



Automated Invoice Processing from ABBYY Drives Higher Efficiency for Energy Distributor

Customer Overview



Name

PAPCO

Location

Virginia Beach, Virginia, USA

Industry

Oil and Gas

Web

www.papco.com

Challenge

Decrease the time, expense and effort required by PAPCO to process invoices by replacing tedious manual processes with automated capture and entry of data into its complex accounting system.

Results

ABBYY FlexiCapture for Invoices automated the capture and entry of invoice data. This reduced invoice-processing times by six man-hours a day, yielding annual savings of \$30,000 — while also streamlining approval and storage processes.

www.ABBYY.com

As a leading energy solutions supplier in the Eastern United States, PAPCO receives over 600,000 invoices a year from over 1,000 vendors. Entry of their information into the company's accounting system required tedious, expensive and time-consuming manual processes — tasks that are now completed accurately and automatically with ABBYY FlexiCapture® for Invoices.

“Everyone liked the FlexiCapture solution. It saved the end authorizers a lot of time – and their time is very valuable.”

Trudy Collins, Credit, Billing & AP Manager, PAPCO

Driving value and innovation in energy distribution since 1976

Backed by a fully integrated network of refiners, pipelines, terminals and transportation providers, PAPCO is a leading energy solutions provider in the Eastern United States with 40 years' experience in marketing and distributing fuels and lubricants. Serving a broad range of customers, PAPCO delivers petroleum management solutions for everything from commercial fuel and lubricants to commercial propane and home heat, as well as innovative risk and performance management solutions. “In all,” says Trudy Collins, Credit, Bill and AP Manager, PAPCO, “we serve 5,040 customers across fifteen states.”

Reclaiming energy lost to manual invoice processing

PAPCO's diverse portfolio, customer base and infrastructure require services from over 1000 vendors. Among them over 600,000 pages of invoices are submitted a year — which used to require tedious and error-prone manual entry into the company's Factor® accounting system. The resulting drain on resources and efficiency was further compounded by complicated, multi-level AP approval workflows at PAPCO: “We are very complex,” confirms Collins. “We have twenty departments, each assigned three levels of invoice approvers — with executive approval required for the largest invoices.”

As a consequence, Collin's AP staff often worked overtime and weekends — straining budgets and morale. “Things took ages,” says Collins. “We scanned invoices to PDF, uploaded them to SharePoint then keyed data from the images into our Factor accounting solution. Approved invoices were then exported to our PaperVision document management system.” Plus, PAPCO's SharePoint workflow was not only cumbersome, it cost time in other ways: the power to research issues was limited; getting data for budgeting was time consuming; and finding information for audits cost many man hours. “We needed to automate the entry, approval and storage of invoices,” says Collins.

ABBYY Solution Partner



As a full service data capture solution provider, ScanStore has helped over 4,000 customers worldwide achieve their goals in automating the capture, classification and electronic management of documents. Its consulting and custom programming services deliver savings, efficiency and high ROI via a wide range of market-leading solutions.

Visit: www.scanstore.com

In attempting to upgrade their SharePoint solution, Collins and her team hit a roadblock: “We needed automated data capture and classification — and PaperVision’s software couldn’t handle our complex workflows.” After reviewing alternatives, the team chose ABBYY FlexiCapture as the best candidate — and identified ABBYY’s partner, ScanStore as the best integrator to work with. “ABBYY’s speed, accuracy and flexibility were impressive. And ScanStore as a vendor was a very lucky find.”

Fueling new efficiency with ABBYY FlexiCapture for Invoices

Before engaging with ScanStore, the PAPCO team requested a demonstration of FlexiCapture — and was invited to see it handling live data at another customer’s site. “The speed, sheer volume of documents, and capture accuracy were all very impressive,” recalls Collins, adding that, “The accuracy was most impressive.” During the demo, Collins also met ScanStore’s CEO, Aaron Tyrrell. “That was our second bit of luck,” says Collins. “Aaron impressed us with his knowledge of both FlexiCapture, and our PaperVision document management software.”

Tyrrell began the project with a four-day onsite assessment of PAPCO’s business processes. “He did a great job, familiarizing himself with the company, our goals, the paper workflow and the requirements of other vendors,” says Collins. “But several weeks into the project, ABBYY released a version of FlexiCapture specifically configured for invoices — so we paused. The new version’s ability to handle complex workflows was greatly enhanced,” she says. “Additionally, it is intelligent and highly trainable. So we switched gears and became early adopters.”

Working with Collins, Tyrrell created a multi-level approval workflow that integrated FlexiCapture for Invoices with the PAPCO Factor accounting software and PaperVision system. Using network copiers for scanning, the solution automatically extracts and classifies invoice data, then routes it to appropriate AP department processing staff for verification. It then goes to their supervisors for sign off on each invoice. Once the approval workflow is complete, the data is exported to the accounts payable system, while images and index data are saved to a PaperVision document management system.

Even with the redirect to FlexiCapture for Invoices, implementation of the new solution for PAPCO was timely. And as Collins recalls, users enjoyed its benefits quickly: “The easiest part of it all was the training. It was simple to bring folks on board and teach them how to use the software. It was very well embraced and everyone was very happy with the solution.”

The results

According to Collins, FlexiCapture has increased the efficiency of invoice-related tasks in virtually every area: “The SharePoint solution required a lot of typing and manual processing of the electronic data. ABBYY automatically takes care of all that, making us much more efficient. It saves end authorizers a lot of time, too. And since they’re managers and executives, their time is very valuable.”

Plus, supporting budget planning and complying with audits is now more efficient. Research and auditing in the back-end is easier thanks to improved search indexing. And finding information for budgeting went from having to look up account codes and then referencing invoices, to a simple search of the document management system — enabling instant access to required information.

“FlexiCapture has created so much efficiency. It’s gone from taking me an hour a day to approve invoices, to a couple of minutes.”

Trudy Collins, Credit, Billing & AP Manager, PAPCO

And when it comes to time saved at PAPCO, the numbers speak for themselves. Their FlexiCapture for Invoices solution has reduced the time needed to process invoices up to six hours a day — a 50% reduction in labor — yielding annual savings of \$30,000. “AP staff have gone from working overtime and weekends to meeting deadlines well within normal hours,” states Collins. “Turnaround is much better and so is morale.”

Collins also sees a future of new opportunities for PAPCO using the FlexiCapture solution. Planned implementations include automating the processing of freight invoices and adding the processing of fuel invoices after that. And she foresees even brighter prospects: “I’m working up a model for automated paperless billing. Right now it’s all paper-based. We see a huge opportunity to improve that.”

About ABBYY

ABBYY is a leading global provider of technologies and solutions that help businesses effectively action information.

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