AUTOMATION DECONSTRUCTED

Strategic RPA Workshop

Automation - specifically robotic process automation (RPA) - once again featured prominently in this year's Annual Symposium. Unlike some events elsewhere, however, this year's inclusion was not simply so we could jump on the 'include-it-so-as-to-appear-relevant' bandwagon, rather it was at the behest of our members, many of whom claim to be both bemused and confused by the onslaught of accompanying hype since its arrival two years ago.

In order to provide as wide an optic as possible, this year we looked at RPA through a variety of lenses; from industry commentators, advisories and unions through to the service providers themselves and, ultimately, the end users. First up was an RPA masterclass of sorts, delivered by GSA Council Member, Technology Jedi and Strategic Adviser on RPA and Artificial Intelligence (AI), Andrew Burgess. Here, the delegates obtained clarity on what RPA is (and perhaps just as importantly, what it isn't) and how it is used. They also learned the practicalities of both building a business case and implementing an RPA programme, as well as obtaining some meaningful insights into AI and the scenarios where AI is currently deployed.

Professor Leslie Willcocks, from the London School of Economics, added a further dimension when he shared key outcomes from his latest research conducted into the successes and failures from RPA programmes. His second book on the subject, *Robotic Process Automation and Risk Mitigation: The Definitive Guide'* includes no less than 41 perceived risks, plus 30 'smart action principles' to help organisations achieve that elusive 'triple win' (Shareholder Value, Customer Value and