

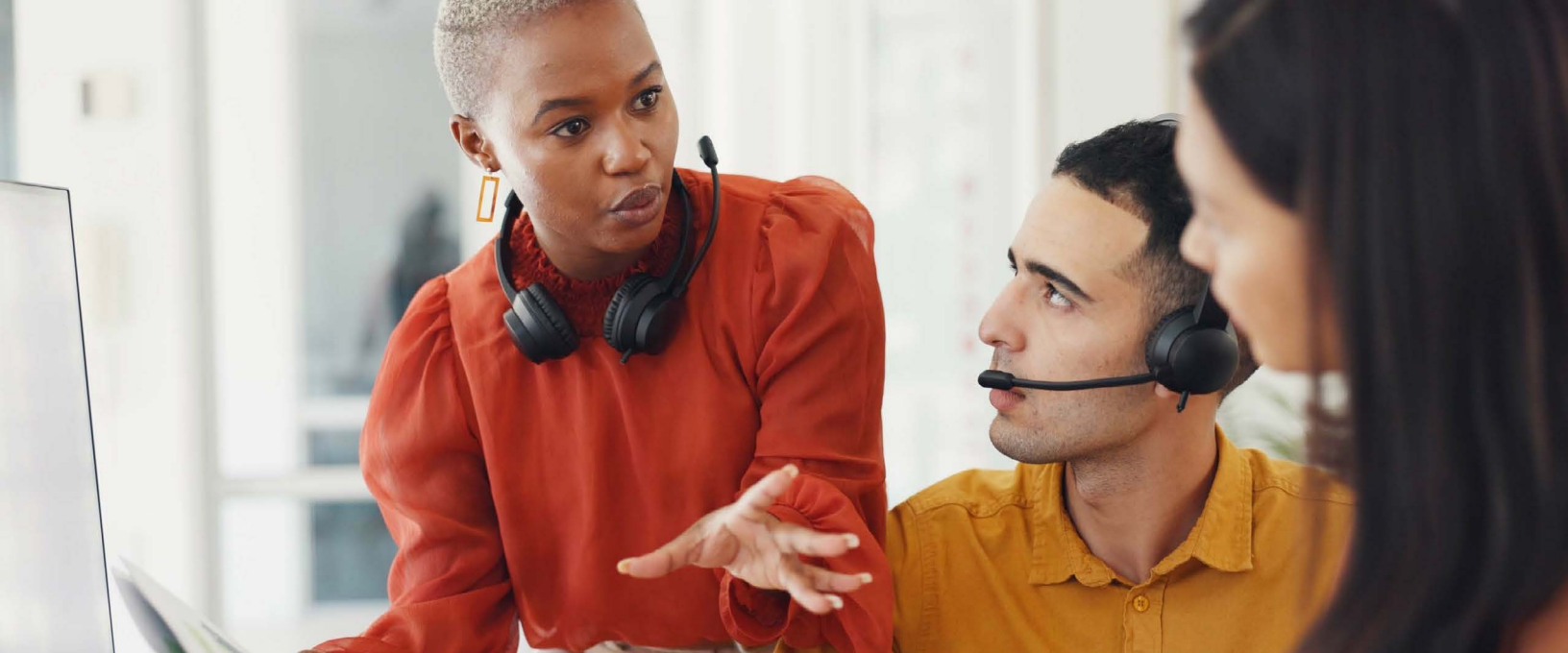


# SIMPLIFYING THE UNIMAGINABLY COMPLEX

Transforming the accounts payables of a giant telco through the cloud and automation

## Abstract

Pete Rogers, AVP of Global Accounts Payable at a telecom giant, was looking to transform its complex, fragmented, and manually intensive accounts payable processes. Seeking to address high cycle times, frequent errors, and high training costs with speed, scale, and minimal disruption, Pete turned to Infosys BPM for help. This case details how Infosys BPM deployed its indigenous APOC platform along with a comprehensive RPA solution to centralise the company's processes and eliminate 75% of the manual effort. The outcomes? 30% faster invoice processing, 30% reduced overdue payments, increased working capital worth \$800 Mn, and global-level award win.



## A giant vendor network

Pete Rogers is the AVP of Global Accounts Payable at a telecom giant operating across 70 countries, overseeing its widespread accounts payable (AP) operations. He is primarily responsible for supervising the AP team and ensuring efficient cash flows, optimal query responses, and on-time vendor payments. But as he soon discovered, there was a dire need for process transformation.

While reviewing some vendor queries and overall AP operation statuses, Pete came across several vendor complaints regarding overdue invoices. When he brought up the issue with his AP team, they revealed the reason for the delays to be a highly

fragmented, manually intensive system for processing invoices and managing expenses. Given its vast network of 30,000 vendors spread across geographies, the company's AP operations ran over a complex IT landscape of more than 10 ERP systems. The team was not only required to have specific knowledge in each of these systems, but also had to manually record, code, and post the vendor invoices across them all. This lack of efficiency in framework often resulted in operational errors, delays in vendor payments, and subsequently, issues in cash flow.

