

ARTSYL

Intelligent Process Automation

Precoat Metals Centralizes AP and Elevates the Roles of AP Team Members by Transforming Vendor Invoice Processes

“ *The docAlpha Transformation Platform, integrated with WebDocs and AS/400, allowed Precoat to quickly centralize AP operations and deliver end-to-end automation* ”

The Challenge

Precoat Metals specializes in decorative and protective coatings for continuous coiled metal used in commercial and residential construction, appliance, HVAC, transportation, and container products. As such, the company has spent over 50 years focused on continuous process improvement, embracing Six Sigma, LEAN, Value Stream Mapping, Design for Six Sigma and 5S to deliver the highest quality products efficiently.

Recently, the company made the decision to apply the same approach to process efficiency for back end finance processes like accounts payable.

While the company relied on RJS HelpSystems' WebDocs to handle digital content like invoices, orders, quotes, etc., and used AS/400 to manage business data, the systems weren't being used to full effect.

As a result, AP staff members in regional offices spent time printing emailed invoices, scanning them and profiling them manually within their WebDocs document management system. Once invoices and P.O.s were matched manually, the AP team then re-keyed invoice information into their AS/400 ERP. At that time, the company maintained AP staff members in separate regional offices, supported by temporary workers to scan and handle of 15 to 20 batches of invoices daily. Invoices from paint vendors typically included 15-20 pages of lines items, with large invoices from a single vendor running up to 100 pages. As a result, tremendous amounts of manual effort were often required just for data entry.

According to Precoat Metals Accounts Payable Supervisor Pat Collins, the company's new CFO saw an immediate opportunity to improve AP operations by centralizing and streamlining.

“Our new CFO wanted everything centralized, and he wanted automated matching. His direction was, within month, get it done,” Collins said.



Client

Precoat Metals

precoat.com

Industry

Manufacturing (metal coating)

Needs

- Centralize AP operations
- Achieve better visibility and control over AP processes
- Automate and streamline AP invoice capture, AP data entry, PO matching, routing, approval and ERP transaction creation
- End-to-end process flow from invoice receipt to RJS HelpSystems WebDocs and AS400 ERP

Solution

- docAlpha Transformation Platform
- Automated handling of emailed invoices to extract invoice data

The Solution

Precoat Metals chose to take advantage of additional functionality available for their WebDocs document management system that would support 3-way matching of PO-based invoices. To further streamline processes, they could integrate WebDocs with their AS/400 ERP to eliminate duplicate data entry when creating transactions.

While this approach eliminated some major process bottlenecks, it didn't resolve the problem of having to manually scan invoices and enter data into WebDocs.

That's when the company discovered the docAlpha Transformation Platform from Artsyl Technologies. Integrated with RJS HelpSystems Document Management, docAlpha can monitor email inboxes to automatically identify the type of attached document, extract the appropriate transaction data and upload everything into WebDocs.

Once in WebDocs, quotes, invoices and orders can be matched automatically. Exceptions are flagged for manual handling by the AP staff, but the majority of invoices flow through the systems all the way to the AS/400 ERP without any manual intervention required.

The Results

According to Collins, merging the capabilities of docAlpha with WebDocs was key to helping Precoat centralize their AP operations and maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the AP team.

"We're not really touching much paper anymore," Collins said. "We work the batches out of docAlpha, and then it goes to WebDocs, and then it goes through a match process."

As a result, Precoat has been able to re-assign four full time employees to higher-level accounting, finance and analyst roles.

Beyond process efficiency, the new process approach delivers greater process visibility and control.

"Everybody who is in the financial buyer role all have access to see all the invoices," Collins said.

According to Collins, the business impact of the newly-defined AP process has been significant for Precoat Metals.

"docAlpha was the key to it all," Collins said, "it allowed us to go through HelpSystems and match, then import into AS400 without us having to touch anything."

Artsyl

For over a decade, Artsyl has delivered smart process automation solutions that begin with the most painful and inefficient step in any process — manual data entry. By leveraging data and documents to intelligently handle data capture, extraction, classification and routing, Artsyl streamlines end-to-end operations for improved efficiency, visibility, compliance and control.

Artsyl's docAlpha platform reduces manual document handling, eliminates data entry, increases data accuracy, accelerates workflows and ensures standards compliance. Supported by robust reporting that increases process transparency, Artsyl solutions empower organizations to monitor KPIs, eliminate approval bottlenecks and reduce cycle times while providing instant auditability.

- Automated extraction of invoice data
- Integration with RJS HelpSystems WebDocs for PO matching and processing
- Integration with AS400 for automated ERP transaction creation

Results

- Successfully centralized AP invoice handling
- Ability to scale beyond 400 invoice batches/8,000-9,000 pages of invoices monthly
- Reallocated 4 FTEs to higher-level tasks

Precoat Metals

Precoat Metals, a unit of Sequa Corporation, is the largest independent metal coil coater in North America, provides quick, dependable service and the highest standard of quality to a broad range of industrial customers. Precoat Metals is a leader in the application of decorative and protective coatings to continuous coiled metal for use in commercial and residential construction, appliance, HVAC, transportation, and container products.

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