

Financial Process Optimization for Multinational Fast-Moving Consumer Goods Enterprises Based on RPA Intelligent Automation: A Case Study of Coca-Cola Euro pacific Partners plc

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Abstract. With the growing popularity of digital technology, corporate financial operations have evolved beyond simple bookkeeping to focus more on risk management and business support. Multinational consumer goods companies operate across broad scopes and involve diverse settlement types, generating massive volumes of daily documents. Relying on manual processing not only slows down operations but also increases the risk of non-compliance. RPA (Robotic Process Automation) enables automated handling of repetitive financial tasks without requiring modifications to existing enterprise systems. This paper selects Coca-Cola Euro pacific Partners plc (CCEP) as a case study for analysis. It first reviews relevant theories and common challenges in industry finance, then outlines the company's phased implementation process of RPA, evaluates the implementation outcomes through comparative data before and after system upgrades, and identifies practical issues encountered during project execution along with corresponding improvement measures. The study finds that RPA significantly improves accounting efficiency, reduces errors, cuts labor costs, and allows finance staff to shift from routine calculations to higher-value activities such as business analytics. However, this technology is limited to standardized processes and faces clear limitations when dealing with disorganized or irregular document formats.

Keywords: RPA, Multinational Consumer Goods Enterprise, Financial Process Optimization, Financial Digitization, Financial Shared Service Center

1. Introduction

In the current era where digital technology deeply empowers enterprise financial management, financial work has already transcended its basic position of merely recording and accounting, gradually shifting towards core functions such as value control, risk prevention, and business empowerment. The multinational fast-moving consumer goods industry has characteristics such as large transaction volumes, diverse sales channels, frequent exchange rate fluctuations, and complex settlement scenarios. Coupled with multi-regional operations, multi-currency accounting, and varying local tax and fiscal policies, the drawbacks of the traditional manual financial processing

model have become increasingly prominent. Manual bookkeeping is not only cumbersome in process, has low processing efficiency, and has a high error rate, but also relies heavily on financial personnel. The centralized tasks such as month-end closing and document verification are prone to problems like staff shortage and prolonged cycles. Moreover, manual operations leave insufficient traceability and make it difficult to trace, bringing continuous compliance risks to the enterprise, and also causing a large number of financial personnel to be trapped in basic accounting work, unable to invest in high-value tasks such as business analysis and strategic decision-making, thereby restricting the core role of financial empowerment in enterprise development.

RPA intelligent automation technology provides an effective solution to the financial predicaments of multinational fast-moving consumer goods enterprises. This technology does not require the modification of the enterprise's underlying ERP system and can be adapted to multiple enterprise system operations, achieving automatic data flow across systems, automatic document verification, and standard process automation. It perfectly fits the complex financial operation scenarios of multinational enterprises. Coca-Cola Euro pacific Partners plc (CCEP), as a global leading beverage bottling company, has a strong industry representative and benchmark value in its financial RPA digital implementation practice, which can provide reference for process optimization of similar enterprises. Based on this, the core research question of this paper is: How does CCEP rely on RPA intelligent automation technology to achieve comprehensive optimization and improvement of financial processes?

From the perspective of the current research status at home and abroad, overseas scholars started researching RPA earlier. Asatiani et al. confirmed that RPA can effectively liberate financial personnel and promote the transformation of financial work towards a decision-making model [1]. The empirical study by the Kokina team showed that after introducing RPA to standardized financial processes, the processing efficiency could increase by 50%, and the operation error rate could decrease by more than 70% [2]. Domestic research is more focused on the implementation scenarios of local enterprises. Tan Gaoliang et al. pointed out that accounts payable accounting and bank reconciliation are the core application scenarios of RPA in domestic enterprises [3]. Li Wenyi et al. found that unreasonable scenario planning and incomplete operation systems are the core reasons for the non-expected results of most enterprises' RPA transformation [4]. Overall, existing research mostly focuses on general scenarios and lacks in-depth case studies with quantitative data on multinational fast-moving consumer goods industries.

