

*An Accounts Payable Expert  
Interview*

# The Case For Accounts Payable Automation



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*Optiform Interviews  
Amy Knoebel, MBA*

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# Amy Knoebel, MBA

**Accounts Payable Supervisor**

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17 years Experience in Accounts  
Payable

Optiform Interviewed Amy About Her  
Experience in AP

# BIO

*Who is Amy?*

## **Hi Amy! Tell us a little bit about you. Who are you? Why do you love working in Accounts Payable?**

Amy Knoebel: I have been an Accounts Payable Manager in various industries for over seventeen years.

I enjoy Accounts Payable for a variety of reasons:

- It is an important department in any company
- It is the last place to catch mistakes or issues
- I get to work with many different people and departments (purchasing, accounts receivable, sales, other management staff, etc)
- It is always changing
- I get to be in a department that helps makes a difference for the company

# BAD PRACTICES

*It isn't all sunshine...*

**What are some of the worst AP practices that you have seen in action or heard about?**

- Not getting W9's and confirming new vendors during setup
- Address books missing key information
- 1099's not being sent out
- Paying off statements vs. invoices
- Putting invoices in drawers and not processing them

# CONCERNS

*"There is a great difference between worry and concern. A worried person sees a problem, and a concerned person solves a problem."*

*- Harold Stephens*

## **What have you seen as points of resistance or concern about AP automation?**

If you are not automated and want to be, there is a high cost to getting it set up. The company needs to evaluate the cost and efficiency to justify the change.

If they are already automated, is the process/software working the way it should?

- What issues arise from the automation? i.e. Are there exceptions in the queues that need worked?
- What if we pay the wrong vendor?
- How do we handle duplicate invoices coming through?

# THE OLD WAY

*Perfection has to do with the end product, but excellence has to do with the process. - Jerry Moran*

## **Can you describe some of the older, manual processes you've worked within AP?**

Before automation:

- Opening the mail
- Stamping it
- Coding it where necessary
- Getting the approvals
- Was it lost and does it need another copy?

Depending on the type of invoice:

- Who needs to approve it?
- Who enters it in the ERP?

It could take up to two to three days to be processed and ready to pay.



# THE NEW WAY

*Efficiency is doing things right;  
effectiveness is doing the right things. -  
Peter Drucker*

## **How does an automated AP process make a difference in this process?**

Automation is more efficient when it comes to workflow.

- The invoice is scanned in
- It is routed to person who approves electronically
- It gets coded
- Sent to be processed
- Invoice is paid

This can be done in hours, depending on approval levels, controls built in system, etc.



# TOP TIPS

*Most discussions of decision making assume that only senior executives make decisions or that only senior executives' decisions matter. This is a dangerous mistake. - Peter Drucker*

## **What would you tell someone considering making the transformation to an automated AP department in the near future?**

- Do your research
- Get as much information as possible
- Take your time and do it right
- Think about everything as much as you can
- Pick a reputable company (software side) that has a good implementation team that assists you
- Make sure upper management are on board and support changes
- Test it before go live
- Implement what works best for your company

# KEY BENEFITS

*Most discussions of decision making assume that only senior executives make decisions or that only senior executives' decisions matter. This is a dangerous mistake. - Peter Drucker*

## **In your experience, what are the key benefits of becoming a company with an automated AP department?**

Automation allows the department and company to focus on other items/issues.

It takes certain issues out of the equation like missing/lost invoices, getting approvals before being paid out, turn around time quicker for processing, and less/no paper.

# FINAL THOUGHTS

**I've worked in large and small companies and seen a lot. A paperless environment does have a lot of pros.**

**If a company has the support, staff, finances and the volume to support it, it's worth the transition to automate.**

# Thank you for reading

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