



CASE STUDY

South Ayrshire Council



SUMMARY

In a calendar year, South Ayrshire Council processes in excess of £100 million worth of invoices through its Accounts Payable function, consisting of 160,000 invoices from more than 10,000 different suppliers. With over 32,000 suppliers currently on its database, the Council is rationalising this supplier database to just 4,000.

Software

b-Wize INVOICE - Captiva's leading edge software for processing supplier invoices and associated documents combines document scanning, intelligent information capture, and automatic export to Oracle's Public Sector Content Management (PSCM) solution.

Processed Documents

Supplier invoices

Volumes

160,000 invoices annually

Configuration

Windows 2000 Server
KODAK i260 duplex scanner with flatbed attachment
1 Scanner Workstation
1 Processing Workstation
4 Workstations for validation of automatic recognition
Novell Network

GOALS

South Ayrshire Council is located in southwest Scotland. Over the years, the Council has developed traditional back-office processes and accounting functions that are heavily paper-reliant and labour-intensive. Every year South Ayrshire Council receives more than 160,000 paper invoices from over ten thousand suppliers. Each invoice generates a payment process that begins in one of the 200 different business units across the authority. This highly devolved system meant that at any one time it was extremely difficult for the Council to get an accurate picture of the invoice processing status - critical when the council aims to pay more than 85 per cent of invoices within 30 days. South Ayrshire Council's vision is to streamline its Accounts Payable process by automatically capturing the data from hundreds of thousands of paper-based supplier invoices, which means replacing manual processes with a centralised automated Data Capture, Content Management, and Workflow processing solution.

SOLUTION

The Council is working with its financial system partner, Oracle, and its imaging partner, Informed Imaging, to develop the solution. Already, single or multiple-page invoices can be scanned using a Kodak i260 scanner, and the b-Wize INVOICE software (supplied by Informed Imaging) then automatically extracts and verifies the data.

The resulting information is routed to Oracle Financials via Oracle's Public Sector Content Management (PSCM) system, allowing thousands of valid invoices to be processed with virtually no human intervention. Even invoices that don't have valid purchase order numbers are automatically routed to Oracle Workflow so that remote users can contribute before data is uploaded.



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BENEFITS

By implementing a fully integrated data capture and invoice processing system, the following benefits are achieved:

- streamlines processes and removes unnecessary paper handling and storage costs
- improves invoice document management, allowing easier tracking and the ability to meet government guidelines for paying suppliers, as well as avoiding late payment penalties
- makes detailed purchasing information more readily available to remote staff, enabling more intelligence-based financial decisions and a more collaborative approach to purchasing
- allows the Council to assess its utilisation of goods and services from contracted sources, and assists in the evaluation of additional contracts.

COMMENT

Mr Jeff Atkinson, Chief Accountant (Systems)
South Ayrshire Council

Why did you decide to automate the processing of supplier invoices?

South Ayrshire Council currently operates a decentralised invoice processing system with more than 200 separate units processing invoices. The current system involves double-handling, as each invoice is processed and then checked centrally before finally being microfilmed and filed. In addition, we found that departments, due to the inaccessibility of the microfilm records, frequently kept at least one photocopy of each invoice for their records.

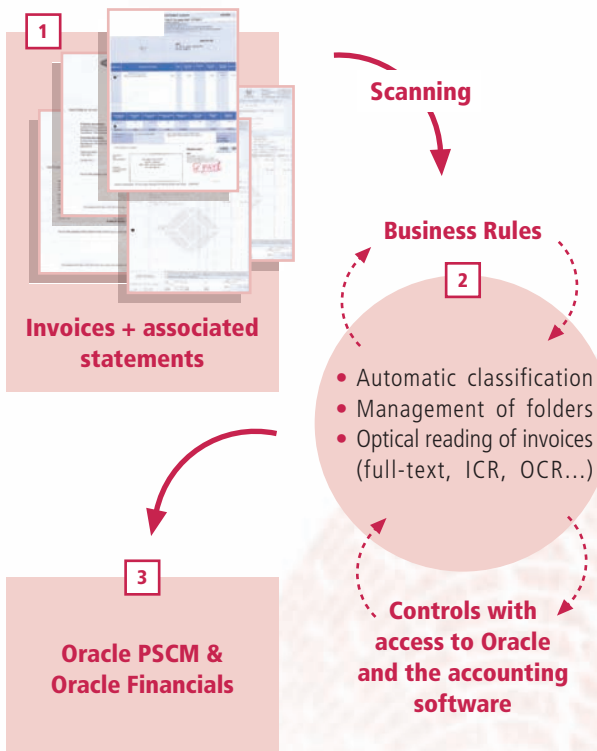
We recognised that there were real benefits to be gained from imaging the documents and having invoice images readily available to decentralised users. If we could automatically capture invoice data, as well as images, the Council would be able to make further cost savings. In conjunction with our new financial system provider, Oracle, who recommended b-Wize INVOICE software, supplied by Informed Imaging, we embarked upon a pilot project to confirm our strategy could work in practice. We liked b-Wize because of its advanced functionality, ease of implementation, and ability to easily integrate with our Oracle financial system.

We have now proved the concept and are embarking upon refining our working solution.

What benefits have you gained from automating your invoice processing?

Implementing our invoice imaging and processing strategy with b-Wize INVOICE will provide many benefits including: reduced invoice processing costs; faster payment processing; reduced photocopying, filing, and document retrieval costs; improved availability of invoice information; and better control and security of the documents.

b-Wize PRODUCTION FLOW



Steps 2 & 3 - Business approval workflow

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