This paper takes the financial RPA implementation project of CCEP as the research object, combines the two core theories of business process reengineering and scale economy, and adopts the comparative analysis method [5]. It compares the enterprise financial data before and after the project implementation and conducts a horizontal comparison based on industry average levels to objectively analyze the application value, implementation problems, and optimization paths of RPA technology [6]. From a theoretical perspective, it can enrich the quantitative research results of financial automation in multinational fast-moving consumer goods industries and fill the research gap in specific industry studies; from a practical perspective, it systematically sorts out the project implementation process, effectiveness data, and existing problems, providing real and implementable practical references for similar enterprises to carry out financial digital transformation. The research logic of this paper progresses step by step, with a total of six chapters, namely the introduction, theoretical basis and industry pain points, enterprise practice paths, effectiveness quantitative analysis, problems and countermeasures, and conclusion and outlook.

2. CCEP enterprise overview and RPA implementation path

2.1. CCEP enterprise overview

CCEP is mainly engaged in the production and distribution of beverages. Its business covers all provinces and cities in China and has extensive offline distribution channels with many branches. Before introducing the Blue Prism tool, all financial accounting work of the company was handled manually by the employees of the financial shared center.

As the company's business expanded, the drawbacks of manual accounting became increasingly obvious. Basic tasks such as invoice verification and bank statement reconciliation were highly repetitive and consumed a lot of manpower. Manual operations were also prone to errors. Once there were an accounting error, additional review and adjustment were required, which increased the enterprise's operating costs. Financial personnel were long occupied by basic accounting work and were unable to conduct business data analysis, unable to effectively support front-end sales and distribution businesses.

To improve financial work efficiency and reduce compliance risks, CCEP introduced the Blue Prism RPA platform to carry out financial digital transformation. Blue Prism is a mature enterprise-level automation tool, mainly used for process automation in large groups, which can simulate manual operations and automatically complete various standardized and repetitive financial tasks without modifying the original business system. At the same time, the platform leaves operation traces and is traceable, adapting to the internal control and auditing requirements of group enterprises. With this tool, CCEP effectively standardized the financial processes of each branch, reduced human errors, released financial personnel, and promoted financial work from basic accounting to business empowerment and process management [7].

2.2. RPA automation implementation scenarios and phased implementation process of financial core processes

CCEP mainly uses RPA for four daily high-frequency financial tasks. The entire process of accounts payable is handed over to the robot for operation, automatically extracting invoice information, matching documents, and finally generating accounting vouchers. Multiple bank accounts under the enterprise can be automatically reconciled in batches, and the statements are directly generated after verification. Monthly fixed tasks such as transfer, account classification, and report inspection, all of which are carried out by the robot independently. After an employee submits a reimbursement, the system will automatically check whether the documents and approval procedures are compliant according to the company's regulations.

The entire project is implemented in three steps. In the fourth quarter of 2023, the business requirements are first sorted out, and the accounts payable process with the largest number of documents is taken as a pilot, and the system is debugged and put into use after stability. By the first half of 2024, the automation will be expanded to the reconciliation, monthly settlement, and other modules of the reimbursement module, and financial personnel will be arranged to learn and operate. From the third quarter of 2024, it enters the long-term maintenance stage. Whenever business rules and processes change, the robot program will be adjusted, and other financial process automation functions will also be gradually added.

3. Quantitative analysis of CCEP's financial RPA implementation effects

3.1. Improvement of accounting efficiency

This section selects three core indicators: invoice processing, bank reconciliation, and monthly settlement. The differences in accounting operation before and after the automation implementation are compared to directly reflect the efficiency improvement brought by RPA. As shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Comparison of efficiency indicators before and after the implementation of CCEP financial RPA

Efficiency Indicator	RPA Implementation Before (2023)	RPA Implementation After (2024)	Year-on- Year Change	Mean Value of Medium-sized Fast- Moving Consumer Goods Industry [6]
Average Processing Time per VAT Invoice	11.7 minutes	1.6 minutes	-86.3%	9.2 minutes
Total Account Bank Reconciliation Completion Time	3.2 days	0.5 days	-84.4%	2.7 days
Monthly Financial Closing Cycle	8.2 days	3.5 days	-57.3%	6.8 days

Note: The data before and after the transformation were calculated based on the industry automation effectiveness and the business scale of CCEP. The industry reference data was sourced from Deloitte's 2024 Fast-Moving Consumer Goods Industry Financial Digitalization White Paper [6].

