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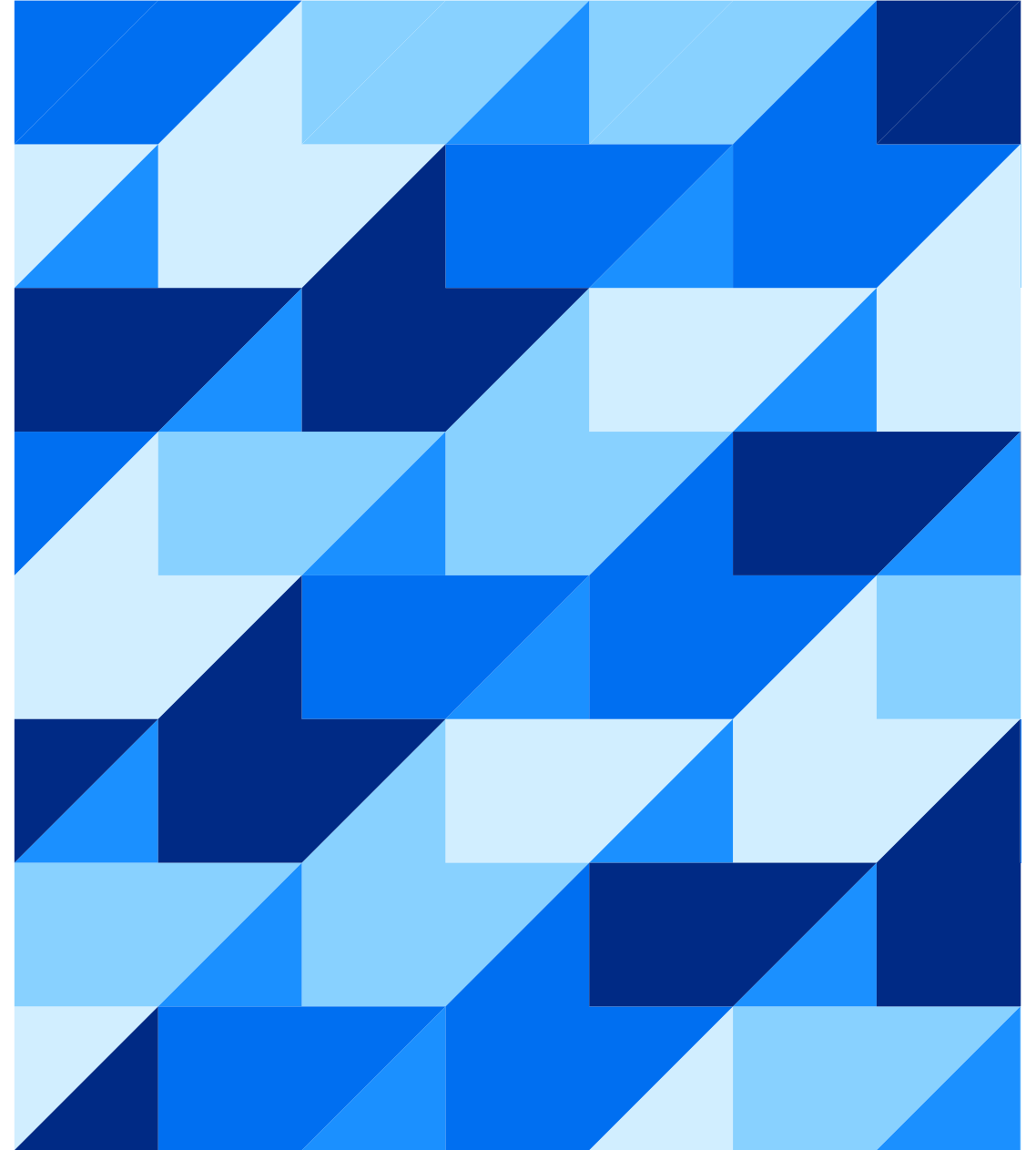
Optimizing supplier invoice processing through automation

Deloitte Africa

Professional and Consulting Services

PUBLIC

Deloitte.



