



Business challenge

As its global real estate holdings grew, Emaar Properties PJSC needed to make its back-office operations more efficient, reduce staffing costs and free up time for employees to work on more value-added activities.

Transformation

When Emaar, one of the world’s largest real estate companies, needed to make its back-office operations more efficient, IBM helped identify key processes that would benefit the most from automation. Emaar also deployed IBM® Robotic Process Automation tools to automate 86 percent of its daily volume of transactions while reducing staffing costs by 40 percent.

Results

86% process automation

for invoicing, reconciliation and other back-office business tasks

40% cost reduction

for full-time employees to manage routine office work

50% faster turnaround

of office processes, pre-automation vs. post-automation

Emaar Properties PJSC

How to achieve greater heights in business efficiency through automation

Based in the United Arab Emirates and listed on the Dubai Financial Market, [Emaar](#) is one of the world’s largest real estate development companies. With annual revenues of over USD 7 billion, the company operates in 36 markets across the Middle East, North Africa, Pan-Asia and North America and is involved in property investment, development, shopping malls, retail centers, hotels, resorts and property management services. Founded in 1997, Emaar Properties is on the Forbes 2019 list of the World’s Best Regarded Companies—the only real estate company to be on the list.

“IBM as a partner is quite collaborative. They understand the top priorities for us as a technology organization as well as a business organization.”

—Binoos Joseph, CIO, Emaar Properties PJSC

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Lofty ambitions for real estate leadership

With its silvery spire piercing the clouds over half a mile above Dubai, the Burj Khalifa has stood as the tallest building in the world for almost a decade. But just a few miles up the coast of the Arabian Gulf, a new tower is under construction. When it tops out in 2020, the Dubai Creek Tower—at nearly four-fifths of a mile in elevation—will be the world’s tallest free-standing structure.

These iconic skyscrapers represent the crown jewels of Emaar, a rapidly growing, Dubai-based real estate property development and management firm. Controlling one of the largest real estate portfolios in the world, Emaar owns or manages over 1.6 billion square feet of prime commercial, residential, retail and hospitality space in Asia, Africa, Europe and North America.

To collect and manage revenue from its extensive real estate holdings, Emaar expanded its back-office operations. However, manually intensive processes, such as invoicing, contract management and bank reconciliation, were prone to higher error rates due to human interactions. During peak volume

periods, office workers also had difficulty managing workloads and turning work around on a timely basis.

From a strategic perspective, Emaar management saw that too many employees were tied to repetitive, manually intensive tasks, making less time available for value-added work activities related to customer service or planning for the future.

“There were a lot of inefficiencies accumulated over years of fast-paced growth,” says Binoo Joseph, Chief Information Officer (CIO) of Emaar. “A lot of the processes were a bit siloed and a bit dated. Before we could automate processes to actually bring in benefits, we had to attack the area of process re-engineering. And that’s where IBM came in.”

Elevating employee engagement

As the owner of Dubai Mall, the world’s largest retail destination with over 1,300 stores and 200 restaurants, Emaar was looking for every opportunity to streamline mall management. That’s why the company selected its Malls division for initial deployment of the Robotic Process Automation solution.

Working with Emaar’s IT department, IBM focused on transaction processes where more value could be added through automation, such

as invoicing, receipt management and reconciliation. IBM also studied processes to see how they could flow together for greater optimization. The next step was to develop a business case and deployment plan to guide the Robotic Process Automation implementation over a six-month period.

Emaar management recognized that in addition to technical engineering, “human engineering” would be required to bring employees on board with automating tasks that had been done manually. “At first, there was a little bit of resistance out there,” says Joseph. “The resistance was overcome when we demonstrated the benefits to the business users—how they could translate late nights into better workdays.”

Securing employee cooperation during the transformation was also essential when it came to training “bots” to do the work and dealing with issues caused by non-compliance with data management processes. “IBM expedited solving these issues and provided insights on how others had addressed them successfully,” says Joseph. “They helped convince our people and show them how it could be done better.”

Higher levels of performance

After identifying and automating five back-office processes for its Malls division, Emaar realized significant performance improvements in three key areas, including:

- 86 percent automation of the total daily volume of processes
- 40 percent reduction in staffing costs
- 50 percent reduction in process turnaround time

In addition to delivering performance improvements, Emaar saw system-wide advantages to running the Robotic Process Automation solution. “At the core, Emaar and IBM did something that ensures a cleaner process flow across the teams,” says Joseph. “We are redefining and improving the functionality of the system while doing the automation layer on top. This allows the business users to reap the most benefit out of what tech has to offer.”

Based on its first successful implementation of the Robotic Process Automation solution, Emaar management is considering the solution for other parts of its global enterprise. “Process automation is something we are quite bullish about,” says Joseph. “If we can make our processes more efficient, automate them and add intelligence, it brings in tons of benefits and scalability for the future.”

Solution component

- IBM® Robotic Process Automation

Take the next step

To learn more about the IBM solution featured in this story, please contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner.

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