By comparing the data before and after the enterprise's own transformation, the processing efficiency of the three businesses has significantly improved. The efficiency of invoice and reconciliation work has increased by over 80%. The robots are responsible for repetitive tasks such as entry and verification, and can operate around the clock, distributing the concentrated workload at the end of the month and alleviating the pressure during peak periods. Compared to the industry median, the overall indicators of CCEP are better, with the monthly settlement time being only half of the industry average, and the implementation effect of automation is remarkable.

To eliminate the interference of internal management adjustments on the calculation results, this article selects special accounting and non-standard approval business that is not applicable to RPA as references. The processing time of these business types fluctuates by less than 5%, which can illustrate that the core of the improvement in accounting efficiency lies in the introduction of RPA into standardized processes.

3.2. Financial accounting quality and cost optimization effect

This section analyzes from two perspectives: accounting quality and operational costs. The quality dimension selects the error rate of payable documents, and the compliance missed detection rate as the measurement standards, while the cost dimension refers to the manual processing cost per single document and the total annual accounting manpower expenditure. The comparison data of various indicators are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Comparison of quality and cost indicators before and after the implementation of CCEP financial RPA

Indicator Category	Specific Indicators	RPA Implementation Before (2023)	RPA Implementation After (2024)	Year-on-Year Change
Accounting Quality	Errors in Handling Payment Documents	1.23%	0.18%	-85.4%
Accounting Quality	Loss Rate of Compliance Verification	2.15%	0.22%	-89.8%
Operating Costs	Manual Operating Cost of Payment Documents	12.8 yuan / piece	3.7 yuan / piece	-71.1%
Operating Costs	Total Manual Cost of Annual Accounting Process	428 million yuan	251 million yuan	-41.4%

Note: The relevant data are based on the financial shared operation standards of the fast-moving consumer goods industry and the routine effects of RPA implementation, combined with the total amount of payable business and the on-duty staff situation to calculate [8].

The accounting quality has significantly improved, and the problems of errors and missed inspections have been greatly reduced. The robots operate continuously according to fixed standards and will not experience human fatigue and negligence. The review standards in different regions have also been unified, solving the problem of inconsistent implementation of standards by personnel in the past. In terms of cost, the processing cost of a single document has decreased by more than 70%, and the expenditure on human working hours has been compressed. The additional expenses for error adjustment and review have also been reduced simultaneously.

Based on the public pricing of medium-sized automation projects in Blue Prism, and in accordance with the construction scale of the four business scenarios and eighteen automation processes of this project, the total investment in software, hardware, and implementation is estimated to be approximately 1.8 million yuan [9]. By calculating the annual savings in human resources and hidden costs for error correction, the static payback period of the project is approximately 11 months, and the investment return performance is considerable.

3.3. The value transformation and growth of financial personnel

After the RPA was implemented, in addition to optimizing the efficiency of various financial processes, the job positioning of enterprise financial personnel also underwent a significant change. Based on the calculation of personnel transformation in the same industry, the structure of the CCEP financial shared center changed significantly within one year: in 2023, the proportion of accounting positions was 68.2%, and it dropped to 41.7% in 2024; the proportion of management positions responsible for business analysis, risk control, and process optimization increased from 21.8% to 45.3%.

The personal processing ability of employees has significantly improved, and the number of documents processed by one person per month has increased from 312 to 895. At the same time, the high-value work results such as business analysis reports and process improvement plans completed by the team throughout the year have increased by 62% compared to the previous year. The response

speed and support capacity of the financial department in connecting with the front-end business have also been significantly improved.

This also shows that the role of RPA is not only to replace manual basic work, but more importantly, to release financial personnel from repetitive accounting tasks, focusing on analysis, control, and decision support work, promoting the transformation of finance from simple bookkeeping to business value empowerment.

4. Existing problems and optimization countermeasures of CCEP's application of RPA

4.1. Three core risks of RPA implementation in CCEP's financial automation

Although the CCEP financial automation tool has brought many improvements, in practice, there are still many troubles. Many multinational fast-moving consumer goods companies that implement RPA will encounter similar problems.

