



SAP Concur 

Supporting business decisions with a **single view of spend**

The benefits of an integrated, consolidated spend management platform

Table of Contents

-
- 3 Supporting business decisions with a single view of spend**

 - 4 Business drivers for an integrated invoice and expense solution**

 - 5 The benefits of one platform for visibility and transparency**

 - 7 Strategic spend management: Analysing data from an integrated platform**



Introduction

As organisations adjust their strategic plans for a world that has changed since COVID-19, the focus will be on reducing costs and optimising efficiency. Expenditure is a major area that is spread diversely across every function of a business. This often leaves the finance team struggling to get visibility into every dollar that's being spent, which in turn impacts business efficiency. By gaining **a single, real-time view of spend** across the organisation, businesses are much better placed to identify and address unnecessary costs, as well as find opportunities to optimise business operations.

Unfortunately, for businesses that are still using paper-based processes and spreadsheets, it's impossible to get a single view of spend due to siloed information and a lack of a single source of truth. An integrated, cloud-based spend

management solution gives businesses real-time visibility into spend no matter where in the world it happens, and the ability to translate that data into actionable insights.

“The SAP Concur platform has become our ‘one – stop – shop’ for all invoicing and expenses and created efficiency across a number of cumbersome transactional processes.”

Anna Devonish, projects & systems manager for finance, Opteon Solutions

Business drivers for an integrated invoice and expense solution

Understanding and meeting the different needs of various business functions, from procurement to finance to IT, is complex. Automated solutions can help eliminate siloes and help each business function align its activities with the company's broader priorities.

For Noel David, financial controller at True Alliance, the business driver for an integrated spend management solution was about simplicity and scalability. "For us, the decision to go with SAP Concur solutions was about two key things: scalability and system consolidation. We didn't want multiple systems as it was complicated and added resources to the business for IT, finance and other system functions. With the SAP Concur platform, we were able to leverage more than one function on a single platform and they were interconnected. We continue to add brands into our stable, so the platform gives us scalability to add brands without adding cost from an IT and finance perspective," said Noel David.

For Anna Devonish, projects and systems manager for finance at Opteon Solutions, the biggest business driver was about having a single source of truth. "We didn't have a centralised, common way to process expenses, book travel or manage supplier invoices. All approvals required manual transfer of documents between offices to gain signatures without a central repository or source of truth to track business spend, reimbursable expenses and travel costs," said Anna Devonish.

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Noel David, financial controller at True Alliance





The benefits of one platform for visibility and transparency

Gaining visibility into every type of spending, including direct spending, indirect spending, services, and travel and expense-related spending can take a herculean effort without the right systems. This wastes time and energy for some of the organisation's most valuable staff members, the finance team. Recent research revealed that 94 per cent of executives believe it's important to have a single platform for integrated spend, which will improve spend management, supplier management, budgeting and working capital.¹

An automated platform with a single view of spend delivers benefits across the company. Specifically:

- 1. Finance** can direct budgets towards top priorities, stay ahead of regulatory and tax changes, and manage spending more effectively.
- 2. Procurement** can cut costs, improve supplier performance, and make better decisions faster.
- 3. Supply chain** can orchestrate complex, multi-tier chains while reducing disruptions, increasing speed to market, and strengthening supplier relationships.
- 4. IT** can direct more time and talent to helping the business innovate and expand.
- 5. Business users** become familiar with a single platform instead of having to work through multiple systems relating to expenditure.

1. IDC Whitepaper: *The Future of Spend Management: Approaches, Opportunities, and Challenges in a Digital World*, IDC 2019

Additional benefits include increased visibility and transparency across spend management, a greater return on investment through supplier consolidation, analysis, and spend analysis, and a reduction in invoice processing times. Accounts payable invoice and approval processes can be streamlined, along with employee expense claims. Invoice tracking and visibility with real-time reporting delivers unprecedented control to businesses that implement automated platforms with a single view of spend.

For Opteon Solutions, SAP Concur solutions were first sought as a tool to manage corporate credit card spend, acquittal and reporting but based on Opteon's evaluation of the SAP Concur product range the company expanded their product choices to also include Concur® Invoice and Concur® Travel with Concur® Expense.

“We found having one platform was critical. The efficiencies we gained were across the entire workforce because every part of our business is involved in spend and they are active players in that process from doing an expense claim to purchasing goods. We now have great visibility and timeliness of reporting across all business units and we can add value back to them in making decisions as to critical spend. Having one platform to see spend was pivotal for us.”

“All of our spend activity, with the exception of payroll, is now processed and managed via the

SAP Concur platform,” says Devonish. “Our initial project goals included a greater visibility of spend with improved consolidation, reporting tools and dashboards. We were looking to transition our focus to procurement activities to generate a greater return through supplier consolidation, analysis and spend analysis.”

Additionally, “The change management process got easier with each SAP Concur offering that we rolled out due to the familiarity of the one platform,” says Devonish.

The familiarity of the SAP Concur platform also proved beneficial for True Alliance. “A great achievement for us was familiarity. Finance processes aren't the most enjoyable processes to do in the business. What was most important for us was to make the team familiar with one platform. In the past, we had five different processes using five different functions and processes. By implementing Concur Expense initially we had created familiarity within the business which made the future roll out of the other modules seamless. The training effort rolling out Concur Invoice, Concur Travel, Personnel Reimbursement and Concur® Purchase Request was minimal because we had created that familiarity of the platform earlier and also our employees knew the SAP Concur platform was now a one-stop-shop for everything,” said Noel David.

“What we've got with SAP Concur solutions, is **workflow status**, we can see where things are in the system and there is transparency in the business.”

Noel David, financial controller at True Alliance

Strategic spend management: Analysing data from an integrated platform

Expense and invoice management can no longer be seen as simply a cost centre. Instead, organisations should view this function as an opportunity for improvement. This is especially true for small and medium businesses (SMBs) that need to manage their cashflow effectively to survive. To maintain a competitive advantage, companies must be strategic in their spend management and identify ways to invest wisely to meet current demands and fuel future growth.

According to Anna Devonish, Opteon Solutions is able leverage spend information by using the data as a basis for making actionable operating decisions.

“SAP Concur solutions has given us greater visibility with consolidated real-time reporting and dashboards. We have been able to transition our focus into procurement activities rather than transaction processing with a greater return on supplier consolidation,” says Devonish. “It has allowed our finance team to progress its digital transformation plan and move away from the entry and capture of information on to more value-add services such as spend analysis, procurement activities and synergy realisations on business combinations.”

Most companies have basic spend policies in place that govern what employees are allowed to spend money on, how much they can spend, and what vendors they’re allowed to use. Most likely, there are existing relationships in place that deliver discounts or other benefits. However, just sticking to these guidelines isn’t enough.

The consolidation of spend information via SAP Concur solutions has provided Opteon Solutions with an increase in buying power to negotiate contracts.

“The data we get out of the SAP Concur platform, the visibility, has allowed us to review our procurement policies and our procurement opportunities. We have been able to do some supplier rationalisations and we have been able to go out and re-negotiate some of those contracts, get some better buying-power deals and broker those. We have been able to use this data to do strategic evaluations. SAP Concur solutions has allowed us to make some operating decisions directly out of spend information,” said Anna Devonish.

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Anna Devonish, projects & systems manager for finance, Opteon Solutions

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