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Co-founder & CFO

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ANTWORKS

ENABLING INTELLIGENT, INTEGRATED, END-TO-END AUTOMATION

By Shaheen Saikia

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In the era of data deluge, as much as eighty percent of an organisation's data is unstructured, while a mere twenty percent is structured. This poses a major challenge for organisations that struggle to utilize data for automation of innumerable business processes, costing them time, capital and manpower.

"We have built a powerful platform to tackle one of the biggest challenges for enterprises – unstructured data – that's ANTStein." – Asheesh Mehra, Co-founder, and Chief Everything Officer, AntWorks

The root cause of this problem is the inability of robotic process automation (RPA) systems to ingest unstructured data, placing 80 percent of an organization's decision-making activities outside the purview of today's automation technology. Another key challenge with RPA, as it exists today, is that it is driven by dumb robots — there is no intelligence associated whatsoever! Driven by a stringent set of

rules, these robots are formulated to work on data that needs to be further packaged to function as inputs to rule-based processes. As a result, when processes are largely unstructured, RPA simply fails to perform.

"Today's RPA architecture in organizations is broken with multiple vendor products being stitched together - AntStien brings the 3 key pieces together for an Intelligent Integrated Automation Platform – Machine Vision + RPA + Intelligence" – Govind Sandhu, Co-founder, and Chief Financial Officer, AntWorks

Today, if an enterprise decides to go ahead with automation, it could choose amongst three options. In the first option, the organization might partner with a service provider to carry forward the process of data ingestion using optical character recognition technology. This could fall flat, as OCR is getting obsolete, due to a poor accuracy rate of about 50-60 percent. In the second option, the organization could collaborate with an RPA vendor to automate the entire process of data transportation. The third and final option entails partnering with a service provider who offers artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning capabilities to process and transform unstructured data.

"There are three choices in Data capture / automation: OCR, which is obsolete, RPA, which is mechanical, and ANTStein, which is intelligent, process- and industry-agnostic, and only gets better with time – powered as it is, by AI." – Asheesh Mehra.

Singapore-based, global technology and services company AntWorks, in its attempt to address data challenges

THE INCEPTION STORY

After working together in the technology consulting and outsourcing industry for more than two decades, long-time friends and colleagues – Asheesh Mehra and Govind Sandhu – decided to chase their own dreams. Equipped with enormous experience and industry expertise, the duo could clearly envision how technology within the services industry could make a phenomenal difference - with automation. And so began the story of AntWorks in 2015, with a focus on technologies, which would disrupt and transform existing business models.

Within a few short years, AntWorks, under the leadership of Asheesh Mehra as Chief Executive Officer and Govind Sandhu as Chief Financial Officer, has gained a strong reputation with a track record of successful implementations across the financial and healthcare sectors. The firm has expanded its footprint to three continents, across eight countries, and is about 200 people strong. With two development centres in Washington and Chennai, it currently serves a number of enterprises, including many Fortune 500 companies. The firm is also partnering with leading consulting firms to take its technology platform to customers all over the world.

What's more, the company has also garnered a number of accolades - Horses for Sources (HfS) has recognised the firm as 'The Most Innovative RPA Provider' for 2017 and International Data Corporation (IDC) has recognized the firm as the Digital Disruptive for 2017.

is redefining the current landscape of the automation industry. It is doing so with a unique platform called ANTStein — one of the first, intelligent, integrated, and end-to-end automation platforms.

ANTStein is built for multi-format data ingestion – structured, unstructured, and image-based data. Its uniqueness is that it adds intelligence to the automation process, by using AntWorks' hybrid machine learning algorithms, cognitive ability and pattern recognition techniques for "deep" and adaptive learning. Venkatanathan Dwarakanathan, CTO at AntWorks explains, "ANTStein is built on Fractal Science, and the very approach enables to re-

engineer itself while evaluating new data."

"Unstructured data by its very definition means there is no structure to it but if you observe it closely, it has patterns, and it resonates. To exploit this, we adopted Fractal Science – to build our base architecture and we were awestruck with the results, even with smaller datasets."
– *Venkatanathan Dwarakanathan, Chief Technology Officer, AntWorks*

Thus, in comparison with other current players in the RPA domain, AntWorks has integrated cognitive machine learning and autonomous automation into a single stack. What's

more, the service provider is also able to reduce the cost of integrating business rules engines (BREs), by using various deployment frameworks. As Govind Sandhu, co-founder and CFO puts it, "AntWorks helps enterprises to not just reduce costs and increase process accuracy, but also empowers them to shape business strategies with greater flexibility, driven by deeper insights from data."

ANTStein: new-age data extraction engine

As a state-of-the-art solution, ANTStein, is a content-based, object-retrieval framework with the capability to acquire and adapt to new information as part of its learning mechanism. This enables it to effectively handle business processes that require reasoning. With a cognitive machine reading based engine, ANTStein has the ability to independently re-engineer itself while evaluating new data. Its dynamic learning engine allows ANTStein to analyse and resolve problems simultaneously.

Consequently, it can singlehandedly complete laborious jobs of large teams, only faster and with better accuracy, empowering enterprises to provide better customer service. For instance, a request for change-of-address would take ANTStein only a minute to process, while a manned process would take hours (or could easily extend to days)!

In a traditional enterprise, such changes or rapid growth may mandate strengthening of the existing

workforce and setting up of large centres, all of which are rigorous and time-consuming. However, with ANTStein, businesses only need to add one more server, which can scale in a matter of days – driving robustness and flexibility, as the business grows. In addition, its data also empowers businesses with insights that shape current and future business strategies.

Ushering in a fresh, fearless and fast culture

As a part of the new digital ecosystem, the team at AntWorks acknowledge that they have to usher in a new culture if they wish to adapt to and make an impact in an aggressive environment; where cycle times are miniscule and the dynamics of client-vendor relationships have undergone a sea change. Govind Sandhu, Co-founder and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) at AntWorks, says "driven by this realization, the three key pillars on which AntWorks is built are - Fresh, Fearless and Fast. Staying true to these three pillars, we strive to bring in a new outlook in every engagement, with out-of-the-box ideas."

Adopting a fearless approach towards every solution, the firm seeks to experiment, breaking away from the tried-and-tested, towards Fresh innovation, and Fast execution and delivery – one of the most important determinants of an organisation's competency in the field. Another key

principle for the company is to be at 'Zero Distance' from its customers. Its objective is to partner with enterprises to really become a part of their customers' experience and journey – involving the client at every stage of the development process.

Setting benchmarks with third-generation solutions

AntWorks boasts of a clientele that includes leading players in technology, working with a leading firm's integrated platform to bridge the gap between the enterprise and its customers, in financial services, automating the entire tax filing process for one leader, and securing a five-year relationship with another, implementing ANTStein for machine reading, and many more.

"AntWorks has partnered with leading companies across various industries to enable them to make better decisions using insights gleaned from data."– Asheesh Mehra

Currently, the firm has directed all its efforts towards the release of the third-generation of ANTStein, the intelligent automation platform — heralding cognitive decision-making abilities. So, in sharp contrast to the present scenario where bots only transport data, AntWorks plans to set a benchmark for the industry with 'Ant Bots' – that not only analyses data, but also makes cognitive decisions for businesses. **CR**