The Ultimate Buyer's Guide
to Accounts Payable Automation

Corpay^

Introduction

In today's fast-paced world, businesses leverage powerful technology to automate repetitive and routine tasks. While accounts payable (AP) is an area ripe for automation, many organizations still rely heavily on manual, paper-based accounting processes. Consequently, finance teams are stretched thin in the age of doing more with less.

Why Automate Accounts Payable?

AP automation drives value in back-office operations by helping users streamline processes, reduce operational costs, increase efficiency, enhance security, eliminate errors, and improve visibility. As that happens, finance teams can shift their focus to more strategic initiatives, high-value tasks, or up-skilling team members.

Choosing the right solution may feel daunting, but this Buyer's Guide will help you identify, evaluate, and select the perfect fit for your organization based on your budget, wants, and needs.

Are You Considering AP Automation?

With countless AP automation solutions available today, finding the right fit can be challenging. Here are a few key factors to consider during your search:

- **Affordable:** Achieve your goals without breaking the bank.

- **Flexible:** Access your system from anywhere, ideally from both mobile and desktop interfaces.

- **Scalable:** Choose a cloud-based system that can easily grow and adapt with you.

- **Dependable:** Never miss an invoice approval, payment deadline, or vendor communication with a solution that includes tech-forward processes and dedicated customer service.

Step 1: Assess the Current State of Your AP Department

How Do You Know if AP Automation Is Right for You?

To answer this question, you must assess the current state of your AP department.

Q&A: Addressing Traditional AP Pain Points

Q. Why is manual data entry a hassle?

A. Manual data entry is often full of errors and slows things down. With most invoices still coming in paper form, mistakes and delays are pretty common.

Q. What happens when invoices go missing or are duplicated?

A. Missing or duplicate invoices create visibility gaps in your outstanding liabilities, making cash flow management and financial planning a costly challenge.

Q. How do manual payment workflows affect my business?

A. Manual payment processes take up a lot of time and resources, slowing down operations and increasing labor costs.

Q. Why is dealing with a high volume of check payments a problem?

A. Checks are slow and cumbersome, leading to delayed transactions and longer processing times.

Q. What issues arise from discrepancies and disputes?

A. Discrepancies and disputes can delay payments and strain vendor relationships, disrupting your business flow.

Q. How does not approving payments on time impact my business?

A. Missing early payment discounts because of delayed approvals can cost your business significant savings.

Q. What are the security and compliance risks with traditional payment methods?

A. Traditional methods, like paper checks, often carry high risks of security breaches and fraud. Staying compliant with regulations is tougher without automation.

Q. Why is payment follow-up and exception handling so time-consuming?

A. Manually dealing with payment exceptions and follow-ups takes a lot of time and effort, pulling your team away from more important tasks.

Q. Are these issues common, and what should I do if they sound familiar?

A. Yes, these are all common problems in traditional AP processes. If any of this sounds familiar, it's time to consider automating your workflows to boost efficiency, accuracy, and security.

>> With these pain points in mind, let's get started on the path to fully automated payment processes.

Step 2: Make the Business Case for Automation

> *Convincing your CFO to automate AP might take time, but helping them better understand the benefits could be the push they need to automate.*

Make the Business Case for Automation

Talk With Your CFO About These Benefits

- **Reduced Costs:** Automation can save you up to 75% in payment processing and labor costs.[1] Think about what you could do with those savings — better allocate resources and improve overall profitability.

- **Increased Visibility:** Real-time insights into your cash flow and spending give you a clear picture of your financial health. This helps you manage working capital more effectively and make smarter business decisions.

- **Boost Efficiency:** Automation speeds up invoice and payment processing by 80%,[2] saving you thousands of hours every year. Less manual work means your financial operations run smoother and faster.

Real-Time Data Insights and Reports

- **Access On-Demand Data:** Get real-time insights into your finance operations with comprehensive reporting tools. These tools provide detailed analytics to help you understand spending patterns and optimize your financial performance.

