

Case Study: Manufacturing

Global Manufacturer Streamlines Accounts Payable with RPA

Cognizant implements robotic process automation (RPA) to improve the speed, accuracy and compliance of a manufacturer's supplier payment process.

A large multinational manufacturing conglomerate turned to Cognizant for help in processing about 80,000 supplier invoices a year. The client wanted to ensure accurate, timely payments to support its financial management and compliance efforts as well as maintain great supplier relationships. Manual tasks and data entry involving multiple application screens and easily missed details were just a few obstacles in the way of reaching those goals.

The Challenge

Each time the client received an invoice for payment, an analyst had to process it by validating invoice details against data in the client's SAP application. The first step was to download a copy of the invoice from a web application and save it in a shared path. Then the analyst extracted information from eight different fields across three different applications: supplier number and name, invoice number, currency, tax amount, net amount, purchase order number and invoice date.

At a glance

A large multinational manufacturing conglomerate relies on Cognizant's robotic process automation (RPA) solution to fully automate a critical accounts payable invoice preparation process. Running seven hours per day, seven days a week, the bot automatically:

- Downloads invoices and captures data from eight different fields in three applications
- Validates and uploads invoice
- Onboards suppliers as necessary
- Creates exceptions for human intervention if PO numbers are missing or an invoice is not in a standard format
- Sends detailed daily invoice status report

Outcomes

The bot processes transactions with 100% accuracy and 100% compliance, and we are able to reduce the average handling time per invoice by 50%.

Next, the analyst logged into the SAP application to validate the supplier number and name. If the supplier didn't exist in the application, the analyst had to manually onboard the supplier. Finally, the analyst uploaded the validated invoice, generated a unique identification number for it and routed it for approval.

The Approach

We put a bot on the invoice processing line.

We designed an RPA solution that automates the entire invoice validation process, from downloading an invoice copy to capturing, validating and updating invoice details in the client's web application and generating a unique identification number to ensure timely payment processing.

If a supplier does not exist in the client's web application, a bot onboards the supplier before uploading the invoice. The bot also generates exceptions for human intervention if the purchase order number is missing in the SAP application or if the invoice is not standard. The bot also sends a detailed report of processed and unprocessed invoices via email at the end of each day.

Business Outcomes

The bot runs seven hours a day, seven days per week with 100% accuracy and compliance. Average handling time per invoice has been reduced 50%. Further, our bot incorporates reusable features, enabling the client to expand automation easily to other similar processes.

About Cognizant

Cognizant (Nasdaq-100: CTSH) is one of the world's leading professional services companies, transforming clients' business, operating and technology models for the digital era. Our unique industry-based, consultative approach helps clients envision, build and run more innovative and efficient businesses. Headquartered in the U.S., Cognizant is ranked 194 on the Fortune 500 and is consistently listed among the most admired companies in the world. Learn how Cognizant helps clients lead with digital at www.cognizant.com or follow us [@Cognizant](https://twitter.com/Cognizant).

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