



# Drive value in AP with automation

See how real companies leveraged digital transformation to reach high levels of process efficiency, cost saving opportunities and greater financial control.



# Four examples of how companies are leveraging technology to gain control and efficiency in their AP processes

Over the last few decades, thousands of businesses have been modernizing their businesses with automation technology. For Finance and Accounts Payable in particular, these systems have proven essential to gain control of their processes and spend. Gaining true visibility over cashflow and key performance indicators (KPIs), has resulted in increased efficiency allowing for truly touchless invoice processing.

In this eZine, we've compiled four examples of real companies who have embarked on this transformation of their AP processes with Medius. While what drove each of these organizations to pursue automation may sometimes differ slightly, they have all been able to leverage automation and achieve high levels of productivity, growth, and visibility.

**LUSH**  
FRESH HANDMADE COSMETICS

a touchless rate  
from 67% to 92%

**BRIGGS**  
EQUIPMENT

automatic distribution  
rate of 82%

**KARL**  
LAGERFELD

Up to 80% touchless  
on PO invoices

**NIC Global**  
*Manufacturing Solutions*

More than 30%  
higher invoice  
processing

# 92% of invoices processed without human intervention

LUSH Fresh Handmade Cosmetics is a global cosmetics company best known for its colorful bath bombs and soaps, with hundreds of stores known for a sensory and tactile experience for shoppers looking to experience their eco-conscious, vibrant products.

Prior to 2017, the cosmetics company printed hard copies of the nearly 120,000 invoices it received every year in North America. Those paper invoices were manually placed in folders, shuffled from desks, to filing cabinets - back and forth, often lost in the process for indeterminate amounts of time. Too often, out of sight and mind until a vendor would inquire about the status of payment, resulting in a physical manhunt to track down individual invoices across the organization.



## A change was due to come

“Lush was struggling with the volume of paper coming in, and being able to keep track of those documents,” Blanca McGrory, Lush’s accounts payable (AP) manager. With the company poised for growth, the status quo simply wouldn’t cut it. LUSH selected Medius for its AP automation initiative in 2017, going live with a packaged integration to their ERP, Microsoft Dynamics AX.

Immediately, the benefit was noticeable across the company. Audit processes took a matter of hours, instead of lengthy days spent rifling through filing cabinets. The finance team knew exactly where invoices sat and with whom the next steps were required of to get the invoices approved and processed for payment.

Lush has a corporate policy to decrease their environmental impact, so limiting the amount of paper was a huge step. Additionally, they used Medius AP automation to aggregate data on utility consumption, reporting up to an ethics committee overseeing that all offices were running in the most eco-friendly setup possible.

Because of the Medius cloud-based platform, built on Microsoft Azure, teams across the company can access reporting and dashboards from any location. They can track manual invoice handling, **and have been able to move from a touchless rate of 67% to 92%** within their first year. Their internal goal is to get that to 95%, among the best in class rates for Medius customers.

Since implementing automation of their invoice process with Medius, the LUSH staff has been happier since the change, according to McGrory. Staff members are using the time saved for personal development and other business improvements. They’re having conversations about creating meaningful work for people, rather than staff complaining about doing the same thing again and again, doing a job anyone could do.



And during internal audits, **we simply open up Medius and we’re done.** Gone are the days of sorting through filing cabinets and searching for lost invoices.

Blanca McGrory, AP Manager at LUSH

# 200,000 invoices received each year, 75% touchless processing rate

Briggs International, one of the world's largest distributors of Yale and Hyster materials handling equipment, is head quartered in Dallas, Texas with business dealings across the globe. The company generates over \$675M USD annually and processes 220,000 invoices per year.

In 2015, Briggs Equipment chose to implement Medius AP Automation as a means of improving the control over the invoice process and to reduce the overall lead time before an invoice could be approved and paid. At the time, they had also decided to upgrade their ERP system to a more recent version of Microsoft Dynamics AX, and were looking for a solution that could smoothly integrate with the new ERP system to get up and running with accounts payable automation quickly.

