



BUYER'S GUIDE CHECKLIST



A number of AP solutions exist — the key is to find the one that works with your processes and people. You don't want another app that was a great idea but because it didn't fit with the way people worked — or was difficult or cumbersome — it just ended up "gathering dust".

That's why it's important to understand the "how" of each cloud-based AP solution provider.

The key is to ask detailed questions to understand exactly how each system works since AP solutions do the same "what" (i.e., automate invoice processing) but each has a different "how" to achieve it. For example, all AP solutions capture and code invoices, but do they use outsourced staff to do so, creating errors and delays— or do they use artificial intelligence, leading to real-time availability of invoices?

Here is a checklist of questions to help uncover the *how* so that you can make an informed decision based on the factors that matter most to you.

KEY CHECKLIST ITEMS (TOPICS):

- Invoice Uploading
- Invoice Coding
- Invoice Approvals
- PO Management & Receiving
- Integration
- Process Management
- Roles & Permissions
- Notifications
- Reporting
- Vendors
- Implementation
- Customer Support
- Fraud Prevention / Security
- IT Infrastructure

1. INVOICE LIFECYCLE CAPABILITIES



INVOICE UPLOADING

These questions will help you understand how invoices are captured into the system and the processes associated with this initial step in the invoice lifecycle.

- ☐ How are invoices uploaded?
- ☐ How is invoice data captured? If using OCR, how accurate is the image capture?
- ☐ In addition to the invoice image, is any other information available (e.g., sender, email body, date/time, etc.)?
- ☐ Can I set up assignment rules for an invoice based on location, vendor, amount, or other factors?
- ☐ What file formats are supported (e.g., PDF, XLS, PNG, etc.)?
- ☐ Can supporting or backup materials for invoices be added (e.g., vendor contract, insurance certificate, W9, etc.)?
- ☐ Can an invoice that has been uploaded into the system be edited or modified? How?
- ☐ How is the invoice displayed in the system? **(Tip: See how easy it is to find information, such as whether scrolling or toggling is needed to find data.)**



INVOICE CODING

Use these questions to determine how the AP solution ensures it is faster and/or more accurate than your current method.

- ☐ How are invoices coded? Is it manually done or is there some automation? If automation, what and how?
- ☐ Is automation available for all fields or just specific ones?
- ☐ How can I code invoices with multiple GL accounts and items? **(Tip: Request a demo of this to see exactly how this happens and whether it is easy & intuitive.)**
- ☐ How are invoices with amortization handled?
- ☐ Which fields are searchable (i.e., perform direct search by entering text)?

1. INVOICE LIFECYCLE CAPABILITIES



INVOICE CODING (CONT.)

And use these questions to determine if the AP solution is customizable.

Which of these capabilities can be performed directly by the user and which require spending time and money on professional services?

- ☐ Can custom fields from financial system be available in the AP system?
- ☐ Are fields with multiple line items displayed to make it easy to code items?
- ☐ Can I add or remove invoice fields?
- ☐ Can I add or create new fields? Or does this require professional services?
- ☐ What fields are available out-of-the-box vs. professional services?
- ☐ Can fields be rearranged or displayed in different order on screen?
- ☐ Can fields be made mandatory or optional?



APPROVALS

Approvers will be the largest number of users of the AP system. Look for ease of use and convenience that even infrequent users will find intuitive to use.

- ☐ How are approvals performed?
- ☐ What can Approvers view and do?
- ☐ How are invoices with multiple Approvers handled?
- ☐ Does the company provide training for Approvers?
- ☐ Before payment, can AP or CFO do a final review and/or approval?
- ☐ Can I configure approval workflows? If so, how can I do this? If something changes, (e.g., someone goes on vacation), how can I change the workflow?
- ☐ How are approval threshold amounts enforced?
- ☐ Is there a way for me to set up approval rules based on invoice amounts, GL accounts or items, vendors, etc.?
- ☐ Any features to encourage Approvers for sending approvals on a timely basis?
- ☐ What are the actions that Approvers can do (e.g., approve, reject, ask questions, etc.)?

1. INVOICE LIFECYCLE CAPABILITIES



PO MANAGEMENT & RECEIVING

(if applicable to your business)

If purchase orders are used for all or some purchases, evaluate the extent to which an application can automate 3-way matching between PO, receiving, and invoice.

- ☐ Is PO information available in the AP application? If so, how often is the PO data updated?
- ☐ Ask to see how PO matching is done. Is it auto-matching and if so, how (e.g., by total amount, line item amount, quantity, etc.)? What fields are used?
- ☐ How are partial payments handled?
- ☐ How are invoices paying two or more POs handled?
- ☐ Are PO line item details available in the AP system?
- ☐ Can PO line items be adjusted in the AP system?
- ☐ Can an expense line be added in to item line items?
- ☐ Is item receiving information available in the AP application? If so, how often is the data updated?