Company information

COMPANY NAME:

Deloitte Africa

HEADQUARTERS:

Waterfall City, Waterfall, Gauteng

INDUSTRY:

Professional and Consulting Services

WEBSITE:

<https://www.deloitte.com/za/en.html>

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES:

7000

Founded in 1845, Deloitte provides audit and assurance, consulting, tax and related services, but we are more than our offerings. We exist to make an impact that matters.

Our mission is “To uphold integrity and promote a culture of inclusion. To build better futures”.

Deloitte Africa transformed its business to operate “As One,” unlocking the power of its workforce through an embedded intelligence that integrates several SAP technologies and solutions.

In Africa, our sustainability strategy is founded on three areas:

1. Regulatory affairs and public policy
2. Purpose beyond profit
3. World impact (Impact 14M people in Africa by 2030)

Our ESG reports show that there has been a 41% decrease in gross greenhouse emissions since 2019.

Optimizing invoice processing through automation

Deloitte Africa

Deloitte.

CHALLENGE:

The finance procurement process required dedicated finance resources to monitor invoices received in each country's email box. The details from these invoices were subsequently entered manually into the SAP S/4HANA Cloud Public Edition for payment purposes. This process was time-consuming, tedious and prone to human error.

SOLUTION:

The goal was to reduce human involvement in repetitive and manual tasks associated with invoice payments. This was achieved by automating the "manual" segment of the invoice payment workflow. The solution involved creating an unattended SAP Build Process Automation bot that retrieves invoices from a centralized inbox utilizing the document extraction service, followed by executing validations according to defined business rules. If the specified business rules and validations are satisfied, the invoice will be parked in the SAP S/4HANA Cloud Public Edition.

OUTCOME:

The involvement of business stakeholders was crucial during the design and testing phases, facilitating the development of a seamless and robust solution. This solution is currently operational in a productive environment. It has optimized the accounts payable process, enabling the department to focus on reconciliation rather than data capture thereby reducing human errors. This has resulted in a "cleaner" GR/IR account and has minimised the risks associated with missed payments to suppliers.

99%

Cleaner GR/IR accounts due to exception reporting tracking errors and ensuring all invoices are processed correctly

2-3X

Faster delivery of invoices to SAP S/4HANA Cloud Public Edition

75%

Decrease in invoice process overheads



Integrating SAP Build Process Automation capabilities into the SAP S/4HANA Cloud Public Edition supplier invoice management process streamlines accounts payable operations by means of reducing human error, boosting productivity and enhancing efficiency which leads to significant cost savings and a more reliable invoicing process.



Brandon Lee Naidoo
Deloitte ERP Technical & Integration Manager



Deloitte.

Challenges

GLOBAL CHALLENGES

The current job market reflects the harsh reality of retrenchment, a situation exacerbated post the global pandemic. Companies may engage in this process for a variety of reasons, including restructuring, mergers, or economic instability. The technology sector has been particularly affected, resulting in significant job losses that have created challenges for the global workforce. Many organizations are rethinking their workforce strategies and often make changes that are disruptive and painful to improve operational and financial results.

BUSINESS CHALLENGES

Processing of supplier invoices required dedicated finance resources to monitor invoices received in each country's email box. These invoices were then manually captured in SAP S/4HANA Cloud Public Edition for payment. This process was time-consuming, tedious and prone to human error.

As part of an overall process of streamlining the finance function and reducing errors, the goal was to develop a solution to reduce the amount of human intervention required for repetitive, manual invoice payment tasks.

This was successfully achieved by automating the Deloitte Africa supplier invoice capturing process using an SAP Build Process Automation bot.

