

# America's Largest Non-Bank Cash Advance Provider uses ABBYY FlexiCapture to Enhance Accounts Payable Process

## CHALLENGE

Streamline their accounts payable process to save both time and money.

## RESULTS

After implementing ABBYY FCI, Advance America has seen a 38% reduction in time spent processing invoices.

Advance America is one of the largest non-bank cash advance providers in the United States, and as part of its day to day business, processes on average 21,199 invoices a month. Always looking for ways to improve and streamline processes, Advance America decided to integrate ABBYY FlexiCapture for Invoices (ABBYY FCI). "It definitely has been a huge time saver. Even with the ones [invoices] that haven't been fully mapped yet, it's still faster than keying the invoices in by hand."

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*- Neal Littlejohn, EDI Administrator*

## Being the best financial solution for the past 20 years

Established in 1997 with just a few stores in the Southeast United States, Advance America has helped millions of Americans move forward and now has 2,102 stores in 28 states nationwide offering a variety of financial services.

### NEEDING SOMETHING MORE FROM CURRENT PROCESS

Maintaining and running the accounts payable process for a large network of over 2,000 stores nationwide involves an enormous amount of paperwork, from utilities (water, gas, electric, etc.) to day to day items (paper, toner, etc.). So much paperwork in fact, that Advance America averages 21,199 invoices a month from 9,548 different vendors. These invoices are separated into utility and non-utility categories, and follow the process outlined below:

- 1) For utility invoices, they had to be manually keyed into an Excel template, uploaded to their EDI which then transferred the data to their financial system. The paper invoices were then manually stamped with the date they were received and physically stored in file cabinets for 120 days before AP staff would destroy them.

2) For non-utility invoices, they had to be stamped with the received date, routed for approval and signature, manually keyed into Excel template, scanned and uploaded into the company's document image system for storage where the AP staff would then link (index) the documents per the required fields.

This labor-intensive process consumed about 85% of each day of the company's eight full time AP employees!

## **STREAMLINING THE PROCESS**

Knowing there could be a more streamlined process; Advance America went to work researching multiple invoice processing software before finally deciding to go with ABBYY FCI and Naviant, one of ABBYY's tech partners, for the implementation process. "I found that a lot of the OCR/ICR software's utilized ABBYY as a back engine and Naviant came up as a reseller for ABBYY with high marks," recalls Glenn Grospitch, Director of Reconciliation and Accounts Payable. According to Glenn, "Once the decision was made on the software and speaking to Naviant about our vision, I felt like Naviant was very knowledgeable and suggested some items we had not thought about. After the purchase of the software, we had multiple conference calls to assure we had as much information needed to setup the software and server for a smooth implementation. The initial implementation and testing went very well. During the setup and configuration of the system, this is where the knowledge that Phil [Naviant's consultant] had, even though we thought we were pretty automated, he actually had a few ideas to integrate into our current process and streamline it even more than we thought. Having a large variety of samples on hand for testing was key to finding out just how different each vendor may be and how many additional minor adjustments may be needed. Taking the time and laying out exactly how and what we wanted the system to do, getting the system configured to accommodate our special way of processing, and testing a wide variety of invoices made the production environment much smoother"

After implementation of the software was finished, it was clear how ABBYY FCI streamlined the process for each of their invoice formats. Now the new process is:

- 1) For utility invoices, they are now scanned into ABBYY FCI with the software automatically "burning" the date onto the image. Data is verified/trained (if needed), placed on the upload template to load through EDI for additional validation and then loaded into the financial system. This is all placed on an automated scheduler. The image from the original scan into ABBYY FCI is then automatically sent to a depository drive where after 120 days they are automatically purged from the system.
- 2) For non-utility invoices, they are now sent out for an approval signature. Once approved, they are then scanned into ABBYY FCI, once again with the date being automatically "burned" onto the image. From that one scan, information would be extracted and sent to EDI and the scanned image would then also be sent to the document imaging for storage systematically. So ABBYY FCI is serving two purposes: data extraction and backup for the document!

Just with ABBYY FCI being able to "burn" the date on the invoices as opposed to hand stamping each one has been a huge time saver. "That [hand stamping] was a long process, because all you heard out there in the morning when the mail came was all the stampers going off!"; recalls Glenn.

## **The Results**

Despite the initial reluctance among some of the AP staff, after ABBYY FCI was implemented "they absolutely love it", says Glenn. "It's user friendly and it was easy to train all of the associates. Visually from the split screen, where we have our conditions if you will on one side, the mapping, to showing the invoice on the other side; it's very easy for the end user to just click and point and fill in all of the required fields"

Advance America has also been pleased with their choice in Naviant; not only with their help in the initial installation process, but the continued support and quick response as they continue their journey with ABBYY FCI. According to Neal (EDI Administrator), "As far as working with Naviant, it's been great. With the support portal, I can put a question in there and have an answer back in usually 30 minutes".

The number of invoices being processed hasn't changed since implementing ABBYY FCI, however the overall time spent processing those invoices has reduced by over 38% and contributed to saving in personnel! ABBYY FCI also helps save time by intelligently flagging issues such as outstanding balances sooner. According to Glenn, by doing this "...when it goes into EDI, it validates the information and processes a lot faster because the A/P associate is researching and fixing it on the front end instead of waiting until after it goes through the EDI process and it is kicked out, in what we call 'recycle,' to be researched and fixed before it gets loaded into the financial system".

Advance America is still in the process of fully implementing ABBYY FCI with all their vendors, but according to Glenn, "The potential is great!" With this in mind, he is also thinking of the potential future applications of ABBYY FCI.

**"With having a software driven background, I do see where we might be able to utilize this in some other areas throughout the company!"**

*- Glenn Grospitch, Director of Reconciliation and Accounts Payable*