

LexisNexis® UK choose an Avanquest Invoice Capture and Approval System



Avanquest® ProcessFlows

Choosing an invoice approval solution for your Accounts Payable department is a big and complex decision. Especially when you have 15,000 suppliers and 70,000 documents a year to account for.

The Customer:

LexisNexis, a member of the Reed Elsevier group, is a global supplier of information to business. Professionals in law firms, corporations, government, law enforcement bodies and tax, accounting and academic institutions rely on LexisNexis to keep them updated with the latest books and software, consultancy, process automation, outsourcing and fee collection services. The company has 13,000 employees located in more than 100 countries over 6 continents.

LexisNexis business information solutions are designed to deliver the most up-to-date and timely information to clients online - information that will enhance productivity and efficiency and allow clients to make well informed and reliable business decisions which create a competitive edge.

The Challenges:

LexisNexis wanted to overhaul their accounts payable process, which was drawn out and dominated by paper and inefficient manual methods. Isobel George, Accounts Payable Manager at LexisNexis referred to their finance culture as "An area that did a lot of churning, but produced little butter."

Accounts Payable - the facts:

- Approximately 150,000 invoices in total per annum and growing
- Approximately 15,000 vendors
- £6M monthly outgoing payments
- Weekly pay run
- 95% of vendors paid by BACS
- Up to 70,000 paper invoices processed per year
- A large number of vendors are also LexisNexis customers – but no consistency between relationships

The embedded finance culture needed to change:

- The department was beset with everyday problems which required continuous fire-fighting
- Inconsistent manual processes were difficult to manage and 'report' as there was no overall visibility of what was going on
- Dealing with unstructured data in this way meant it was impossible to measure performance
- High volumes exacerbated the situation
- There was little investment in staff training and morale was low

LexisNexis also recognised that 'putting their processes in order' would place them in a strong position should operations be outsourced in the future. This would not be possible if the old processes remained as they would never be able to closely manage or control the AP function.



Preparing for change:

Isobel initiated a review of staff and processes. Any changes would need to have 'buy-in' from the staff to be successful. Manual processes were re-engineered, scanning and workflow benefits identified and a cost analysis and authorisation project undertaken.

Finally, a single source supplier - who could implement change, provide a non financial view of financial data and was capable of fully understanding the company's needs and culture - was sought.

Also important was the fact that the parties got on. LexisNexis recognised that the Avanquest team had actively listened to them, empathised with the business issues and had the flexibility to be able to adapt as priorities changed.

Close collaboration revealed that LexisNexis needed simple workflow. Overly complex solutions were not for them! Non finance managers wanted to be able to visualise financial information so it was simple to understand.



The Solution:

Avanquest was chosen by LexisNexis to supply a fully automated invoice scanning data capture, invoice processing and approval solution (Accounts Payable Plus/AP+).

The decision to appoint Avanquest as a partner for change was not just based on technology. Two key factors were taken into account:

1. The business case proving that over a 5 year period the project provides an overall saving versus project cost outlay
2. Finding the right partner to work with

Accounts Payable Plus (AP+) utilises ICR (Intelligent Character Recognition) technology from ReadSoft and an electronic document management product from Open Text, combined with Avanquest custom AP+ development. This provides directly integrated web based access to electronic versions of the processed invoices from within PeopleSoft – LexisNexis' incumbent line of business system.

Emerging requirements:

During the delivery of AP+, LexisNexis decided to expand the project to include all Accounts Receivable processes. Automated recognition of all incoming cheques and remittance advices is now part of the allocation process.

The Benefits:

Using Avanquest as a single point of contact and delivery was important for LexisNexis. It simplified the roll out of the project and continues to provide them with one owner for ongoing support of all elements and system development. Avanquest managed the supply and delivery of all scanning hardware, project management, change management, system development, application implementation, training (user and technical) and PeopleSoft integration.

- Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable processes are now totally automated throughout the UK operation
- The time taken for an invoice to be processed has been reduced from 10 days to 2
- Because of the direct integration of AP+ with PeopleSoft, it is easy for non-financial users to work with the system
- Users can view invoices directly from within their familiar line of business system via the web enabled document management system
- AP+ delivers efficiency gains, providing LexisNexis with data integrity, real time reporting



and 'right place right time' approval for all invoices and allocation for remittance advices

- The system provides management with activity reporting that enables the operations to be measured and monitored effectively
- Daily reports on numbers of invoices, cheques and remittances scanned, and anomalies such as missing data are made available in a format that suits their own reporting software
- This management information means that LexisNexis are able to confidently move towards an outsourced business model and still maintain control of the whole Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable process
- Intention to expand AP+ into European offices

"Avanquest's area of expertise is the ability to fully understand our overall business processes and needs and then use the right blend of business process automation tools to provide quantifiable business benefits"

Isobel George, Accounts Payable Manager, LexisNexis