Objectives

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The key objective was to reduce the amount of human intervention required for repetitive, manual supplier invoice processing tasks by using automation. A series of workshops and solution design iterations were conducted with the technical team, architects, and business stakeholders.

The following requirements were identified:

1. Vendors are required to send invoices to a country-specific email addresses.
2. These country specific email addresses will forward the invoices to a centralized finance email address.
3. A bot will be tasked with validating email requests according to specific criteria.
4. The bot will leverage an OCR feature to extract the required invoice information.
5. Upon successful extraction and matching of the purchase order within the SAP S/4HANA Cloud Public Edition system, the bot will park the invoice in SAP S/4HANA Cloud Public Edition for validation and processing by the finance accounts payable clerk.
6. Business transaction completion and exception logs are updated at each stage of the process.

WHY SAP

Deloitte's global strategy is to leverage the full potential of SAP solutions to drive business agility and innovation across the enterprise as well as enable scalability, flexibility, and rapid deployment through a cloud first strategy.

Deloitte has been an SAP customer and partner for many years. Deloitte Africa took a cloud journey to SAP S/4HANA Cloud Public Edition in 2018.

SAP Business Technology Platform hosts a plethora of services and tools. One of those being SAP Build Process Automation which could assist us in developing a solution to automate a detailed business process.

SAP Build Process Automation allows for creating intelligent actions and automating repetitive tasks by means of robotic process automation and machine learning capabilities. The use of document information extraction within SAP Build Process Automation allows for extraction of structured and semi-structure information from documents using machine learning models which include pretrained SAP models.

Project or use case

OVERALL USE CASE

Effective invoice management is vital for sustaining operational efficiency and ensuring financial accuracy in the business. Deloitte Africa's finance accounts payable team required dedicated finance resource to monitor invoices received in the email inboxes of various countries. These invoices were manually captured into SAP S/4HANA Cloud Public Edition for processing payments. This process was time consuming, tedious and prone to human error.

Over the years, the importance of optimising invoice management processes has grown, as traditional methods often involve tedious manual entry and reliance on paper-based records. Such practices increase the likelihood of errors and hinder efficiency. The adoption of automated invoice processing facilitates the extraction and validation of data before it is entered into financial systems. This shift towards automation not only shortens processing times and reduces human error but also guarantees that payments are made promptly, along with several other benefits.

A bot was developed utilising SAP Build Process Automation to read invoices from a central inbox through the document extraction service. It thereafter conducts verifications based on predetermined business rules. Once the business rules and checks are satisfied, the invoice data is captured in SAP S/4HANA Cloud Public Edition . However, it remains unposted until a final review is conducted by the accounts payable clerk.

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE PROJECT

SAP Build Process Automation combines the capabilities of SAP Workflow Management and SAP Intelligent Robotic Process Automation. The embedded document extraction service within SAP Build Process Automation allows for extraction of information from input files based on templates. This service includes automatic template detection to extract relevant information from the document for further processing. Information is easily extracted from handwritten, machine generated and scanned documents.

Benefits and outcomes 1 of 2

BUSINESS OR SOCIAL

- Cleaner GR/IR account ensuring invoices are processed correctly.
- Reduced time in manual capturing as there is faster delivery of Invoices to SAP S/4HANA Cloud Public Edition.
- Decrease in invoice processing overheads.
- Elimination of human error.
- Minimized risk of missing payments to suppliers.
- Increased time to contribute other value-added tasks such as reconciliation.

IT*

- Integrating SAP Build Process Automation and SAP S/4HANA Cloud Public Edition allows for seamless flow of information.
- The solution incorporates scalability of use by multiple regions.
- Improvement in Audit trails and monitoring of end-to-end process.
- Using SAP Build Process Automation allowed for easier build, deploy and monitoring of the solution.
- Data protection and privacy which are built into the SAP Build Process Automation capability.