94%

More CFOs are seeing the value of AP automation. In fact, 94% of CFOs are investing in digital technologies in at least one area of payments and finance, with 87% planning to invest in the future.[3]

3. PYMNTS: 9 in 10 CFOs Focused on Payments Automation and Transformation

1. Goldman Sachs: How the next payments frontier will unleash small business
2. Axiomq: How AP Automation Software Can Slash Your Invoice Processing Costs by 80%

- **Enhanced Transparency:** See exactly where an invoice is in the approval process, in real time. This transparency eliminates bottlenecks and ensures timely payments.

- **Self-Service Reporting:** Easily access payment history, archived documents, and status reports whenever you need them. This empowers your team to retrieve the necessary information without waiting.

Accuracy and Compliance

- **Electronic Paper Trail:** Keep a complete electronic record of all invoices, approvals, and changes. This way, you can trace every transaction from start to finish without any hassle.

- **Audit Ready:** Make audits a breeze with a full electronic history of all transactions. Having all documentation readily available reduces audit stress and keeps you compliant.

4. Ardent: Accounts Payable Metrics that Matter that Matter in 2020
5. Ardent: Partners' Accounts Payable Metrics that Matter in 2022

28
The average industry time to route & approve payments is 28 days.[4]

10
The average industry time to manually process one invoice is 10 days.[5]

- **Stress-Free Compliance:** Manage audit processes securely and efficiently, lowering the risk of compliance issues. Automated systems ensure you meet regulatory requirements with ease.

Increased Security

- **Mitigate Fraud Risk:** Switch to virtual cards and ACH transactions to reduce payment fraud. These secure payment methods protect your company from unauthorized transactions and losses.

- **Positive Pay:** Use services like Positive Pay and Payee Positive Pay to verify transaction legitimacy. This adds an extra layer of security to your transactions.

- **Protect Sensitive Data:** Invest in technology to guard against vendor impersonation, phishing, and other threats. Strong security measures keep your financial data safe and confidential.

6. 2024 AFP Payments Fraud and Control Survey Report

Checks continue to be the payment method most vulnerable to fraud, with 65% of organizations reporting fraud attacks of this type.[6]

Step 3: Build the Project Team and Establish Project Goals

Before implementing AP automation in your organization, you should decide which employees will be part of the buying process.

This process usually involves the CFO, Controller, and any AP Clerks. Then, develop a list of goals you hope to achieve once you've automated. If any providers on your list fail to help you reach those goals, it's safe to assume they aren't the best fit for your company.

Your Organization Might Prioritize the Ability To:

• Reduce processing costs and times.

• Reduce exception rates and other invoice processing issues.

• Develop a more effective vendor payment strategy to help better manage and control cash and optimize working capital.

• Minimize late payments and late payments penalties.

• Use data to become a more intelligent operation.

• Improve vendor relationships.

• Gain better visibility into cash flow.

Step 4: Research Providers

Start your research by collecting the names of AP automation providers through an online search.

Choosing the Right AP Automation Provider

With many AP automation providers on the market — especially due to the growing adoption of invoice and payment automation — finding the right fit for your organization can seem daunting. Here's how to start:
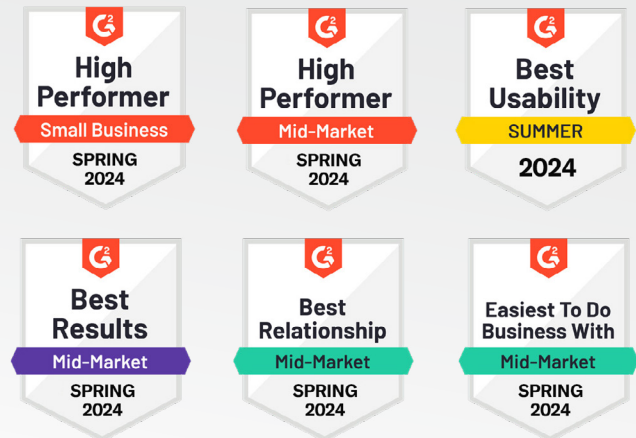
- **Research Providers:** Begin by gathering names of AP automation providers through an online search.

