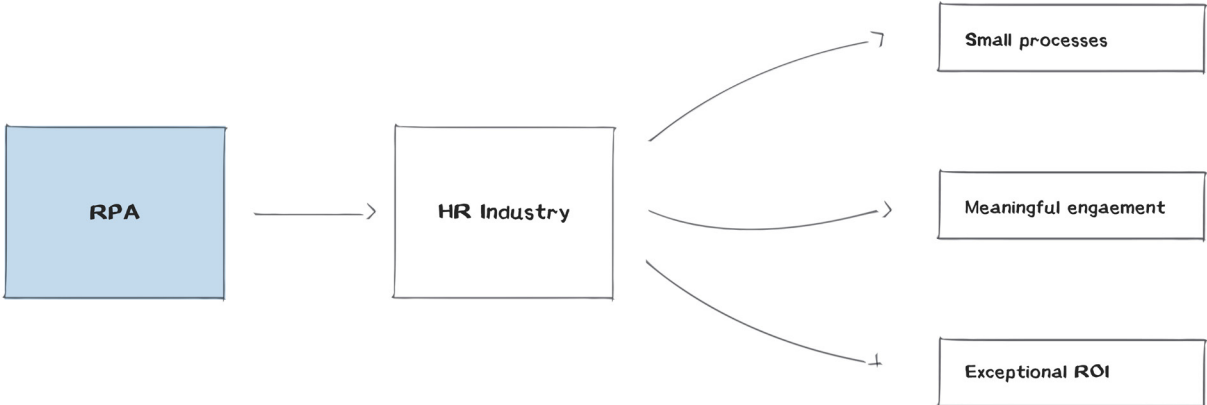
This isn't just talk. Together with UiPath, we've been able to turn RPA into a tool for taking recruiters' focus off of rote, repetitive tasks and putting it back on the human-focused activities that no robot can take on. As we hope we demonstrated with our case studies, this technology really does have the power to be transformative: Genpact reduced their time spent advertising jobs on the web by 80%. Imagine what the average HR department could do with that much recouped time.

Looking towards the future, we see big changes ahead for the HR industry. As tools like social media and Google Analytics become more important to HR's everyday job duties, the typical software

ecosystem will encompass more and more functionality, keeping recruiters and hiring managers connected and efficient. Right now, RPA is one of the best ways to make that connectivity possible. Like RMA more broadly, RPA helps recruiters to do their jobs better by making them more knowledgeable about the effects of their efforts and giving them more control over how those efforts take shape.



For these reasons, we see the role of this technology growing in importance in the years to come. In fact, UiPath and SmartDreamers are already hard at work finding new applications for RPA in the world of HR. As its use cases continue to expand, we’re confident that it will help even more recruiters to attract, engage, convert, and measure qualified job candidates.



Likewise, as RPA becomes more widespread, we’ll increasingly see the HR industry defined by smart processes, meaningful engagement, and exceptional ROI.