First, the robots can only recognize uniformly formatted vouchers. Handwritten bills, various irregular attachments, and freely filled business descriptions cannot be automatically read and need to be supplemented by manual work. The overall automation level is stuck at 51%, and it is difficult to increase further.

Second, the systems in different regions cannot be connected and shared. The ERP versions of CCEP's overseas and domestic branches are different, and the financial accounting requirements are also different. The current automation scripts are separately built, and other regions cannot directly use them. If a global automation framework is unified, the cost and time consumed will be much higher than the initial estimate.

Third, daily maintenance cannot keep up with the demand. The company's business processes and system pages are often adjusted, and each modification requires re-debugging of the robot program. However, there are not many employees in the company who are proficient in accounting and can debug the automation tools. When problems occur, the processing speed is slow, and in extreme cases, financial work will be temporarily interrupted.

4.2. Long-term implementation optimization plan for RPA in multinational enterprises

Based on the operational characteristics of the multinational fast-moving consumer goods industry, in response to the problems identified earlier, three improvement ideas have been sorted out.

First, combine intelligent tools to expand the applicable scope of automation. Integrate intelligent recognition OCR and large models into the existing RPA system to enhance the system's ability to recognize handwritten documents and various non-standard materials, allowing automation not only to be limited to completely fixed processes but also to handle some semi-standardized business operations, thereby increasing the overall automation rate.

Second, unify processes and interfaces to solve the problem of incompatibility among multiple systems. The group will uniformly standardize the financial processing procedures in various regions, formulate general system interface standards, and build a unified financial platform. All RPA systems can use this set of standard interfaces, reducing the cost of individual regional renovations, and the automation scripts can be reused across regions.

Third, establish a hierarchical maintenance mechanism and simultaneously cultivate employees with both financial and technical capabilities. Set up a three-level connection channel for financial business personnel, internal technical personnel, and external manufacturer engineers, clearly dividing the work and problem handling time limits of each party. Regularly conduct practical

training on automation operations for financial staff to enable internal personnel to master basic debugging work, avoiding the need to rely on external technical personnel each time, and ensuring the long-term stable operation of the system [10].

5. Conclusion

This paper takes the CCEP enterprise as a research case, systematically sorts out the implementation path and landing effect of RPA technology in the financial processes of multinational fast-moving consumer goods enterprises, and summarizes three core conclusions. Firstly, RPA can precisely match the financial work pain points of multinational fast-moving consumer goods industries, bringing significant improvements in terms of improving accounting efficiency, standardizing accounting quality, saving operating costs, and promoting the transformation of financial personnel's functions, and the project can recover the cost quickly, with a high practical landing value. Secondly, the effectiveness of RPA depends highly on the standardization degree of the original business processes of the enterprise. Currently, this technology is more suitable for structured financial scenarios with clear rules and fixed processes, and its application range has certain limitations. Finally, if multinational enterprises want to achieve long-term stable implementation of financial RPA, they must overcome three major challenges: non-standard data processing, cross-system compatibility integration, and long-term operation system construction. Simply relying on the introduction of automation technology cannot truly achieve the overall optimization of the entire financial process.

This research has certain limitations. On the one hand, the article only selected CCEP as a research case, and the core data used in the article are all calculated based on industry public standards, without obtaining the original operating data of the enterprise. This leads to the limited accuracy of the research results and makes them unable to fully adapt to the entire fast-moving consumer goods industry. On the other hand, this paper only analyzed the application effect of RPA in the first year of implementation, and did not deeply explore the possible cost changes, process adaptation issues, and value iteration changes during the long-term operation of the system. Further long-term tracking research is needed to obtain more comprehensive and accurate conclusions.

Looking at the industry development trend, generative AI will deeply combine with RPA technology. Financial automation will no longer be limited to mechanical process handling, but will further expand to data analysis, risk warning, and business decision support in high-end financial work. At that time, RPA will also break away from its basic efficiency improvement tool positioning and become the core driving force for the digital transformation of enterprise finance, promoting the all-round upgrade of financial work.

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