

Client Success Story

ECI Defense Group

"We began working with [KnowledgeLake partner] InStream in May of 2018 to get a comprehensive solution to our storage/paperwork issues, and the first step was to begin building automatic searches for solicitations and awards. The goal was to have work already pre-processed and in a queue for entry when we arrived in the morning at 8:00 am. By the end of November, six more sites were added to the automated list, and no manual searches were done for government websites."

Jessica Boehme, Systems Engineer, ECI Defense Group

CUSTOMER:
ECI Defense Group

WEBSITE:
ecidg.com/

REGION:
Tennessee, United States

INDUSTRY:
Logistics & Supply Chain

CUSTOMER PROFILE:

As a privately held corporation, ECI Defense Group is registered with the U.S. Department of Defense and U.S. Small Business Administration. Headquarters operate from a 25,000 square foot office and 42-acre site near Nashville, Tennessee. The Group is a leading global provider of supplies and services to the U.S. Department of Defense and international aerospace markets. It also operates from a 40,000 square foot office building in the Atlanta, Georgia area where it was founded in 1963.

PARTNER:
InStream
instreamllc.com

InStream helps organizations improve efficiency through intelligent business processes and customized solutions. InStream provides solutions for workflow automation, technical and IT project management, process automation, outsourced transactional processing, cloud document management, and more.

ABOUT KNOWLEDGELAKE:

KnowledgeLake provides content management solutions that help busy organizations intelligently automate their most important document processes. Since 1999, we've created award-winning, Microsoft-centric solutions that have helped thousands of companies around the world focus on their mission rather than their mission-critical documents.

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As a leading global provider of supplies and services to the U.S. Department of Defense and international aerospace markets, ECI Defense Group delivers a broad range of commercial materials for facility maintenance and operational needs along with a wide variety of weapon system spares for aircraft, ships, tactical combat vehicles, missiles and submarines. Initially, they were looking for a solution that would help them digitally archive mass amounts of paper documents and folders—since they are required to keep records for 10 years.

After talking to InStream, ECI Defense Group realized that they may be able to help them finally achieve their long-standing goal of having “a fully digital work processing system,” says James Price, President of ECI. They began working with developers to deploy RPA that would help make their process as digital as possible.

BUSINESS NEEDS

When ECI Defense Group began working with InStream, their main goal was to go paperless. This began with having their processes evaluated and then finding a tool to manage their paper-driven workflow. Employees were “manually searching for government solicitations and awards from multiple government websites for each of our clients every morning to gather our work for the day. Each document had to be checked to see if we already had it in our system, and if it was new, then it was printed and handed to the relevant specialist to enter,” says Jessica Boehme, Systems Engineer at ECI Defense Group.



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This process was highly wasteful in terms of supplies, processing, and time—"on a busy day, we would spend up to 4 hours of our morning just pulling solicitations and awards, not even processing them," says Boehme.

They decided to use KnowledgeLake RPA to "begin building automatic searches for solicitations and awards" in order to make this process quicker and more efficient—by reducing turnaround time, they would be able to better serve their customers.

SOLUTION

ECI Defense Group's goal in implementing RPA was to "have work already pre-processed and in a queue for entry when [they] arrived in the morning at 8:00 am," says Boehme. In order to help employees ease into processing work digitally and build confidence in the new system, they chose to launch the solution in an iterative manner. ECI worked with InStream and KnowledgeLake engineers to outline the process and process requirements. Their first site went live in September 2018. By the end of November, six more sites were added to the automated list, and no more manual searches were done for government websites.

"When a new solicitation is found, the download is recorded in a history database for future searches to check against. The history database has added much more traceability because we know exactly when and from where each item was pulled. This has been extremely helpful when investigating any missed opportunities...."

"The RPA website makes troubleshooting easy. Every time a site is searched, the batch saves a log and a video file that can be replayed for several days after that batch has been completed. The websites we are using for searches are not under our control, so when they are updated, KnowledgeLake RPA identifies the differences and adjusts the automation,"
says Boehme

"In our solution, we have two bots that run on two virtual machines and one bot exclusively used for development and testing. We run each website multiple times per day, and anything that is downloaded is added to a history database. The downloaded documents are converted to a different format and stored so they can be accessed by anyone in operations if needed. When our specialists arrive in the morning, their work is already waiting on them. By making our process more efficient, we are not only adding capacity to our own team, but we can also better serve our clients by getting them RFQ's quicker and ultimately shortening the time to get the quote to the government,"
Boehme says.

BENEFITS

By using KnowledgeLake RPA to automate the process of searching for a large volume of solicitations and awards, ECI Defense Group was able to increase their workload capacity and quality of their work while also saving time. "The bots enable us to get a very big head start on that workload each day," says Price. This allows them not only to better serve their clients by getting them RFQs quicker, but also shortens the time it takes to get the quote to the government.