



Leader in Transportation Cost Management Speeds Invoice Processing with Automated Data Capture



AFS, a world-leader in transportation cost management, processes 70,000,000 invoices a year for its customers. While AFS was one of the early adopters of EDI, millions of invoices were still arriving as paper – requiring manual entry until ABBYY FlexiCapture® automated the process. In the years since, AFS has needed to capture far more data from each invoice. And FlexiCapture’s precision, power and flexibility enabled AFS to scale with ease.

“From what I can see, ABBYY’s software is light years ahead of the competition.” -

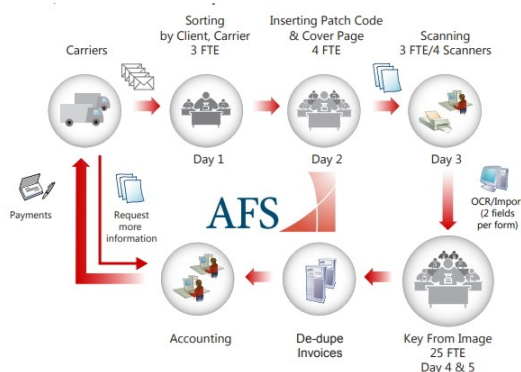
Jay Johnson, Director of IT, Trendset, 2008



Conquering a mountain of paperwork

With the acquisition of Trendset in 2013, AFS solidified its position as a premier provider of advanced freight and account payment solutions. And with it, AFS acquired a FlexiCapturebased solution for automating the capture of invoices that the company processes on behalf of its customers. Implemented in 2008, the system automated the processing of 2.6 million paper invoices a year – amounting to more than 150,000 pages a week. But in addition to the sheer numbers involved, even more complicated issues had to be faced.

AFS is a cost management partner who increases client profitability and efficiencies through specialized consulting and analytic services. With over 30 years in the business, AFS is also a global leader in freight audit & payment services – and has over 1,200 clients in North America.



Prior to FlexiCapture, processing of invoices required the efforts of 35 full-time employees and only two data fields per document could be captured by the system.

By 2008, 80 percent of the invoices were processed via EDI. Even so, this meant almost six million were still arriving by post as paper documents. To answer this challenge required three fulltime mailroom staff and four high-speed scanning stations manned by four full-time personnel. However, the vast majority of the forms received were not suitable for batch processing because there was no consistency in their designs. The existing OCR system was largely unable to work with such unstructured and semi-structured forms. On average it could only capture data from two fields per form – leaving sixteen more requiring entry. To verify the recognized fields and enter the remaining sixteen demanded even more manpower: 25 full time data entry operators.

Easing the climb with ABBYY FlexiCapture

Rapidly expanding business meant that the sheer volume of paper the company had to process every day would soon become unmanageable. But hiring more staff would have cut deeply into profits, which was unacceptable. What was needed was software that could automatically capture and convert imaged data on unstructured paper forms into computer-usable data, with extremely high accuracy. And Jay Johnson, head of the company’s Information Technology department found the answer: ABBYY FlexiCapture.



AFS Current Workflow with ABBYY FlexiCapture By 2014, the FlexiCapture-powered solution enabled fewer employees to process more invoices – and captured data from 46 fields.

The Challenge:

Enable AFS to capture more information from paper invoices, faster and more accurately, without increasing headcount.

The Result:

ABBYY FlexiCapture has enabled AFS to process more invoices than previous in half the time, and without adding significant headcount. Additionally, the solution now captures information from 46 fields, as opposed to just two.

“Our operators fly through the OCR results much faster and more efficiently than it would have been with manual keying.”

Randy Broom IT Director, AFS

According to Johnson, FlexiCapture’s remarkable accuracy and intelligent document recognition dramatically improved operations. The system automatically differentiated invoices from supporting documents and detected the first page of every new invoice. Mailroom and data processing staff dropped from a total of 28 to 16. And the solution extracted all required data from forms – 18 fields instead of just the previous two. Plus, turn around time dropped 50%, FlexiCapture’s classification accuracy eliminated the need for cover pages and separator sheets, and annual savings of \$60,000 were realized.

2014: Six years on, and even more benefits from FlexiCapture

Big changes have happened at AFS since 2008. Seventy million invoices are now processed annually and 95 percent are now processed via EDI. Even so, with the expansion of business, the number of invoices arriving as paper is growing. Plus, to serve its customers properly, AFS has had to greatly expand the amount of information it captures from each invoice: 46 fields, as opposed to 18 just six years ago. “And we’re adding more capability,” says Randy Broom, IT Director. “Our goal is to expand the solution to capture 50 fields in the near future.” And how has FlexiCapture delivered during this hectic growth period? “Brilliantly,” according to Broom. “ABBYY FlexiCapture keeps bringing a lot of efficiency into our process for paper invoices. Our operators fly through the OCR results much faster and more efficiently than it would have been with manual keying.”

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