- **Narrow Down Options:** Focus on those that offer the products and services your company needs.

- **Read Reviews:** Once you have a list of 5–10 providers, check customer satisfaction ratings on sites like G2. This will help you avoid companies that make false promises and ensure you find a true partner for your AP needs.

Streamlined Accounts Payable for a Smooth Financial Process

"Corpay Spend Management has transformed my accounts payable process from a tedious and time-consuming task into a streamlined and efficient one. The software's intuitive interface and automation capabilities have significantly reduced the manual labor involved in processing invoices, approving payments, and managing vendor information. This has not only freed up my time to focus on more strategic financial matters but has also minimized errors and improved overall AP efficiency."

TRAVEL X., 5-STAR REVIEW

Snapshot of Corpay on G2

High Performer — Small Business — SPRING 2024

High Performer — Mid-Market — SPRING 2024

Best Usability — SUMMER 2024

Best Results — Mid-Market — SPRING 2024

Best Relationship — Mid-Market — SPRING 2024

Easiest To Do Business With — Mid-Market — SPRING 2024

Step 5: Explore and Ask Questions

When evaluating potential AP automation providers, it's important to explore their offerings and ask the right questions to ensure they meet your needs.

Key Questions to Ask

- What does their implementation process look like?

- Do they integrate with my ERP?

- Are there startup or activation fees, or are features all-inclusive?

- Do they offer a comprehensive mobile platform?

- Can they enroll my vendors and manage their data?

- Do they offer a single workflow for all payment types, or do I have to separate my payments?

- What methods do their representatives use to make payments (e.g., phone, online portal)?

- Do their representatives handle follow-up and reconciliation for checks, ACH, and card payments?

- What does their fraud protection look like?

- How will they help me achieve paperless workflows?

During Evaluations

- Observe how the solution is used and identify any potential issues.

- Review your pain points and goals.

- Ask plenty of questions and ensure all workflow steps are addressed.

- Inquire about current clients' experiences and research online reviews.

Post Evaluation

- Compare notes and ratings from your demos.

- Address any concerns about the solution's fit for your needs.

Step 6: Make a Decision

After thoroughly evaluating your options, it's time to make your decision. Keep in mind the factors and features previously mentioned to make sure you choose the provider that best fits your needs.

Key Considerations

- **Integration:** Make sure the provider integrates seamlessly with your existing systems and offers ample implementation support without adding extra work for your IT team.

- **Efficiency:** Look for automation that simplifies your workflows, cuts down on manual tasks, and boosts productivity from start to finish. The more time and money you save, the better.

- **Support:** Choose a provider with in-house customer service and support. Their team should handle communications on your behalf to maximize your time savings, and you should be able to reach out with questions and get immediate responses.

Why Choose Corpay?

When it comes to AP automation, Corpay offers solutions designed for unbeatable efficiency and control over your accounts payable processes. With features like an all-in-one mobile app, comprehensive vendor management, seamless integrations, and AI-driven workflows, Corpay is the smart choice for businesses aiming to optimize their financial operations.

Ready to transform your AP processes with Corpay? Start making smarter payments by scheduling a demo with us at **www.corpay.com**.

About Corpay

Corpay (NYSE: CPAY) is a global leader in payments, helping businesses of all sizes better track and manage spend. Through its unified spend management platform, Corpay Complete, Corpay offers a range of solutions including Payments Automation, Invoice Automation, Procure-to-Pay, Expense Management, and Commercial Card programs. These solutions empower clients to automate, secure, and streamline business payments while reducing overall costs. An S&P 500 and Fortune 1000 company, Corpay processes 1.9 billion transactions annually and is the #1 B2B commercial Mastercard® issuer in North America. Learn more at **www.corpay.com**.

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