

SHARED SERVICE CENTER  
DELIVERS P2P EFFICIENCY FOR  
**THE CROWN WORLDWIDE GROUP**



**Global logistics leader gains visibility, transparency and spend control, plus cost savings and reduced processing times through centralized purchase management and invoice automation solutions.**

**The Crown Worldwide Group goes for growth**

The Crown Worldwide Group, headquartered in Hong Kong, is growing rapidly. Already the global leader in relocations, records management and logistics services, and with over 250 locations around the world, Crown is looking to expand its global footprint to offer customers' international reach and a local presence.

To do so efficiently requires a major organizational push towards improving best practice to increase business efficiencies and to enable knowledge sharing right across its global office network.



Chris Davis-Pipe, Group Vice President IT, Crown Worldwide Group

Delivering a streamlined, consolidated and consistent purchase to pay (P2P) cycle was a critical element in this strategic global programme.

**Optimizing A/P Performance**

With distributed local accounting departments and processes spread across 52 countries, optimizing A/P performance was a massive undertaking. However, the business benefits of doing so were clear.

The total number of invoices coming into Crown's network of global offices was huge and the manual processing and local approvals cycle often extended to weeks rather than days.

"We realized that removing some of the mundane, repetitive accounting tasks from our regional offices would improve efficiency and enable our front-line people to focus on higher value tasks," explains Chris Davis-Pipe, Group Vice President, Information Technology at the Crown Worldwide Group.

But increasing efficiency by eliminating paperwork was just part of the story. The Crown Worldwide Group also wanted to establish more consistent, compliant and transparent processes that would enable better control and cash management by addressing problems such as duplicate or late payments, lost invoices and unauthorized spend.

"We believed unauthorized spend represented a considerable cost to the business," continues Davis-Pipe. "We had no visibility of that spend until an invoice arrived;

**Customer**

Name

Crown Worldwide Group

Sector

Relocation, records management and logistics services

Location

Global (headquarters in Hong Kong)

**Challenge**

- Distributed local accounting departments and practices spread across 52 countries
- Multiple financial and cost allocation databases
- Manual paperwork hindering productivity and causing late payment charges
- Lack of central visibility or control of critical data was impacting audit and governance

without a single view of approved spending we had no way of accurately calculating accruals or analyzing our spending patterns across the Group without poring over thousands of pages, in hundreds of books, in tens of offices.”

So, automating the purchase to pay cycle would also present the perfect opportunity to optimize group-wide procurement management processes and achieve the enterprise-wide financial visibility that would enable both more effective working capital management and improved budget management by individual cost centers.

“Eliminating the invoice paperwork has significantly speeded up our processes and streamlined our operations.”

Chris Davis-Pipe, Group Vice President IT, Crown Worldwide Group

## Defining a global criteria

With automation the way forward, a Shared Service Center was established in Kuala Lumpur. This would provide the catalyst for P2P centralization and the elimination of manual and paper-based systems operating across the world.

The chosen solution had to be capable of integrating with eight separate Microsoft Dynamics ERP systems as well as a core Job Costing database. And, because of the global nature of Crown’s business, it had to be flexible enough to manage the company’s requirements for multiple currencies and languages as well as the local compliance requirements of all 52 countries within which the company operates.

It was also crucial that the solution would match Crown’s organizational structure and support the implementation of business-specific workflows.



Alpesh Sanghavi, Director of Operations and staff at the Group Shared Service Centre

## Faster processing, improved compliance and productivity

Basware Enterprise Purchase-to-Pay solution (EPP) – including both Invoice Automation and Purchase Management systems – was implemented at one of Crown’s regional data centers in Hong Kong and is securely accessible anywhere. Local offices now generate requisitions, gain local approvals, and submit purchase orders to suppliers. On receipt of goods and services these are checked, invoices are received and scanned locally.

Next, at the Shared Service Center (SSC), the invoices are matched in the Basware solution against pre-approved purchase orders or cost estimates. Non-matching and non-PO invoices are sent through electronic workflow for coding and approval by country managers before being electronically posted to the appropriate A/P system. Staff at the SSC can remotely access group-wide accounting systems, working with anyone’s data with ease.

According to Alpesh Sanghavi, Director of Operations at the Group Shared Service Centre: “When the project began the SSC was only serving a handful of Group countries. Through rolling out the Basware solution we’ve been able to leverage the global value of the SSC and very quickly brought more countries under its umbrella.”