Benefits and outcomes 2 of 2



PEOPLE RELATED: PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

- Automating the capture and matching process has allowed for resource time to be freed up to focus on other value-added tasks.
- Improved service offering to business.
- Reduced errors in processing invoices.
- Improved compliance according to legislative requirements.
- Streamlined review process and approval.



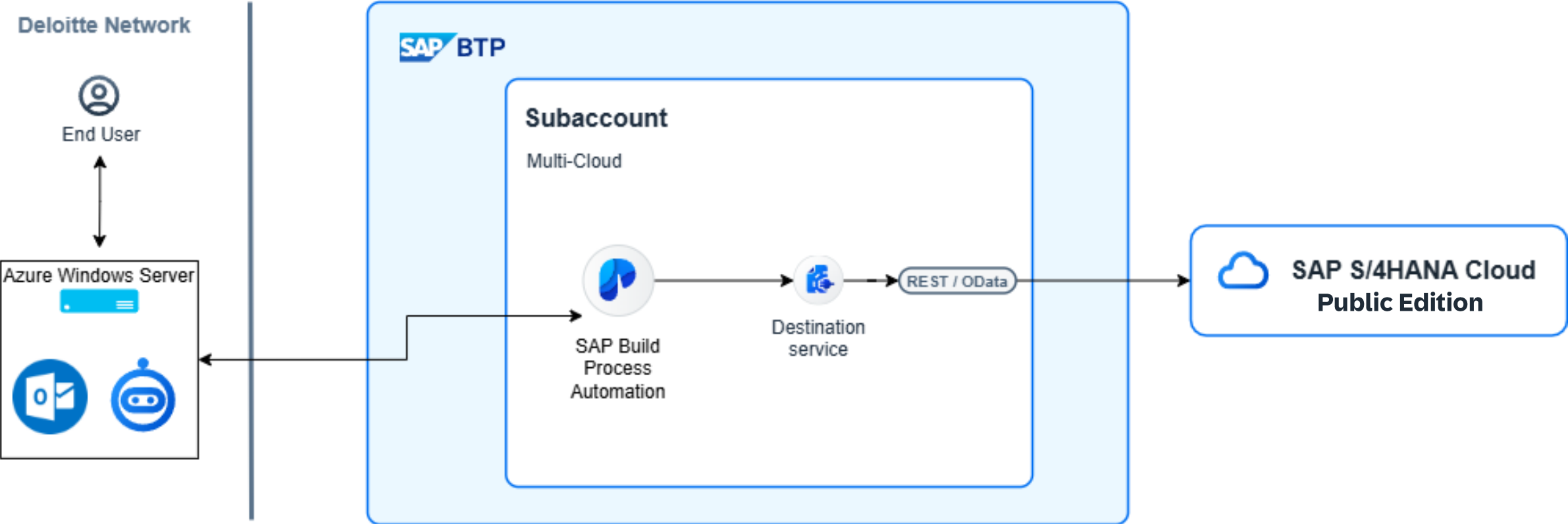
Utilizing the automation has allowed us to process more invoices with less staff, reduce the time in capturing and allowed us to continue with more value-added tasks within the team like reconciliations. It has also reduced the errors in processing which resulted in a cleared GR/ IR account and reduced time spend tracking nonpayment of invoices. Our service offering to business has been improved by the capability of the exception reporting and invoice reconciliation.



**- Manager Procurement and Accounts Payable
Finance & Operations**

Architecture

SAP Electronic Invoicing - SAP BTP Solution Diagram



Deployment details 1 of 3

SAP TECHNOLOGIES USED

	SAP Offerings	DEPLOYMENT STATUS LIVE Proof of Concepty	SAP Business AI SCENARIO (if applicable)	CONTRIBUTION TO PROJECT
1	SAP Business Technology Platform	Live	N/A	Platform which supports services used to build automation project.
2	SAP Build Process Automation	Live	N/A	Service used to build unattended automation.
3	SAP S/4HANA Cloud Public Edition	Live	N/A	SAP ERP system used to manage business end to end processes.

