

Siemens AG

Siemens implemented Perceptive Intelligent Capture from Lexmark to increase automation of its high-volume accounts payable operations.

Challenge

Starting in 2013, Siemens embarked on a project to automate its global routine for accounts payable, as a means of ensuring long-term efficiency and control. Following the implementation of the company's global finance bundling efficiency initiative, which involved a consolidation of their financial services organization, Intelligent Capture allowed Siemens to further automate and harmonize their processes.

"As our Chief Financial Officer often says, nine out of ten for quality is not a pass mark in our industry," said David Mottram, Head of Change Projects for Siemens Global Shared Services. "So what we wanted to do was take the best processes and the best automation projects that we could find, and build them into our transaction centers to ensure the quality is at the highest possible level."

At a basic level, Siemens recognized the value of removing human error from their routine, replacing slow, manual work with a streamlined and reliable process.

"We had a very manual process with lots of human interaction at very different stages," said Mottram. "We wanted to reduce that as much as possible and have a continuous process workflow, particularly with purchase order pairings and entry into our SAP systems."

We had some Optical Character Recognition technology already in place to extract the data from the invoice, but we still had the step of manual checking and making sure everything was correct," added Simeon Weibler, Senior Project Manager. "We looked into several new technologies, including one from a vendor we'd had in place already, but they didn't go far enough for us."

Solution

Based on a proof-of-concept demonstration that resulted in 100% vendor determination and more than 50% straight-through processing of the company's actual invoices sight unseen, Siemens selected Perceptive Intelligent Capture from Lexmark for automation of their global accounts payable process. "Perceptive Intelligent Capture was the missing link we needed, as the technology was really able to read documents the way a human being would," said Karin Springer, Process Manager for Incoming Invoices.

Meet Siemens AG

Siemens is a global powerhouse in electronics and electrical engineering, operating in the fields of industry, energy and healthcare as well as providing infrastructure solutions, primarily for cities and metropolitan areas. For over 165 years, the organization has stood for technological excellence, innovation, quality, reliability and internationality.

- ▶ Location: Worldwide
- ▶ Founded: 1847
- ▶ Employees: 343,000

Products in use: Perceptive Intelligent Capture

"With Perceptive Intelligent Capture in place, we're handling automation for up to 50 fields on an invoice, finding every field and validating every field on the document."

Simeon Weibler

Senior Project Manager
Siemens Global Shared Services

Results

Keeping project promises

Leveraging considerable experience with implementing the technology for Global 2000 enterprises, Lexmark consulted with key financial and IT personnel to configure a solution that would augment the company's complex document processing demands and provide a return on investment quickly, causing minimal disruption to financial routines and allowing for long-term scalability in terms of document volumes, languages, currencies and regional demands for compliance and reporting.

"One of the most pleasing aspects of working with Lexmark is their dedication to the customer," said Mottram. "They have been there for us every step of the way. They promised that they would implement this project within a certain time frame, and they've done it on time and on budget."

Seamless SAP integration

Within nine weeks of project kick-off, Intelligent Capture became operational within the company's SAP system, providing hands-free invoice classification, header and line-item field data extraction, line pairing and routing for approval.

This significant reduction in manual data entry is enabling greater visibility into the accounts payable process, boosting productivity, and freeing up personnel for value-added activities within the Siemens shared services operation, which employs more than 6,000 people. Siemens has reported an immediate boost in productivity for affected routines, with users pursuing even greater levels of automation through process refinement.

Improving invoice processing

"Before this project, we were just extracting some data from some fields on the invoice, and I'm very excited to see what software can do nowadays," said Weibler. "With Perceptive Intelligent Capture in place, we're handling automation for up to 50 fields on an invoice, finding every field and validating every field on the document. The solution makes sure things are in place, whereas only people could get them in place previously."

According to Mottram, "the vendor determination is important for Siemens. We have ninety different company codes, and when we receive these invoices you want to know, at a very early stage, how to sort them and send them to the right areas of the company. With Perceptive Intelligent Capture, we've established a very good process for both vendor determination and line pairing."

With the capture solution, Siemens is now able to receive PDF documents directly from vendors via email to be processed automatically by the system. Furthermore, Siemens has set up an "urgent" payment process for high-priority vendor invoices, allowing these invoices to be flagged and processed within minutes of receipt.



This implementation reflects an expansion of Lexmark International's long-standing relationship with Siemens, which long involved the integration of Lexmark output devices and supplies, customized and packaged with Siemens healthcare diagnostic equipment in the U.S. and Belgium. The combined offering is sold to customers in more than 130 countries through specialized resellers around the world.

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