Already under the pressure of overdue vendor payments and disrupted cash flows,

the problems amplified when the company set out on a cloud migration journey with thousands of on-premise applications. Feeling the heat, Pete realised he needed a business transformation solution to optimise his AP processes. Laying down his requirements, he reached out to Infosys BPM as their digital solutions partner. Then over a series of meetings with Saumya Shinde, the Infosys BPM team lead, he explained the situation in detail, discussed potential solutions, and emphasised his need for achieving the transformation without disrupting the company's underlying business operations.

## Embracing the automation paradigm

Having gauged the complexity of the project, Saumya first rounded up a team of skilled IT consultants and technical professionals to work on the transformation. Then, imbibing a 'zero disruption' approach for the transformation from the get-go, Saumya collaborated with Pete to establish an intelligent implementation strategy. The two roped in a few more SMEs and stakeholders respectively, forming a mutual 'transformation board' for reviewing,

analysing, and signing off on any changes. Pete and other stakeholders in the company also formed a change management team to assist Saumya and her team in ideating and realising the transformation journey.

Working closely with the change management team and transformation board, Saumya and her team spent the first few months in Design Thinking workshops studying the organisation's existing IT

landscape to develop a clear vision and change strategy. During this time, the two sides collaborated over design thinking workshops, identified change areas across the different AP functions, and defined a detailed 90-180-360 days implementation roadmap, centred around innovation and automation. Their core plan was to centralise the data entry, invoice processing, reporting and analytics activities.

## Approach summary



The change strategy in place, Saumya and the team went on to implement the solution and execute the much-awaited transformation during the second phase of the project. First, they moved to deploy Infosys Accounts Payable on Cloud (APOC), the company's state-of-the-art, cloud-native AP platform, in a platform-as-a-service (PaaS) model onto the telco's existing AP ecosystem. For this, they leveraged Microsoft Azure's cloud platform and its key resources like the SQL managed instance, data factory, and storage accounts to support the deployment.

However, as Saumya expected, the company's complex cloud environment and rigorous controls posed a challenge. She looped in and worked closely with Microsoft Azure's consulting division and Pete's cloud security team, establishing

a smooth execution framework. After several intense discussions, they ended up deploying the platform as an infrastructure-as-a-code (IaaS) model. The team also had to leverage a suite of middleware platforms for enabling a seamless data interchange across networks.

After deploying the new APOC solution, Saumya met with the transformation board and change management team to collect stakeholder feedback prior to incorporating subsequent improvements. She and her team then studied the APOC implementation process and explored underlying issues, and took focused actions using customer journey mapping and the Design Council Double Diamond methodologies. They also leveraged Kaizen principles to identify and remove process

defects and mitigate the occurrence of stale and pending transactions. Finally, the team prepared value stream maps and utilised the lean, six sigma, and agile methodology to locate and remove redundant procedures, maximising efficiency throughout the APOC system.

Along with the many improvements, Saumya and her team also implemented robotic process automation through 25 key AP activities, eliminating the manual efforts required for capturing data, creating and posting invoices, or generating reports. Post-deployment of the solution into the company's global AP operations, Saumya and team switched gears to provide hyper-care support to the end-users and stakeholders, further ensuring a smooth transition into the new system.





## Enjoying stress-free payments

Pete and Saumya's combined efforts towards transforming the AP processes yielded major benefits. The solutions and newly developed ecosystem not only eliminated the earlier process inefficiencies,

but also propelled the company to the top quartile in AP performance. To Pete's delight, the APOC platform also offered real-time visibility into KPIs and 20 business metrics on vendor payments, days payable

outstanding, and cash flows. The newfound insights gave Pete a better understanding of the operations, which eventually helped him improve the working capital by \$800 Mn and save costs by 50% over five years.

## Key benefits



At the operational level, the APOC platform solved multiple challenges with automation and digitisation. For starters, with the single-layered framework, Pete's team no longer had to jump across 10 ERP systems. Then, the hyper-automated workflows in data capturing, invoice processing, and reporting completely eliminated the manual efforts at local offices, driving higher efficiency. Due to this, data entry and invoice processing were now 50% and 30% faster respectively.

Overall, the RPA-led transformation led to 75% reduction in manual efforts, significant operational improvements, and a 30% reduction in overdue invoices. Thus, the platform successfully enabled efficient payments processing to the tune of \$80 Bn annually. Moreover, the transformation also enabled over 90% accuracy in data capturing for more than 80% of the invoices via intelligent optical character recognition.

Impressed with the outcomes, Pete and the other stakeholders applauded Saumya and her team's innovative and determined efforts in executing the successful transformation, while keeping true to the 'zero disruption' agreement. The team also went on to receive a globally renowned external award for this, as well as various internal recognitions.

*\*Names have been altered to preserve the identities of the people involved.*

For more information, contact [infosysbpm@infosys.com](mailto:infosysbpm@infosys.com)



© 2024 Infosys Limited, Bengaluru, India. All Rights Reserved. Infosys believes the information in this document is accurate as of its publication date; such information is subject to change without notice. Infosys acknowledges the proprietary rights of other companies to the trademarks, product names and such other intellectual property rights mentioned in this document. Except as expressly permitted, neither this documentation nor any part of it may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, printing, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of Infosys Limited and/ or any named intellectual property rights holders under this document.