INTEGRATION

To ensure your financial system remains the master system of record, it is important to look at how the AP app works with your financial system.

- ☐ How does the AP solution get information from the financial system?
- ☐ How does information about invoices approved and processed in the AP system become available in the financial system?
- ☐ Does the integration require technical resources?
- ☐ How frequently is data updated between the systems?
- ☐ Can I select which data is available between the two systems?
- ☐ What happens if I need to map or change fields that need to be synced between the two systems?
- ☐ If I decide to change financial systems — can the AP solution support it? How long would it take to get on the new system?
- ☐ Once invoices have been paid, where do the invoice and approval history reside?

If you want to improve the invoice approval process for your organization, look for a solution that focuses on invoice approval capabilities. Some companies provide both Invoice and Payment solutions but focus more on payment features and functionality.

Tip: Look at how the main dashboard is displayed (e.g., prominently invoices or payments) to identify their main focus.

2. EXISTING PROCESSES AND CUSTOMIZATION



PROCESS MANAGEMENT

- ☐ Do you have a workflow builder?
- ☐ What processes require workflow to be built? Are optional? Not supported?
- ☐ What happens if someone is on vacation?
- ☐ Show me how an invoice is processed outside the standard workflow.
- ☐ Can I create new workflows or change existing ones myself?



ROLES & PERMISSIONS

- ☐ What types of user roles are available? Can custom roles be created? How?
- ☐ Show me how new users are set up.
- ☐ Can a user be limited to view-only access to invoices that meet a certain criteria (e.g., items, department, vendor, amount thresholds)?



NOTIFICATIONS

What notifications are available for:

- ☐ When invoices are captured in the system
- ☐ When an invoice is sent for approval
- ☐ When an invoice has been approved or declined or canceled
- ☐ When an invoice is late or past due
- ☐ Are other notifications available?

Reminders

- ☐ Are reminders of outstanding tasks sent? If so, how often?
- ☐ Who receives reminder notifications?
- ☐ What is the frequency of these notifications?
- ☐ Can notifications be customized (e.g., message, timing, recipient, etc.)?

2. EXISTING PROCESSES AND CUSTOMIZATION



REPORTING

- ☐ What types of reports are available?
- ☐ Can you show me your search capabilities?
- ☐ Can I download invoices based on certain criteria? Are invoices available in searches?
- ☐ Can the application provide insights and analytics on my invoice lifecycle (e.g., average time to code an invoice, average approval times, etc.)?



VENDORS

- ☐ Can vendors upload invoices directly to the application?
- ☐ What type of vendor management capabilities are available?
- ☐ Can I add vendors directly? Can I get vendor data from my financial system?
- ☐ Are there any communications capabilities with vendors available (e.g., status updates, questions, payment info, etc.)?
- ☐ Can I make relevant vendor docs available in the AP solution (e.g., Price List, Certificate of Insurance)?

3. SET-UP AND SUPPORT



IMPLEMENTATION

- ☐ What are the typical time frames for setup and implementation?
- ☐ Who needs to be involved with implementation from us (e.g., IT, accounting, ERP admin)?
- ☐ How is implementation priced (project, hourly, included, etc.)?
- ☐ What training packages do you have for users?



CUSTOMER SUPPORT

- ☐ What support plans and packages do you offer?
- ☐ How can customers get in touch with support?
- ☐ What is your response and resolution time SLA?
- ☐ What type of learning and support resources are available?

4. SYSTEMS INFRASTRUCTURE



FRAUD PREVENTION / SECURITY

- ☐ What are your features for detecting or preventing potential fraud?
- ☐ What are some of the ways in which your system will help enforce our internal controls?
- ☐ Can your system help us comply with SOX?
- ☐ Are there any capabilities to detect potential duplicate invoices? How does this work?



IT INFRASTRUCTURE

- ☐ Which cloud provider do you use? Where is the data center located? If you store the invoices and invoice data:
 - ☐ How long are invoices and data stored?
 - ☐ Do you have any thresholds on the number of invoices stored and/or file size of invoices stored?
 - ☐ Can I download invoices anytime?
- ☐ If I leave the AP system, can I still access my invoices and approval history?
- ☐ What is open to the public?
- ☐ Who can access the data in the company?
- ☐ Do you share data with third parties?
- ☐ Are you SOC compliant? When was your last SOC compliance certification done? What level are you certified? *(Tip: SOC compliance attests to the controls used within an organization, such as financial reporting or customer data security and protection.)*