Gaining **financial visibility in weeks** with automated AP workflows

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SILVER EAGLE
DISTRIBUTORS

The **Company**

Silver Eagle Distributors, L.P. is the nation's largest Anheuser-Busch distributor and second largest overall beer distributor. The company employs more than 1,500 employees that serve 16 counties in Texas through operations in Houston, San Antonio, Pasadena, Conroe, Cypress and Rosenberg. Silver Eagle also distributes a broad selection of import brands, microbrews and craft beers, and several non-alcohol beverages and waters to more than 13,500 accounts across Texas.

The
overview

Facts & Figures
– Number of invoices: 150,000 annually
– Industry: Distribution
– ERP system: Microsoft Dynamics
– Solution: Medius AP Automation for expense
  and PO-based invoices

Results
– Average Invoices Processed Automatically: 90%
– Average Approval Lead Time: 18 hours
– Average Deviation Analysis Lead Time: 23 hours

With more than 90% of all accounts payable invoices now automated and essentially touchless, we now have control of our true financial picture. Everyone is thrilled – the AP team, the business, our suppliers. **The outcome is absolutely remarkable!**

Elise Byrd, AP Manager at Silver Eagle Distributors

The issues **at hand**

Silver Eagle Distributors processes nearly 150,000 invoices annually. Eightyfive percent of invoices are beer-related. But transaction volume was only the beginning of the burden on their manual, paper-based AP invoicing system!

Prior to the automation project, team members across multiple locations had to perform redundant logging and capturing of each invoice to ensure that nothing was missed. A time-consuming, manual three-way matching process was next, including complicated storage, retrieval and tracking for status updates. Finally, and only if there were no exceptions, was the invoice entered into the ERP system.

Lack of accurate reporting

The AP team struggled with the burden of this tedious manual process, and the department suffered from a poor perception both internally and externally. Far worse, the AP team was blindsided by month-end with non-P.O. spending invoices for the company's operating budget. Without spend visibility, proper accrual and forecasting was near-impossible.

> **Financials and budgeting couldn't be done well because paper kept falling into the holes.**
>
> **Elise Byrd, AP Manager at Silver Eagle Distributors**

AP automation
project goals

A veteran AP manager, Elise Byrd joined Silver Eagle Distributors to lead the migration from paper to an automated workflow solution. Byrd had already done this transformation at four other companies.

She knew there was a better way. She wanted to achieve maximum visibility and efficiency by:

Automating the receipt and processing of invoices, including invoice validation and matching where appropriate, leaving AP to only manage exceptions

— Cutting the cost and time needed to process an invoice
— Reducing the amount of errors and discrepancies
— Gaining clearer insight into the procure-to-pay process
— Empowering AP to better service the enterprise and its suppliers

Compare key AP processes - before and after

Receiving Invoices

Then: Invoices were scanned, emailed or mailed from each warehouse, stored on a shared drive and sorted into folders by location. Receipts were logged into a spreadsheet. AP clerks toggled back and forth to perform a 3-way match. AP clerks looked up vendor numbers, verified address, reviewed the notes on paper, filed the paper, and verified the paper against P.O. Once finalized, AP entered the invoice into the Microsoft Dynamics ERP.

Now: P.O. is already imported in Medius AP Automation, and automatic matching occurs. Invoices that go into the system now have greater than 90% automatic match.

Tangible outcomes, efficiency in weeks

Silver Eagle's transformation journey to automated, paperless workflows was remarkably fast, measured in weeks.

Exceptions & deviations

Then: AP went back to buyer or warehouse to find out what happened to that order; if it was a substitution, and why the invoice didn't match. Each AP clerk maintained folders to store non-matching invoices, and used email to track disputes and get responses. Ultimately, AP went back into the system to manually resolve the deviation. AP sent a copy of the invoice back to the buyer, highlighting the pricing. Tracking the invoice in review was extremely cumbersome.

Now: Medius AP Automation flags the discrepancy and specifically shows why there's an exception. With one click in Medius AP Automation, AP routes the exception – along with all relevant information – back to the approver to get authorization or resolution. Upon re-routing the invoice in Medius AP Automation, it's tracked. AP can run a report, see the invoices, see who has them, and for how long. Medius AP Automation even "pings" the approver, reminding them to take action on the pending item.

Processing
non-PO invoices

Then: General expense invoices came in via mail, often directly to the buyer. The invoices mailed to AP were routed to a user for coding and approval.

Now: Invoice receipt and processing is automated, tracked and reported in Medius AP Automation.

Full control
with reporting and KPIs

Now that invoice information is available in Medius AP Automation, Silver Eagle Distributors has thousands of points of information in their financial system and a powerful, efficient new way to harness that data into accurate and timely financial reporting. Native reports in Medius AP Automation used on a regular basis include:

— Accruals

— Received not invoiced

— Pending Approvals

— Budget reviews

Approvals 'on the go' streamlines everything

For the business, it's a whole new world: everything is digitized and accounted for. It's incredibly easy to securely approve invoices via mobile, and easy to report and research.

"Approvers are very happy. It's a huge time-saver for them - they use their laptops, cell phones, tablets - for access to review and approve any invoice from anywhere. Users get a report in Medius AP Automation, see the document, who approved it and all supporting documentation. For managers, the tool supports their budget review process. They're ecstatic. And AP isn't constantly fielding questions about why certain things are in their budget.

The Medius AP Automation implementation has resulted in numerous and immediate benefits. We now have full visibility and control of our invoices and financials with the new automated workflow process. We can report on-time and with complete accuracy. The business can easily manage its approval responsibilities and quickly answer their own budget review questions. I am convinced we will continue to see even more results and financial savings in the future."
- Elise Byrd, AP Manager at Silver Eagle Distributors.

About **Silver Eagle Distributors**

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About **Medius**

Medius AP management software replaces the work and worry of invoices with AI and automation. Medius goes far beyond basic automation by using artificial intelligence to do the work - so invoices get coded, approved and paid, and your business can trust your budgets and forecasts without the fear of potential fraud. And you won't have to worry about implementation and ongoing administration costs, because you'll start seeing the value immediately and the innovation won't stop. To learn more, visit medius.com.

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