

# Extending Automation to Accounts Payable

Gain Spend Visibility and Control  
for State & Local Organizations



Today's finance teams carry a heavy burden, supporting everything from growth strategies to long-term planning – all while continuously delivering monthly and quarterly numbers and keeping cash flowing. But even as demands on finance departments grow, many still spend excessive time using paper, spreadsheets, and e-mails to process vendor invoices, approvals, and payments. **Do you ever think there must be a better way?**



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## Is the Status Quo Holding Your Organization Back?

If this sounds familiar, you're not alone. Did you know that 26% of small and midsize organizations use spreadsheets to manage their expenses?<sup>1</sup> And 49% of these organizations even use a "handwritten record to track, manage, and analyze spend."<sup>2</sup>

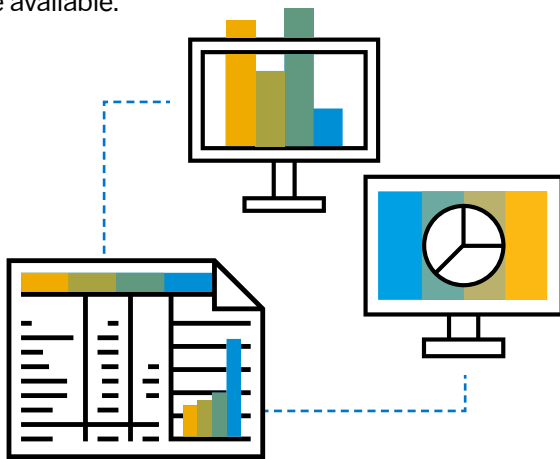
But manual and spreadsheet-driven processes are inefficient at any level of scale, not just for large organizations. This applies to all finance processes, including accounts payable (AP) – not just expenses. Given the resource constraints of small organizations, inefficiencies in any of these areas can have an even bigger impact on overall efficiency and distract from growth priorities.

1. ["5 Great Reasons to Move Your Expenses to the Cloud."](#) SAP, 2018.
2. Joshua Sophy, ["84 Percent of Small Businesses Rely on a Manual Process."](#) Small Business Trends, April 4, 2017.





The fact is, your organization probably can't just “throw more bodies” at a cumbersome task the way larger organizations can, because there may not **be** anyone else available.



Moreover, when you're juggling different sources of spend, finance can't afford to be bogged down with manual work. Most AP departments must process invoices from an increasing number of suppliers; according to AMI-Partners, the typical small organization is working with 190 suppliers and vendors.<sup>3</sup> To support growth, you need a more scalable way of working with larger ecosystems of partners and suppliers.

3. Joseph Bertran, “[Elevate Business Performance and Better Manage Spend with Automation](#),” AMI-Partners study sponsored by SAP, 2018.



## The Costs Add Up **Faster Than You May Realize**

You may be comfortable with the status quo – most small organizations still use manual processes and spreadsheets, right? But the costs add up more quickly than you probably realize. Industry research suggests that:

- Accounting and finance teams typically spend 14% of their time on processing invoices each week.<sup>4</sup>
- 41% of small organizations report getting hit with late fees from vendors.<sup>5</sup>

Manual-, spreadsheet-, or e-mail-based processes also lead to costly mistakes, delays, and oversights. That's why:

- 68% of finance leaders aren't completely confident that employees comply with company travel and expense (T&E) policies.<sup>6</sup>
- 46% of finance leaders consider errors and mistakes their greatest challenge.<sup>7</sup>
- 42% of the small organizations surveyed say they've experienced errors reconciling invoices.<sup>8</sup>

4. Joseph Bertran, "[Elevate Business Performance and Better Manage Spend with Automation](#)," AMI-Partners survey sponsored by SAP, February 2018.

5. Christal Bemont, "[Common AP Practices May Be Setting SMBs Up for Financial Mistakes](#)," SAP blog, April 2017.

6, 7. "[Connecting the Dots on Travel, Expense and Invoice Spend: How to Mitigate Risk with Centralised Spend Management](#)," SAP, 2017.