Medius AP Automation was implemented at the very end of 2015 with deployment completed in around 3 months. Once Briggs had completed their upgrade of Microsoft Dynamics AX, the Medius professional services team stepped in to train and test the systems together, setting Briggs' team up to take off with their new systems.

"The implementation process was even better than we'd hoped for; Medius AP Automation and Dynamics AX work incredibly well together, and from a business perspective, it was promising to know that our ERP system and AP automation solution were in sync so quickly," said Alden Senteney, Project Manager, Briggs Equipment.



## Striving for continuous improvement

Briggs Equipment has consistently been dedicated to the continual improvement of their accounts payable processes with Medius AP Automation. Today they have achieved a touchless rate of 66% and automatic distribution rate of 82% which is well in line or above the average benchmarks for all Medius users. Still, the team possess a self-starting drive to keep improving their KPIs.

“Before Medius, we didn’t have the metrics or sightline we needed to benchmark our processes and make the improvements we needed. With the guidance from the team at Medius, we could not only set up the KPIs we needed to track, but also maintained regular meetings with Medius and our team to pinpoint areas for improvement. We’ve been really pleased with the process and with the improvements we’ve been able to make,” remarked Alden.

In recent years, Briggs Equipment has demonstrated impressive growth as a business, acquiring MacKinnon Equipment & Services in the summer of 2017 thereby expanding their geographical footprint and their strength in the material handling business. They’ve been able to scale their business without having to add any additional AP headcount, an impressive feat given their recent growth.

““ Thanks to Medius, **I’ve cut my time spent working with invoices in half**, and that’s just the start of it

Daniel Shore, AP Manager at Briggs Equipment

# A mega-brand prepares for further expansion with **more efficient AP Automation**

Known throughout the globe, the name Karl Lagerfeld is synonymous with luxury and high fashion. Sharing the iconic vision and design aesthetic of its founder, perhaps no other brand is as widely recognized in the world of fashion. Featuring “Parisian-inspired classics with a rock-chic attitude”, KARL LAGERFELD offers ready-to-wear for women, men and kids. KARL LAGERFELD JEANS includes small leather goods, bags, footwear, fragrances, and eyewear, covering virtually every area of fashion lifestyle. KARL LAGERFELD connects with consumers at more than 200 stores worldwide - including premium wholesale and franchise partners - with key locations in Paris, London, Munich, Dubai and Shanghai. The brand also has a robust digital presence across Europe, the Middle East, Asia, and its KARL.COM flagship.

By 2020, the Accounts Payable department was handling thousands of suppliers and more than \$100 million in purchase order value. Despite the massive volume however, the team was still using a manual system to process its invoices. Invoices were printed out, entered by hand, and then physically routed for approval. Some invoices required multiple approvers, causing further complications. It was a time-consuming process that lacked visibility for auditor and vendor follow up. Plus, it was difficult to track invoices that were lost or delayed on an approver’s desk. With fewer than 10 employees the system was becoming unsustainable.

“We had 20 entities across Europe as well as plans for continued expansion. We needed proper workflows and procedures where our corporate policies could be applied. We needed automation.”

Eva Miguel Banos, Finance Director



## 80% touchless PO invoice processing

Recognizing the need for intelligent technology and automation, the team evaluated various solutions. According to Eva, there were several reasons for selecting Medius. The primary selling point was Medius' standard integration to Karl Lagerfeld's ERP, Infor M3. "Medius asked just a few questions and we could tell immediately they had a clear, in-depth knowledge of our ERP," says Eva. "They pinpointed the issues, identified the solutions and demonstrated superior insight." The team was also working within a tight time frame. A solution was needed before the start of the new fiscal year, and Medius was confident they could implement it within less than three months. Finally, Medius provided an in-house consultant to support the go live. As a result, the process was seamless, and the system was up and running within just 7 weeks - far better than originally expected.

