

CASE STUDY: PREPARING FOR AP AUTOMATION


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INTRODUCTION

The big-picture goal of this project was to automate the majority of Accounts Payable processing for our client at their North America, Europe, and Asia operations. Initial objectives of this project included Mobilization, a Current State Evaluation, and Disconnect Assessment in preparation for the implementation of Canon's AP Automation Solution.

This project is a partnership with Canon Information & Imaging Solutions (CIIS), marking the 3rd partnership with our Elire Strategic Advisory Services (SAS). Elire was recently named 2018 CIIS Partner of the Year! Elire's Strategic Advisory Services Practice offers Strategic Roadmaps, Business Process Improvement, Outsourcing and Vendor Management, as well as training and change management services. These areas combine to help our clients understand their organization's current state problems and develop necessary solutions to move to the client's desired future state.

The project commenced in September 2018 with the scheduled Go-Live for North America in April 2019 and July 2019 for Europe and Asia. The goal of implementing the AP Processing Automation solution was to reduce processing time, data entry errors, and labor hours for our client. All effectively decreasing the bottom line.



MOBILIZATION



The mobilization tasks completed were pre-requisite tasks for current state. These tasks tended to be more administrative and included: resource setup, system setup, logistic planning, and voucher analysis. The initial resource setup included many on-boarding activities to ensure all project participants could perform their duties from Day 1, instead of running into roadblocks.

From an SAS perspective, this included identifying key client resources for their input on specific topic areas and organizing a facilitation plan for the Current State and Futures State requirements gathering.

From an IT perspective, many tasks were completed to ensure the proper software and hardware was setup and ready for Day 1.

Mobilization logistics mostly included travel planning for resources. Finally, the voucher analysis was vital for the current state research as the team queried voucher data and used this to learn more about the client's current vouchering process. This would help sift through the large amounts of data to be utilized. As a part of this process, the Elire team had to communicate with the client early on to get the information pulled from their systems.

CURRENT STATE

The main objective of the Current State phase of this project was to fully understand what the client's business process looks like, learn about the 'why' of how they currently operate, and identify any other intricacies that we must keep in mind while designing the future state. Another key objective of documenting the current state was to gather disconnects (anything that impedes the effectiveness or efficiency of the process) from the key resources identified during mobilization. This Disconnect Assessment would eventually become one of the key drivers for future state design. To understand the Current State AP process in scope, multiple Current State Mapping sessions were hosted for each global region.

The Current State Assessment included multiple components that brought value to understanding the unique functions of our client's business. This phase of the project took place over the first month. It began with hosting original mapping sessions for United States, Mexico, Canada, Europe, China, Japan, and Singapore. During these sessions we gathered information on the key parties interacting within the process, process steps, disconnects, and any attributes within their system.

These attributes could be a report, audit point, system customization, interface, enhancement, bolt-on, key policy, or workflow rules. After creating the original maps, the SAS team worked to create electronic drafts of the current state. These would be distributed to the key RACI members for review. Next, we convened for a second time to review and validate the Current State process maps. This included documenting additional pieces of information or making edits to the drafted maps. After a second round of information gathering, maps and correlating details were finalized. After receiving our main input from the project team members, we opened up a few current state sessions for the Property Managers. This group proved to give unique insight into their own role within AP processing. Detailing their own process steps, and disconnects gave us a different perspective to understand the full Current State process. This would be the baseline for designing the future state, as we now understood the uniqueness of our client's vouchering process and the difficulties they are currently having. The other important research that we completed was the Disconnect Assessment.

DISCONNECT ASSESSMENT



The Disconnect Assessment was created using the disconnects we gathered during the Current State mapping sessions. These were all compiled into one report, which we could use to further understand the issues within the Current State. The Elire team worked to bucket these disconnects into themes and analyze the commonalities of issues that individuals see throughout the client's global processes. Once we understood the issue points within the current state, we were able to move forward into proposing solutions. Elire and Canon worked together to define solutions for each of the pain points that were called out. After the solutions were determined we worked to create the summary deck for all disconnects. This deck was presented to the client as the complete Disconnect Assessment, containing key statistics, themes, and solutioning as we began the Future State Design phase.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Brandon Benner is a Consultant in Elire's Strategic Advisory Services Practice and a Certified Oracle Procurement Cloud Implementation Specialist.

Mr. Benner assists his clients in current state mapping to gather their current process and disconnects, as well as developing solutions for process improvements to get them to their desired future state. Mr. Benner is currently completing the Implementation of Canon's AP Automation Solution for a global real estate client.

Elire's Strategic Advisory Services practice offers services in the areas of Strategic Roadmaps, Business Process Improvement, Accounts Payable Automation, and Training and Change Management. These areas combine to help our clients understand their organization's Current State problems and develop the necessary solutions to move to their desired future state. The Elire methodology allows our clients to move forward with confidence and also develops the materials necessary to win internal support for the project.

Elire and Canon have a proven partnership of delivering success to our Clients. Elire is a certified Canon Reseller, and is the go-to implementation partner in the marketplace. As the industry PeopleSoft experts, Elire also provides guidance for the future of the Canon solution, assisting the Canon development team to continue to add maximum value to the tools PeopleSoft Users. Elire was also recognized as Canon's Partner of the Year in 2018.