8. Joshua Sophy, "[84 Percent of Small Businesses Rely on a Manual Process](#)," Small Business Trends, April 4, 2017.



And when spend data is scattered, it's hard to understand where people are spending – and in time to do something about it. No wonder 75% of finance leaders say their departments often exceeds expense, travel, and invoice budgets. And even more agree their expense, travel, and invoice systems could be better connected for a single view of spend.<sup>9</sup>

The good news is, you can pair your expense management with automated AP for a truly integrated solution that automates efficient AP processes; centralizes all employee spend data; and gives you the visibility, agility, and control you need to manage and grow your organization with more intelligence.

“We had a paper-based system in which the order would be placed, the invoice would go to finance, finance would approve it, and then they would pay it. There just wasn't a level of control there.”<sup>10</sup>

Andrew Simcock, Finance Director, Atech Support

9. [“Connecting the Dots on Travel, Expense and Invoice Spend: How to Mitigate Risk with Centralised Spend Management.”](#) SAP, 2017.

10. [Case Study for Atech Support.](#) SAP.



## Transform How You Manage Spend **with** **a Truly Integrated Solution**

With everything you have on your plate and the regulatory pressures you face, why not bring the same level of automated efficiency to AP that you have in your expense management? No matter the size of your organization, SAP® Concur gives you a truly integrated way that **connects the dots on expense and invoice spend** – and makes all of these processes run better.

When you add Concur® Invoice to your spend management process, you'll replace e-mail- and paper-based invoice processes with an integrated solution that automatically captures, validates, and routes for approval every invoice. Plus, you can integrate purchasing card and invoice information with your expense data. You'll get a clear, near-real-time view

into all employee spending, so you can proactively control it and improve planning, accruals, and cash flow. And as a best practice, you can always extend automation further with the Concur® Travel solution for comprehensive employee spend management.

You'll be free to manage spending instead of managing the process and tackle whatever your organization needs you to take on. At the same time, by eliminating costly, repetitive, error-prone work, you can potentially save hundreds of thousands of dollars per year – money that can go toward hiring more people, investing in new assets, developing new offerings, and more.







## Bring Automated Efficiency to **Accounts Payable**

For a moderate investment, SAP Concur solutions allow you to extend your expense solution to accounts payable, so you can automate invoice capture, routing, and approvals to help you improve the productivity of your entire team. You'll eliminate costly mistakes and delays as well as time wasted chasing down approvers; shuffling paper, e-mails, and PDFs; and sorting through exceptions. And you can **use intelligent technology such as AI and machine learning** to automatically interpret and categorize expense charges from paper invoices.



**\$34,000**

Average annual savings after implementing invoicing solutions<sup>11</sup>



**\$11 per invoice**

Average savings after implementing invoicing solutions<sup>13</sup>





**16%**

Time savings using an automated invoice management solution<sup>12</sup>



**500 hours**

Time saved annually per finance employee using an integrated expense, travel, and invoice solution<sup>14</sup>

 I've been able to reduce the amount of time I spend on invoices and expenses by 30% to 40%. It has been instrumental in helping me do my job better and be more effective.<sup>15</sup> 

Maria Santos Roman, Office Manager,  
DRC Capital LLP

11.–14. Joseph Bertran, "[Elevate Business Performance and Better Manage Spend with Automation](#)," AMI-Partners survey sponsored by SAP, February 2018.

15. [Case Study for DRC Capital LLP, SAP](#).



## Increase Control Over Accounts Payable Spending

With SAP Concur solutions, you can put **detailed, automated spend controls** in place to stay on top of virtually every invoice and transaction that flows through accounts payable. You can automatically apply spending policies and targeted approval rules to each invoice – whenever it happens – thereby improv-

ing policy compliance and reducing overspending. Plus, the system will automatically check invoices against POs and goods and services received; this enables you to catch duplicates before you overpay, speed up vendor payments, and easily manage exceptions.





## Get a Single, Sharper Look at **All Your Spending**

By bringing all of your spending together through a connected solution, you can move past the moment-in-time snapshots that spreadsheets and manual processes deliver. **Enjoy complete, clear, and near-real-time insight** in both accounts payable and expense spending as it happens.