Medius proved to be a welcome tool with numerous benefits. First, it offers better visibility than ever before. The team simply types in a vendor name to discover the location of an invoice. They spend less time chasing down approvers and achieve a higher level of efficiency. Better visibility also provides an audit trail for both auditors as well as vendors who may be seeking payment.

Staff discovered that Medius reduces errors and can detect potential fraud. If a vendor's bank account has changed for example, the system catches it in the earliest stages and staff can follow up for verification. Eva also appreciates that Medius forces the company to use better processes. For example, if a PO is processed in one currency and the invoice is received in a different currency, Medius forces consistency in order to complete two-way matching. So Medius actually encourages other departments to be more aware of processes and follow better business practices.

Director of IT Transformation, Arnold Ruijter was highly impressed with implementation. "Medius required very little input from IT staff which was greatly appreciated. Now the solution is doing exactly what we want and need," he comments. When asked if Medius has exceeded expectations, the answer is an unequivocal yes. "Absolutely," says Eva "I wish we had done it earlier!"



I don't know where we would be without Medius. I was physically signing invoices only a year ago. That would be impossible now.

Eva Miguel Banos, Finance Director



# More than 30% higher invoice processing

Seattle based NIC Global is a leading parts manufacturer providing sheet metal components for trucking, medical products and utility cabinets. As NIC continued to grow, issues in the AP department were becoming apparent. Using a manual system to process hundreds of vendor invoices meant that file cabinets were filled with paper. Documents were being routed by hand and email, often multiple times before an approval was received. It was a time-consuming process made even worse by the need to match complex invoices to receipts. The result was that approvals were slow and vendor payments were delayed.

Recognizing the need for improvement, management conducted research to find a best-in-class automation tool. Sophisticated OCR was important, but ease-of-use was also a factor. While other solutions fell short, Medius had it all. The team considers Medius' time saving automation workflows to be a gamechanger. As for implementation, Jason Mayfield, Director of Accounting comments, "We expected some bumps during integration to our ERP, Infor SyteLine, but Medius support was there to help us along the way. Once implementation was completed, the system proved to be everything we expected, and more!"



## Saving money and increasing productivity

Almost immediately Medius improved efficiency with an approval hierarchy that routes invoices logically and methodically. Staff can easily review an invoice, resolve any issues, track invoice status and approve. Plus, NIC saves postage and printing costs, while taking advantage of early payment discounts.

Visibility also improved. Researching an expense no longer requires a manual search through file cabinets. The manager simply logs in and retrieves the invoice. Bi-weekly reports show staff which invoices are outstanding and need to be prioritized.

With remote offices in various time zones, having 24/7 access to invoices without contacting headquarters is a huge benefit to all. Invoice processing also improved, going from 650 to 800 per week without additional staff. Medius also helps in accruals for non PO invoices. A report can be generated at month end showing expense based invoices that haven't been processed through ERP so an accrual can be easily entered.

“ If not for Medius, **we definitely** would have had to add more staff.

Jason Mayfield, Director of Accounting, NIC Global

# About Medius

Managing AP and finance should be about strategy, not stress. You shouldn't have to sift through endless emails, PDFs or paper to get invoices confirmed, coded and paid, so you can (heaven forbid) go home. You shouldn't have to scramble to pay suppliers and keep them happy or cross your fingers no surprises land in your inbox that jeopardize the numbers you've presented to the boss and the board. You shouldn't have to worry about a fake invoice subjecting you to fraud. And you certainly shouldn't have to fret about finding a solution that is actually a solution - one that doesn't add expensive consultants and costs instead of speed and simplicity.

Let's replace all that worry and wondering with calm and confidence. Medius links all of AP together - from invoice capture and processing all the way through payment. With one look at a demo, you'll see how Medius takes you beyond basic automation and minor improvements to let Artificial Intelligence (AI) do most of the work for you, so you can get done, go home and rest easy. You'll know exactly what's paid, what's pending, and that your forecasts are spot on. 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](https://medius.com).



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