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Cote Restaurants improves AP Processing

CÔTE
BRASSERIE

Challenges

- The central finance department receives huge volumes of invoices from the various locations via post

- These invoices required manual processing which was time consuming and labour intensive.

- They needed an automated invoice processing solution to improve efficiency and ultimately save them time and money.

- Processing 5,000- 6,000 invoices per month with at least 50 approvers, unlimited capability was an essential requirement.

Solution

- Cote implemented an EzeScan Front End Capture Solution in conjunction with DocuWare.

- EzeScan was implemented in order to grab all of the non EDI invoices that arrived as hard copies and once scanned, EzeScan would grab the relevant index fields and then drop the documents into hot folders.

- EzeScan monitors these hot folders and places them straight into the relevant DocuWare workflows for the restaurant managers to approve the invoices electronically via their mobile phones.

With the help of EzeScan's Automated Invoice Processing Solution, the restaurant chain has successfully increased the accuracy and input of invoices to provide better cash flow management and reduce overheads.

Côte Restaurants first opened their doors in 2007 with their London based modern French brasserie style restaurants. In 2009 they expanded by opening restaurants in locations outside of London and their expansion across the UK has continued with the acquisition of the restaurant chains Jackson & Rye and Limeyard. Now with a total of 46 restaurants in their portfolio, and in the region of 3,000 employees.

The central finance department is located in central London and on a daily basis, receives huge volumes of invoices to process from the various restaurant locations. These arrive by a variety of different methods, many of them via the post. This meant not only did they often get lost, but the process was very slow, and meant that they were often a week behind.

Invoices were being processed manually which was time consuming and labour intensive, and invoices could sometimes get lost or damaged. Côte needed an automated solution to improve efficiency and ultimately save them time and money.

EzeScan was implemented as the Front End Capture Solution in conjunction with DocuWare as the Document Management Solution (DMS). Cote were impressed by EzeSan's unlimited scanning volumes and unlimited user licenses with DocuWare.

Processing between 5,000 and 6,000 invoices monthly and having a minimum of 50 approvers, Cote had an indispensable need for unlimited capability. They needed a future-proof solution to accommodate their ongoing growth.

Côte were using Sage 200 as their accounting package and any invoices relating to food and beverages were already being submitted via the EDI (Electronic Data Interchange) system, Comtrex. EzeScan was implemented in order to grab all of the non EDI invoices that arrived as hard copies.

In practice, the finance department would receive invoices in volume. They are then scanned on a couple of networked scanners, at which point EzeScan would grab the relevant index fields and then drop the documents into hot folders.

EzeScan then monitors the hot folders and places them straight into the relevant DocuWare workflows for the restaurant managers to approve the invoices locally.

- If pre approval is required they are held in order for a query code to be added before sending to the approver.

Results

- With the help of EzeScan, accuracy levels have increased from around 75% to almost 90%.

- Côte are able to better manage their cash flow as invoices are being processed much faster. The entire process has been reduced to 14 days maximum.

- Previously 6 staff were required to process invoices whereas currently only 1.5 users are needed to achieve better results.

About EzeScan

EzeScan provides fast, cost effective business process automation solutions including simplified document back scanning, accounts payable, data robotic process automation, forms data extraction, mailroom/correspondence automation and highly integrated EDRMS capture. With thousands of installations in Australasia, North America and the UK, EzeScan is your ideal digital transformation provider.

Some invoices require multiple approvals. Previously this was done by signing hard copy documents, which from start to finish could take up to 30 days. Now invoices can be approved electronically via their mobile phones and the entire process has been reduced to 14 days maximum. It also means that if anyone is away, the invoice can be passed to an alternative person to be approved or approved remotely so no delays are incurred.

Alternatively, if pre-approval is required they are held in order for a query code to be added before sending to the approver. Then once approved they come back, the query code is removed, they are approved for payment and then stored within DocuWare.

The benefits to Cote have been huge, especially in terms of giving them the opportunity to better manage their cash flow due to the fact that invoices are being processed much faster.

Previously 6 staff were required to process invoices and now it's only 1.5, so it has also freed up their capacity to get on with other tasks such as detailed statement reconciliations and building better relationships with suppliers, which they didn't have time to do before.

The previous manual process often meant a fair amount of human error, and accuracy levels were around 75%. The introduction of the EzeScan solution has now increased accuracy levels to almost 90%.

Although the restaurant chain could have made the system fully automated ,they still like to have some level of manual interaction in order to keep an eye on everything.

Cote still have big plans for expansion and if they continue to grow at the same rate it was likely that they would need to employ 2 people to the finance team every year in order to cope with the growth.

However, due to the scalability of the EzeScan solution, now as they grow as a business they will not need to increase the head count as the solution is able to grow with them, which safe guards the businesses growth plans.