

Improving Cash Flow with Automated Order to Cash Process



CLIENT	Canon U.S.A., Inc.
INDUSTRY	Manufacturer of B2B technology products
SOLUTIONS	Automated Order to Cash with Enterprise Imaging Platform

The high-tech manufacturer is able to generate invoices **6 times faster** by implementing an automated order to cash process that leverages Enterprise Imaging Platform.

"Like most large enterprises, Canon needs to produce thousands of invoices on a daily basis, utilizing information from a variety of back end systems. With EIP, we are able to reduce the processing time and gain better control and access to the receivables information thereby improving our overall cash flow."

Kevin Sato, VP & GM of Corporate IT for Canon U.S.A., Inc.

"If you asked me ten years ago, I would have said that the 'best of breed' is the way to go. If you ask me today, it's really the 'best of suite'. Being a solution architect, I came to realize that you want to spend less time integrating products, and more time focusing on business processes. That is when you start seeing the value of this kind of solution."

Michael Lebron, Director of IT Architecture, Canon U.S.A., Inc.

Client Profile

Canon USA is a provider of consumer, business-to-business, and industrial digital imaging products and solutions. The company generates over 2,000 invoices (6,000 – 10,000 pages) every day, and it uses multiple enterprise applications in connection with the accounting processes.

Challenges

Due to the complexity of the company's ERP and other systems, the nightly processing of invoices was slow and experienced frequent problems. The company risked delays in issuing invoices, and in effect, delays in receiving revenue. Overall, the existing accounting system was not scaling well to the growing needs of the company.

Performance of the ERP was slow due to many open database connections. The system was also unstable, frequently crashing as a result of excessive memory load on the server resource. A separate tool had to be used to handle just the document creation. In addition, the system lacked the ability to recover from errors. If there was an error in a single invoice, the entire batch of invoices would have to be re-created. An insufficient archiving function resulted in a lengthy process (often more than 15 minutes) to search and retrieve an invoice.

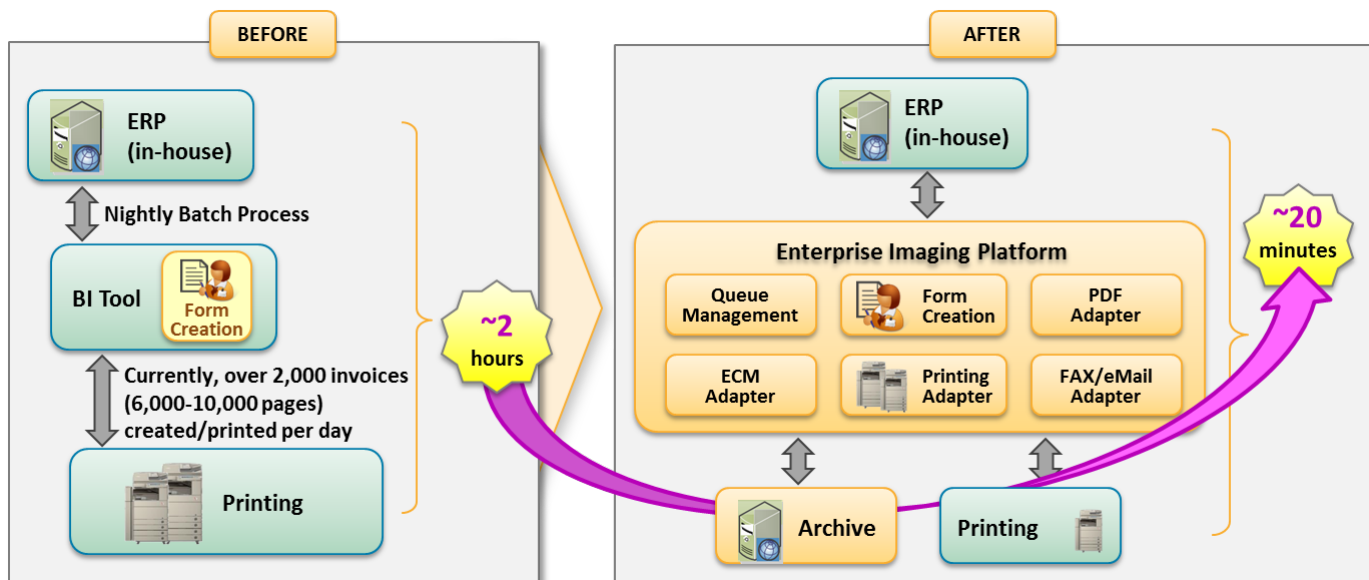
The problems frequently caused extended warehouse operation hours, overtime that had to be paid to employees, and costly IT involvement to fix the issues. The company needed a scalable, high performance system, with improved print management and error recovery, as well as a reliable long term archiving and document search functions.

Solution

The Order to Cash business processes have been automated leveraging **Enterprise Imaging Platform (EIP), a single middleware platform that automates complex business processes by integrating enterprise applications and paper based information flows.** The solution, designed and implemented by Canon Information and Imaging Solutions Inc., enabled a scalable, high volume invoice creation, printing, archival and distribution. EIP has not only dramatically improved the performance and reliability for the accounting process, but the flexible SOA based architecture enables easy connection to existing applications and scalability for future expansion.

Solution – Key Points

- Increased performance and reliability – designed to make the solution scalable with load balancing for high volume document processing.
- Robust archiving capabilities – long term document archiving and easy retrieval.
- Improved traceability and process management.
- Flexibility and scalability for future expansion – the SOA based architecture is used to easily connect to the existing and future enterprise applications.
- Efficient print management and error handling – printing can be restarted from where an error occurred, without having to re-print the entire batch.



BEFORE	AFTER
2 hours to generate the daily invoices	20 minutes to generate the daily invoices 6 times faster! – Improved cash flow
Document search and retrieval often exceeded 15 minutes	Document search and retrieval in seconds Improved customer service and compliance
Unstable system, requires refreshing memory daily	Stable system. Daily memory refresh is no longer needed IT resources can now focus on mission critical projects
A single error may require re-creation of the entire batch, wasting over 2 hours!	Smart error recovery – only the incorrect pages are re-created Saved time and paper
System is not scalable	Ability to scale the solution Room for future business growth and quick adaptation

Moving Forward

Canon USA is currently planning to leverage Enterprise Imaging Platform to improve the accounts payable processes. There are also plans to expand the scope of the system to include processing of other documents, such as export documents, contracts, etc. Deploying the system to other Canon subsidiaries is also considered, to take a full advantage of the benefits offered by the automation.

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