

## THE FINNISH POST REINVENTS ITSELF WITH NEW TECHNOLOGIES INCLUDING ROBOTIC PROCESS AUTOMATION AND GAMIFICATION

The Finnish Postal Service, known locally as the Posti Group, is one of the oldest companies in Finland. A few years ago, Posti realized the traditional postal and letter business was declining rapidly while parcel volumes were increasing. To remain competitive, Posti Group needed to fundamentally change the way it operated, replacing legacy systems and processes, moving to the cloud, incorporating artificial intelligence and machine learning. What ensued was a full-scale digital transformation across all facets of the business. This article will focus on two exciting initiatives, robotic process automation (RPA) and gamification.



Posti

### MOVING FASTER WITH INFOSYS

During my conversation with Turkka Kuusisto, CEO, Posti, I learnt that to fulfill the ambitious agenda which involved modernizing the front-end consumer-facing applications and replacing legacy systems and processes, the company sought out

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outside help. That began a search for a professional partner with the competencies and resources to accelerate the transformation and assure success. What followed was a vetting process to find a partner who truly understood what Posti was trying to achieve. In the end, the choice was Infosys, which had demonstrated the ability to be successful in delivering digital transformation via [Infosys Cobalt](#), a set of services, solutions and platforms for enterprises. Posti has three examples of projects that have delivered value already.

## INCREASING EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY BY AUTOMATING MANUAL TASKS

Posti had many legacy systems and processes that involved several manual steps. This scenario is ripe for the application of RPA. The goal is to automate tedious and repetitive tasks freeing up employees to be more creative and spend more time with customers.

Posti chose [UiPath](#) as the RPA platform that makes it easy to build, deploy, and manage software robots. Software robots can streamline repetitive tasks and emulate human actions in automating manual tasks. Posti also uses [Aito](#), which is an easy tool to implement machine learning into business processes.

Aito augments RPA without going through the data science pipeline (converting raw data into actionable answers).

The first example took place in the finance department with the automation of the purchase invoice handling process. Automation of thousands of new invoices every month involves several cognitive decisions such as assigning a reviewer, allocating a cost center, and correcting missing information, achieved by creating a software robot with UiPath and having it interact with Aito. The robot reads the data in each invoice and then asks Aito to predict the correct values.

The accuracy of the new automation was determined by operating in parallel with the manual process for one month. During the simulation, the automated predictions fulfilled the accuracy requirement of a 95% goal set initially, which led to production. In the first two months, RPA was used to process 7,000 invoices. The new automation has reduced the workload on the Accounts Payable team with time saved by the hundreds of users throughout the organization checking and approving invoices. The RPA team at

Posti can now replicate the technology for countless other business processes across HR, finance, sales support, and logistics.

## RETAINING HAPPIER EMPLOYEES WITH GAMIFICATION

Delivering the mail, particularly in a cold, harsh Finnish winter, is hard work. Posti has had a challenge in retaining delivery workers, and with churn comes the perpetual task of training new employees.

Posti leveraged Infosys Living Labs, the innovation-as-a-service offering from Infosys. Upon discovering that the [Infosys](#) has developed the [Infosys Enterprise Gamification Platform \(iEGP\)](#), Posti wanted to explore the viability of a gamified rewards program to enhance engagement and reduce the churn of the delivery workforce.

Gamification techniques tap into the human desire for competition, achievement, status, altruism, and community collaboration. A common practice of gamification is to increase engagement by rewarding users who accomplish desired tasks. Rewards might include badges or rewarding points to elevate status by showcasing the talents, expertise, and user accomplishments.

Competition is another technique used in gamification. The desire to appear on the leaderboard drives players to complete more tasks, fueling deeper engagement. (Think Peleton)

The solution is called Route Master, a mobile app that all delivery employees carry in the field when making deliveries. This app is the prime interface for connecting the workers with the new engagement model. Workers are rewarded for good work as well as keeping them informed of team activities. Employees get points for completing the route correctly and points for helping others, such as new employees. Happier employees stay with the company longer. Posti becomes a more attractive employer by rewarding good work and creating a culture of belonging. Posti now has over 1500 users on the system with plans to plan to scale further.

The third project of innovation is to look at the modernization and futureproofing of Posti's micro-sorting service centers. Infosys Listening Post-as-a-Service allowed Posti to look at the role of startups in helping Posti meet its objectives of fulfilling growing demands of business, optimization based on business needs, revamping existing sorting systems which are beyond their lifecycle and are difficult to maintain, and

reducing the vendor dependency for any changes / repairs. Together Posti and Infosys looked at almost 40 startups/companies from Infosys Innovation Network and finally shortlisted 9 companies and 4 startups. The assessment was based on factors such as price, implementation time, quality of service, technical qualifications and market position.

## WRAPPING UP

What a great comeback story this is! In the next decade, all companies will be tech companies in some way, shape, or form or not in business anymore. Technology is not a single department anymore; it is the company and the culture.

Posti's investment in RPA and machine learning is a competitive advantage because, in the future, the company with the best algorithms will win by understanding the customer better. RPA coupled with machine learning can automate time-consuming manual tasks that keep employees from face time with customers. The lesson here is to start small to convince the organization of the value of automation. To avoid common pitfalls and reduce the learning curve with RPA, reach out to other companies that have already implemented RPA.

When Posti working with Infosys, first introduced gamification, there was resistance until people started to see the benefits. Posti has used gamification to engage and retain employees, but it has a broader application. Gamification can be used to apply game design elements to any activity, application, or initiative. Digital transformation initiatives can use gamification techniques to inject fun and healthy competition to achieve user or stakeholder engagement, especially when there is resistance to change.

Lastly, Posti has been pragmatic in leveraging Infosys Innovation Network and collaborating with startups to ensure that Posti benefits from cutting edge, digital-native innovation. All companies now need to build their innovation ecosystem to augment internal skills. Posti has put themselves among the leaders in their sector by doing so early.

Posti, along with Infosys, is on a journey to modernize IT applications and infrastructure. As the transformation continues, the focus will be on improving the customer experience, expanding the parcel locker network, improve sorting efficiencies, digitizing the whole business, and growing the sorting and distribution capacity.

Posti saw the imperative to reinvent and transform from a traditional postal company into a next-generation and efficient 'delivery and fulfilment company. Posti is now an industry-leading logistics company with plans to *grow outside* Finland, *especially in* Sweden, Baltics

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