With full transparency into all your critical areas of spending, you'll eliminate surprises and late fees, see what you could save

by paying early, and effectively negotiate discounts – savings you can reinvest into other areas of your organization (or any way you wish). At the same time, you'll equip every budget manager with full visibility into expenses so they can effectively predict and proactively manage spending and ensure every bit of your budget is directed exactly where you need it to go.

“Today, I have more time to look at analytics, process reconciliations, and prepare and communicate new features and enhancements to employees.”<sup>16</sup>

Kevin Wright, Accounts Payable Manager, Code42

“We went with Concur Invoice because it allows us to move all of our expense items electronically through an invoice process without having to have paper moving around. It also helped us remove all of the file cabinets and storage we had in our office space as well as not having staff constantly be pulling files and refiling things away.”<sup>17</sup>

Mark Hummer, Administrative Manager of Finance, The Conference Board of New York

16. [Case Study for Code42](#), SAP.

17. [Case Study for The Conference Board of New York](#), SAP.



# What's Holding You Back?

So, what's stopping you combining expense management with invoice management from SAP Concur solutions?

**"It's just not a priority. We're good with the status quo."**

Our people wear too many hats to focus on making a change.

There's a backlog of IT projects.

Our culture and leadership resist change.

We don't want to do too much too soon – before the organization is ready.



**"The change management required is just too much."**

We'll have to change too many internal processes at once.

It makes sense, but it will be too hard to communicate the process changes to our internal partners, even if they know it is the best option for the company.

Our people won't like it, so they won't adopt it.

It won't integrate with our ERP.

**"We're already automated."**

We've already implemented partial automation. It's not "smart," but it's enough for us.

Our people will struggle to fully adopt the features of a bigger, more powerful solution.

**"I don't believe we'll actually realize monetary return on the investment."**

Our manual processes are "free" because we don't pay for software.

Our AP workload volume isn't big enough to deliver enough ROI to make it worth the investment.



## The Question Is, **Can You Afford Not To?**

See what's possible when you bring the same level of automated efficiency to invoice management and travel booking.



Customers typically realize \$39,000 in annual savings using Concur Invoice.<sup>18</sup>

Our procure-to-pay process has been reduced by 60%, and we've reduced the use of paper by 90%. We've now got an accounts payable system that can underpin any business we bring on board. There's no limitation to that – in size, quantum, or location.<sup>19</sup>

Anita Nicole Sanchez, Financial Controller,  
Smartsalary

18. Joseph Bertran, "[Elevate Business Performance and Better Manage Spend with Automation](#),"

AMI-Partners survey sponsored by SAP, February 2018.

19. [Case Study for Smartsalary](#), SAP.





## Learn More

When you pair expense management with Concur Invoice, you can eliminate manual, inefficient AP processes taking too much time, costing too much money, and keeping you in the dark about how much you're spending and where it's going. We provide a clear path to fully centralized, near-real-time employee spend data, giving you the unparalleled visibility,

agility, and control needed to manage and grow your organization with more intelligence. You can even predict and proactively manage spending, redirecting it to align with your strategic priorities.

**Spend happens. Make it count.** Visit us [online](#).

 Most times, when you're looking at new software, it's a big implementation; but this was simple. What SAP Concur solutions do for us is what some large companies work on internally for years and still cannot do.<sup>20</sup> 

Greg MacDonald, Corporate Controller, ABM Integrated Solutions

20. [Case Study for ABM Integrated Solutions](#), SAP.



## ABOUT SAP CONCUR SOLUTIONS

SAP Concur solutions provide integrated travel, expense, and invoice management, driven by a relentless pursuit to simplify and automate these everyday processes. With the SAP Concur mobile app, a top-rated app guides employees through every trip, charges are effortlessly populated into expense reports, and invoice approvals are automated. By integrating near-real-time data and using AI to audit 100% of transactions, organizations can see exactly what they're spending without worrying about blind spots in the budget. SAP Concur solutions eliminate yesterday's tedious tasks, make today's work easier, and help organizations run at their best every day. Learn more at [concur.com](https://concur.com) or by reading the SAP blog.

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