



HFS Hot Vendor: Krista

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Introduction

The HFS Hot Vendors are an exclusive group of emerging players, each with a differentiated value proposition for the HFS OneOffice or HFS OneEcosystem. HFS analysts speak with numerous exciting startups and emerging players.

We designate a select group as HFS Hot Vendors based on their offerings' distinctiveness, ecosystem robustness, client impact, financial position, and the impact in our OneOffice and/or OneEcosystem Frameworks. The HFS Hot Vendors may not (at the time of writing) have the scale and size to be featured in our Top 10 reports, but they have the vision and strategy to impact and disrupt the market.

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Cutting through the noise around intelligent automation remains challenging. With capabilities around process intelligence being the flavor of the month, talking to a provider that aims to reimagine intelligent automation through natural language understanding (NLU) and low-code capabilities makes for a refreshing change.

Krista Software makes NLU the interface through which a user can set up, automate, and execute business processes. It's a little like asking Siri or Alexa for help in solving specific process challenges.

Dallas, Texas-headquartered Krista wants to reshape the automation debate. It blends NLU with low-code software and machine learning development as differentiators in its approach to automating complex processes.

The result, claims Krista, is a modern intelligent automation platform designed to leverage existing IT assets and SaaS apps in automated business workflows. As its CEO put it, Krista is an elegant iPaaS (integration platform-as-a-service) platform leveraging NLU as its interface. In his view, it makes designing a process like describing a conversation between your people and your apps. This makes for a very differentiated approach to RPA, especially in the context of frequent changes in user interface (UI) elements, which can make scaling RPA deployments difficult. In this, Krista is encroaching on the territory of IPsoft with its Amelia and 1Desk platforms. The difference is that Krista translates what humans want to say to a system rather than integrating it with what an API provides. Its use of voice and NLU makes for a more intuitive way of solving process problems without the need for coding or integration expertise.

In process automation, Krista's sweet spot is where multiple people and system capabilities must be orchestrated to perform a valuable business outcome, especially where changes to

the process are frequent and machine learning could be applied to optimize the process.

For a specific job function, Krista's goal is to become a zero-training, familiar interface to the many systems typically required for that job, driving down complexity and training needs, increasing utilization of IT systems, enabling IT agility, and increasing compliance. Executives at Krista describe this solution as becoming "the final assembly step" for integrating IT capabilities.

Crucially it is not just providing information on process issues; it is used to expedite issues such as sales or shipping orders and similar tasks. As such, Krista is complementary to approaches such as BPM and RPA, integrating with existing assets.

What sets Krista's vision apart from many other automation vendors is its broad understanding of where automation can be applied. It is pushing into scenarios such as cybersecurity, DevOps, and DevSecOps. Thus, it can help clients operationalize the OneOffice as they progress toward cloud-native applications and processes. With that, bringing IT and business operations together is a matter of necessity. If processes are containerized, then operations must understand and manage the interdependencies of IT and business processes.

Clients experience the value proposition in different ways. Mid-market organizations view Krista as a platform enabling a broad set of automation without the need to hire and train specialist staff. Large and mature clients use Krista to complement RPA by integrating natively into cloud applications and supporting event-driven architectures. Thus, Krista is helping to progress its journey toward cloud-native while providing compatibility with the legacy world.

HFS' take

HFS has designated Krista as an HFS OneOffice™ Hot Vendor because it offers a highly differentiated voice in a noisy automation market. It is not just following the RPA or conversational AI gravy trains; instead, it is putting forward an innovative approach to machine learning that allows clients to use their data models and helps integrate them into production. Intuitive NLU and low-code applications reduce the need for coding and specialist knowledge. The ambition is to make

automation a conversation between people and systems, for instance, personifying the back-end system. Krista is not lacking ambition.

Krista must now demonstrate its platform's outcomes and effectiveness to the broader market. Partners will play a critical role in that regard as they will provide reach and mitigate perceptions of risk. Deeper investments in sales and marketing are the next logical step.

Vendor factsheet

- **Founded:** 2016
- **Key executives:** John Michelsen, Cofounder and CEO; Madhav Sonthalia, Chief Products Officer; Satendar Bhatia, Chief Revenue Officer; Luther Birdzell, Chief Data Scientist
- **Headquarters:** Dallas, Texas, USA
- **Funding source:** Private funding pre-IPO
- **Number of clients:** 100+ globally

Solution portfolio

- Krista Client is the conversational interface where people interact with Krista. Krista can integrate with Slack, Teams, SMS, WhatsApp, and other communication platforms.
- Krista Studio is used by businesspeople to author and change workflows, even when building machine learning. IT administrators configure access to apps with role-based controls.

- Krista Workspace is the cloud-based environment where people, apps, and AI collaborate to achieve optimized business process outcomes.
- Krista Access Point solves security and network connectivity challenges when connecting the cloud to on-prem solutions.
- Krista Extension Kit is how IT connects Krista to apps not in the catalog. This one-time coding effort empowers non-technical people to leverage an app's capabilities with natural language.

Domain coverage

- Sales operations; banking, finance, and insurance; contact center; supply chain; cyber and IT security; DevOps; enterprise app building

Partnerships

- TCS, Cognizant, Tech Mahindra, Vonage, Coforge



About HFS

Insight. Inspiration. Impact.

HFS is a unique analyst organization that combines deep visionary expertise with rapid demand side analysis of the Global 2000. Its outlook for the future is admired across the global technology and business operations industries.

Its analysts are respected for their no-nonsense insights based on demand side data and engagements with industry practitioners.

HFS Research introduced the world to terms such as “RPA” (Robotic Process Automation) in 2012 and more recently, the HFS OneOffice™. The HFS mission is to provide visionary insight into the major innovations impacting business operations such as Automation, Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain, Internet of Things, Digital Business Models and Smart Analytics.

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