DEPLOYMENT STATUS:

Live

DEPLOYMENT COUNTRY:

African Regions: South Africa, Kenya, Zambia, Malawi, Botswana, Ghana, Uganda, Tanzania, Nigeria, Namibia

DATE:

10th October 2024

NUMBER OF END USERS:

Deloitte Africa Accounts Payable Team.

TRANSACTION VOLUME:

Approximately 120 invoices processed per day.

Deployment details 2 of 3

The following SAP Business Technology Platform (SAP BTP) solutions are part of the project:

	TECHNOLOGY	SAP BTP SOLUTION	CONTRIBUTION TO PROJECT
1	Application Development and Automation	SAP Build Process Automation	SAP Build Process Automation was used to develop the automation project and manage the execution and monitoring of the bot.
2	Extended Planning and Analysis	N/A	N/A
3	Data and Analytics	N/A	N/A
4	Integration	N/A	N/A
5	Artificial Intelligence	N/A	N/A

***LICENSED THROUGH THE SAP BUILD/TECH ADOPTION PROGRAM:**

***LISTED ON SAP STORE:**

***MONETIZED (SOLD TO YOUR CUSTOMERS):**

***CO-INNOVATION WITH SAP:**

***NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS USING THE SOLUTION/APP:**

Deployment details 3 of 3

The following offerings from SAP services or application packages were utilized during the implementation or deployment phase.

	SAP SERVICE OR APPLICATION PACKAGE	CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROJECT
1	N/A	N/A
2		
3		
4		
5		

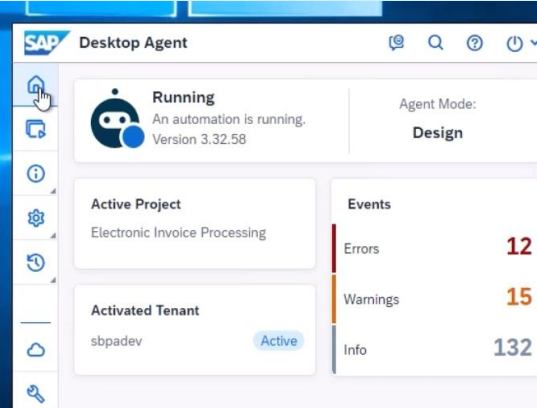
Other Packages

SAP DISCOVERY CENTER MISSION:
N/A

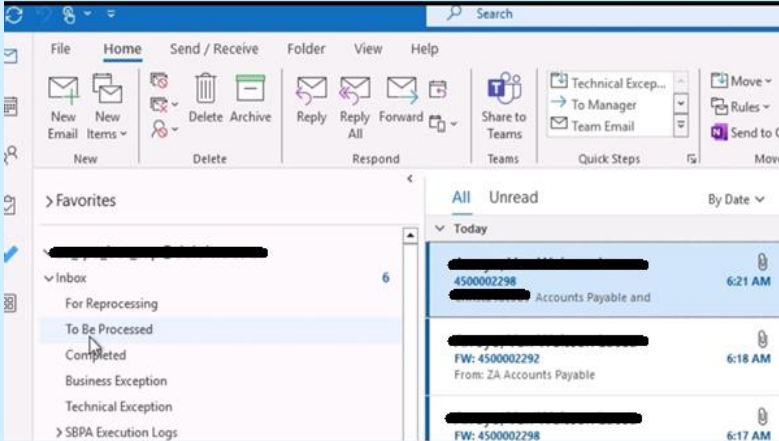
Additional information

Automation Process Overview (1/2)

Desktop Agent on Azure Windows Server utilised to run scheduled unattended bot.



Outlook used for dedicated mailbox to receive Invoice attachments which are then moved to the To Be Processed folder for further sorting and processing.



Automation steps run in the background to ensure business rules are met for accurate processing.

