

Mazda Streamlines Accounting Through SAP Integration & Web Functionality



mazda

ORGANIZATION

Mazda North American Operations
www.mazdausa.com

INDUSTRY

Automotive Manufacturing

SOLUTION

- > Imaging/Workflow for Accounts Payable
- > SAP Integration

CHALLENGE

- > Integrate imaging and workflow into new SAP accounting system
- > Move to web-based forms
- > Redesign databases to improve functionality

KEY BENEFITS

- > SAP user is able to view the actual document and data within system
- > Tolerance checks automated for incoming invoices
- > Sophisticated workflow ensures accurate routing of information for timely approvals
- > POs or critical information traceable throughout transaction lifecycle
- > Improved infrastructure allows for web-based functionality
- > Ease of deployment—information universally accessible via the web
- > Information is managed at server instead of individual desktops
- > Reduced maintenance and support from outsourced desktop group
- > Web-enabled expense reporting allows reimbursement in 2-3 days, down from 2 weeks
- > New web-based functionality opens the door for additional initiatives at Mazda with little expenditure

“THE FACT THAT IMAGESOURCE IS CERTIFIED BY SAP GAVE US CONFIDENCE THEY WOULD MEET OUR CRITICAL DEADLINE TO GET THE NEW ERP SYSTEM UP AND RUNNING. THEIR ILINX TECHNOLOGY WAS THE KEY ELEMENT TO A SEAMLESS INTEGRATION WHICH MAXIMIZED OUR ROI.”

Kevin Luck, Business Systems Analyst, IT Division, Mazda North American Operations

Headquartered in Irvine, California, Mazda North American Operations oversees the sales, marketing, parts and customer service support of Mazda vehicles through nearly 900 dealers. The Accounting Department was challenged with processing nearly 17,000 invoices per year on a 13-year-old ERP system.

In 2004 Mazda made the decision to transfer their accounting functions to SAP to increase process efficiencies and reduce costs. Wanting to engage advancements in technology, Mazda's leadership directed the IT department to fully utilize web functionality whenever possible.

Timeline Critical in Move to SAP

Mazda wanted the SAP system up and working several months prior to the new fiscal year. Sizeable labor and fiscal allocations to the SAP conversion motivated Mazda's IT department to keep the imaging and workflow upgrade on schedule.

To guarantee the projected deadline was met, Mazda turned to ImageSource®, and their outstanding team of professionals.

“ImageSource has breadth of knowledge and experience. They have specialist—project managers, analysts and developers—who have a deeper knowledge base than other solution providers,” says Kevin Luck, Business Systems Analyst, IT Division, Mazda North American Operations.

Foundation Set for Web Functionality

Another of Mazda's objectives was to enable employees to track POs or critical information at any time during a transaction lifecycle.

An initial, in-depth consultation with ImageSource helped Mazda shape the vision for the Accounts Payable solution. A

web-based workflow was designed, to be implemented immediately following the successful SAP launch, providing valuable infrastructure for future initiatives.

Comprehensive Workflow Redesigned

The existing Acorde (Oracle IPM) for imaging, workflow and document management had to be integrated with SAP. The migration required Mazda to change all vendor numbers, general ledger account numbers including the number's basic structure. A comprehensive workflow redesign was needed to address compatibility issues with Mazda's old and new systems.

ImageSource upgraded enterprise workflows and client workstation software, realizing the initial SAP integration on time.



More Transactions with Fewer Resources

The SAP integration can easily capture, route, store and retrieve documents, images, and data associated with transactions. SAP users are able to view the actual document, in addition to the data within the system.

A Mazda employee fills out a form in IBPM, setting in motion the workflow in the requisition for a purchase order, check request, wire payment or expense report. Using Fujitsu's imaging

hardware, an invoice is scanned into Kofax Ascent Capture and QA'd. It is then linked with the original requisition PO, going through automated tolerance checks. Once verified and approved by the requestor, the invoice is sent to SAP accounts payable for remittance.

The integration has allowed Mazda employees to process more transactions with fewer resources. Mazda currently handles invoice processing that requires routing for more than 600 confirmations or approvals daily. Sophisticated workflow functionality allows information/documents to be delivered to the appropriate person for timely approval.

Process improvements mean that it can now take less than three days from receipt of invoice to SAP processing.

Flexibility, Speed and Ease of Use

ImageSource's solution allowed Mazda to utilize a web-based platform, improving processing speed and ease of use. Built-in flexibility allows for additional workflows to be easily deployed. The solution addressed the following objectives:

- › Reduce maintenance/system administration through simplified workflow, streamlined system and merged forms
- › Improve speed of searches and other business processes
- › Enhance quality of data entered and captured
- › Allow users to independently find status of packages through a status search option
- › Reduce labor to process invoices by adding function to track line-item deductions against PO's balance

Web Functionality Provides Accessibility

The second phase encompassed a complete system upgrade, including the move to Oracle IPM 7.6 and Kofax Ascent Capture 7. ImageSource ILINX® Release Script replaced the existing release script, providing out-of-the-box functionality for Mazda to customize without writing code.

ImageSource designed a web-based architecture that increases efficiencies through improved automation and intelligent delivery of business documents enterprise-wide. Now over the Web, the traditional corporate environment

is expanded, providing accessibility to anyone, anywhere. Beyond the immediate benefits, this infrastructure can be leveraged economically for future technology implementations.

Streamlined Functionality and Processes

Restricted by the number of line-items on requisitions in the old system, ImageSource created additional databases that permit unlimited line-items on a single requisition form. The databases also reduced duplication of data in the system.

Through the use of profiles, the number of queues has been consolidated, making the workflow easier to maintain.

And a universal search option has been added, which allows users to independently search for the status of requisitions, and see where they are in the workflow process.

Expense Reporting Made Quick & Simple

Leveraging the web-based system further, it is capable of facilitating expense reporting and subsequent workflow. The old, manual process took well over two weeks. Through the use of web-forms, employees can submit expense reports electronically from any location and have it approved by a manager via workflow. Typically, reimbursement will take just 2-3 days.

Substantial Reduction in Support Services

The old environment required multiple desktop installations, including custom applications providing forms and ODBC's. Maintenance to keep up with inherent shifting within the corporate environment was constant. Now on the Web, outsourced maintenance and support services have been dramatically reduced, resulting in far less downtime and improved productivity.

Partnership Provides Exponential Returns

The superior functionality provided by the ImageSource solution has enabled Mazda to improve business processes enterprise-wide.

"Beyond defining our basic objectives, the architecture, concept and design for getting things moving on the back-end was greatly due to ImageSource's planning," says Kevin Luck. "They're an invaluable part of our technological advancement."

Technology



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