Initially the SSC in Kuala Lumpur serviced invoices from Korea, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Japan, Australia and

## The journey

### Phase 1:

#### Eliminating repetitive manual processing through Invoice Automation

Automated A/P practices have delivered considerable associated cost savings while invoice processing times have fallen significantly

### Phase 2:

#### Delivering direct cost savings through Purchase Management

Spend data is now available for the first time and the introduction of a standardized global purchasing solution has brought unauthorized procurement under control

### Phase 3:

#### Assuring adoption of corporate strategy and standard processes across the global office network

Ease of integration with ERP and all internal job costing systems enabled fast deployment across multiple territories, while P2P transparency delivers best practice and central enforcement of corporate standards to support growth of the business

### Phase 4:

#### Securing future cost savings through e-invoicing

Planned move to e-invoices in the supply chain (i.e. allowing suppliers to send invoice data electronically) would radically streamline the P2P process, guarantee significant cost savings and improve supplier relationships

the United Kingdom. Within 12 months, the service had been rolled out to offices in more than 40 countries.

Eliminating paperwork has significantly speeded up the A/P process, and more, as Sanghavi explains:

“Thanks to invoice automation we’ve achieved significant improvements in a number of areas — processing times are lower thanks to invoice matching and ‘soft’ copy invoice approvals — while the central accounts payable group is now able to enforce corporate procedures and standards. In addition, the seamless integration of Basware with our accounting software and other systems means we get an accurate financial snapshot of every cost center.”

## Purchasing: from problem to best practice

Alongside reducing unauthorized and wasteful spending, achieving a central view of purchasing across the group has generated a range of other benefits, as Davis-Pipe explains: “We now have visibility covering all invoices as soon as they arrive. This provides better accruals and more up to date information when reviewing invoices for payment.”

Eliminating late payments and unauthorized spend was high on the Group’s agenda, and Sanghavi confirms the adoption of Basware means targets set by the Chief Finance Officer can now be achieved. “Unauthorized purchases, for example, now enter the system in the form of invoices which have to be approved through official channels. This puts the spotlight on where and how unauthorized spend occurs.”

As Sanghavi explains, the SSC now acts as a pivotal link between the Group’s Procurement and Finance functions:

“Strategies set by Finance are now being adopted and enforced group-wide. The eventual vision is to make procurement and finance processes both global and integrated, delivering these worldwide via Basware.”

The gains don’t end there. Insight into local spending patterns across the group has enabled Crown to initiate regional purchasing deals that have helped significantly reduce costs.

From an output perspective, the Basware system has released Crown’s regional administrative resources to concentrate on more productive functions. “A major productivity benefit has been the automatic handling of invoices that match a pre-approved cost-location – more than half of our purchase invoices now no longer need management approval.”

And whereas previously Crown accounts payable staff had to assess each invoice and enter it manually onto one of several databases, Basware Invoice Automation now automatically integrates with all necessary systems such as Job Costing, Basware Purchase Management and ERP systems, forwarding invoices to Accounts Payable once processing is complete.

## Looking to the future

“We are delighted with the results we’ve already seen from the Basware Invoice Automation and Purchase Management,” confirms Davis-Pipe. “We’re now looking to build on the efficiencies we’ve already achieved by making the next move – to e-invoices. Eliminating paper invoices by getting suppliers to send invoice data electronically will enable us to reap yet further gains.”

Alongside this, the company is looking to implement internal catalogs so that group service providers – like Marketing and IT – can provide fixed menus of products to global offices for purchase.

## Basware solutions adopted

- ✓ Basware Invoice Automation
- ✓ Basware Purchase Management
- ✓ Basware anyERP Adapter



Crown Worldwide Group operates from over 250 locations in 52 countries, providing governments, corporations, diplomats and private customers with global mobility, transportation of household goods and fine arts, departure and destination services, business information storage, high value warehousing, freight forwarding and third-party logistics. Crown Worldwide Group’s divisions are Crown Relocations, Crown Fine Arts, Crown Records Management, Crown Logistics and Crown Wine Cellars. Established in 1965, the Crown Worldwide Group is a privately held company with global headquarters in Hong Kong.

[www.crownworldwide.com](http://www.crownworldwide.com)

Basware is the global leader in purchase-to-pay solutions with more than 1,500 customers and 1,000,000 users in over 50 countries around the world.

Basware solutions are distributed and implemented in Europe, the US, and Asia-Pacific through an extensive network of Basware offices and business partners.

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