



# HFS Hot Vendor: Robocorp

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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.

## Q1 2021

Author: Elena Christopher

Founded in 2019, Robocorp is a US-based start-up with strong Finnish roots offering open-source automation that is Python-based and cloud-native. It is designed for developers and will never claim to be “low-code no-code,” despite referring to itself as “open-source RPA (robotic process automation).” Don’t get distracted by the buzzword bingo terminology; Robocorp’s mission is to help the world leverage the vast potential of automation by providing low-friction access to technology that emphasizes scalability and extensibility.

Robocorp’s software engineer founders keenly watched the rise of RPA, taking note of certain emerging realities like bot brittleness, scale challenges, contribution to shadow IT, and the continued need for specialists for complex automation despite the studio-based no-code development approach. Rather than attempting to compete with the venture capital dollars and marketing might of leading RPA firms, Robocorp decided to try a bottom-up approach targeting the vast Python open-source developer community. The firm used Python and the robot framework (originally build for test automation) as its open-source core for the development of an automation stack, complemented by automation libraries, developer tools, a cloud-based orchestrator, support, and secure, serverless hosting in the cloud, all continually iterated and enhanced with the hive-mind collaboration of the open-source community.

The company is monetizing its offering with [different access tiers](#) ranging from free with four “robot work hours” to starter, basic, pro, and enterprise tiers that offer escalating levels of capabilities for a monthly fee (\$49 for starter, \$299 for basic, \$800+ for pro, and custom for enterprise). The move from free to fee kicks in when orchestration (triggered scheduling) is needed. Robot runtime is consumed when running robots in processes with cloud containers or linked environments. This is a consumption-based model with no licensing fees.

The company directly targets developers, and through its growing partner channel, it is making a play for the underserved middle market. Service partners such as Thoughtful Automation are using the Robocorp stack as their automation core and building a focused managed service offering around it. The lack of licensing fees makes this model possible.

In reference checks with Robocorp clients and partners, HFS substantiated its “low-friction” claims with customers indicating that they can be up and running swiftly, learning and experimenting for free, which has been particularly impactful for prototyping needs. They also laud the sheer affordability and appreciate the community and Robocorp-provided support and continuous releases and upgrades.

The company received its latest funding (a \$5.5 million seed round) in May 2020. It continues to focus on building its client base in the US and expanding its

partnership network. Some exciting new opportunities with US federal government clients may speed its entry into the enterprise market.

## HFS' take

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HFS has designated Robocorp as a OneOffice Hot Vendor because of its commitment to bringing automation to the world in a scalable and extensible fashion. It may call itself RPA, surfing whatever buzz it can, but it is actually a Python-based automation tool that is cloud-native and API-led, using UI-based (user interface-based) automation only as a last resort. Its developer-focus and consumption-based pricing model further challenges established RPA norms.

HFS views the potential of Robocorp as less about a developer-led revolution (although a few more fans of process automation in IT could not hurt) and much more about automation-as-a- service. While we're big advocates of

driving digital fluency and problem solving into every worker in our burgeoning work-from-anywhere economy, citizen development has not taken off. We continue to observe that companies want the benefits of automation without the implementation and management pain—or the cost!

To support this, Robocorp should continue to build its service provider partnerships as they are a critical channel to market. The as-a-service model will resonate particularly well in the underserved middle market who want the benefits of automation just as much as global enterprises but only want to pay for automation delivered, not bots in seats.

## Vendor factsheet

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- Robocorp was founded in the US in 2019 with locations in Helsinki and San Francisco
- Its leadership team comprises a gang of software engineers and tech entrepreneurs including Antti Karjalainen (CEO), Teppo Koskinen (CTO), Jouko Ahvenainen (COO), and Sampo Ahokas (VP of Engineering)
- Robocorp has received approximately \$12 million of funding to date. Its seed investment of \$5.6 million in November 2019 was led by famed open-source investor Benchmark Capital, with Peter Fenton joining its board. Other investors include Slow Ventures, firstminute capital, Harpoon Ventures, and executives from Salesforce and Docker
- Robocorp currently has 35 partners (and adding one per week) who have in turn deployed Robocorp as part of their solutions. Its open-source platform is used by thousands of developers

## Solution portfolio

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The Robocorp solution portfolio includes

- An open-source development environment (Robocorp Lab) and VS Code extension, both designed for creating software automation
- Comprehensive and ongoing developer documentation (Robocorp Docs)
- Robocorp Cloud, a multi-tenant cloud
- Robocorp Cloud Enterprise, a private cloud and self-hosted robot orchestration
- “Self-service” pricing available transparently online, offering a consumption-based model with various available options

## Partnerships

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Robocorp has 35 partners, ranging from nimble entrepreneurs to large multi-national established practices, including Thoughtful Automation, Teknei, and NyxTech.



# 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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