

CASE STUDY:

EF Education First

BASWARE KEEPS EF EDUCATION FIRST'S STAFF MOVING - NOW THEY'RE MOVING TO THE CLOUD

FOR EF EDUCATION FIRST, A COMPANY WITH MORE THAN 46,000 EMPLOYEES AND 580 OFFICES / SCHOOLS IN 116 COUNTRIES, TAKING CONTROL OF FINANCES WAS CRITICAL. BASWARE HELPED THEM PROCESS 230,000 INVOICES PER YEAR - NOW THEY'RE LOOKING TO THE CLOUD TO DO EVEN MORE WITH THEIR SOLUTION.

EF Education First (abbreviated as EF) is an international education company that specializes in language training, educational travel, academic degree programs, and cultural exchange. The company was founded in 1965 by Bertil Hult in the Swedish university town of Lund and now operates in 116 countries worldwide, 56 of which are using Basware to process their invoices.

WHY AUTOMATE?

Before choosing Basware, EF had no system for managing invoices. As Sara Gregorsson, Financial

'BEFORE BASWARE THERE WAS A LOT OF CONFUSION AS TO 'WHAT DO I EVEN DO IF I HAVE AN INVOICE?'. NOW THERE'S A STRUCTURED PROCESS AROUND THAT.'

Systems Analyst, puts it, 'the decision was taken that it's too much hassle to control invoices. There were too many paper copies taking up too much time of the sales people - they should be doing sales, not wandering around with invoices for approval'. Invoices were getting lost, not being paid, there were incorrect approval flows and a system was needed from a control perspective, too.

STAFF ROTATION IS A BENEFIT, AND A CHALLENGE

'Working and traveling abroad is one of the benefits of having EF as an employer', says Sara. 'If you like to travel it's the perfect company to work with. You get to live the product', she adds, particularly as they offer graduates a global rotation programme in finance. But with a frequent rotation of staff comes the risk that financial knowledge is lost

CUSTOMER:



INDUSTRY:

Education

LOCATION:

116 countries worldwide, 56 of which use Basware

BASWARE SOLUTION:

- Basware Invoice Processing (IP) package
- e-Invoicing and PDF e-Invoicing Receiving

over time. In addition, it was difficult to get staff up and running quickly with new systems, before Basware was in place.

Since rolling out Basware, life is much easier. Sara says, 'It's convenient now. We can have an accountant that works in Sweden and can go to the US four months later and he or she will benefit from the fact that they can work in the system in multiple countries, and it looks the same'.

basware

Simplify Operations, Spend Smarter.



'...PEOPLE WANT SOMETHING MORE. WE HAVE TO FOCUS ON UPGRADING, AND NOT JUST MAINTAIN WHAT WE HAVE IN PLACE. WE NEED TO UPGRADE!'

In addition, information is not lost. 'Sales and operational staff can access their archive of what they've been paying in the past and see how it has been allocated. They can bring that information with them if they move around the company.'

GLOBAL CAPABILITIES: A PERFECT MATCH

With its global client base, advanced rollout programme for different countries and ability to handle many countries and multiple currencies, Basware was the best choice for EF. 'We wanted a mature invoice processing system capable of customized accounting in many different regions at the same time. We wanted something that was complex yet user-friendly.' And they got it.

'I get the feeling that Basware is very much ahead when it comes to functionality requested by users. We need things that make processing quicker. We need a complex system that can accommodate a business as complex as ours - with different rules in different countries on how you can do accounting. It's good that we've been able to put all these different countries into the same system.'

'We wanted to make sure that it's a smooth process for all the staff involved in processing invoices - whether it's accountants, budget holders, or sales, marketing and school staff that are end-users. They just want to get rid of invoices: they have other things to focus on. So we have auto-flows set up so invoices flow to specific users and we work with coding templates so the end-users don't always have to code the invoices themselves.'

Basware integrates seamlessly with their other systems too 'we transfer all the info from Basware to the accounting system where we then process payments.'

'YOU BECOME A BIT BLIND WHEN YOU HOST IT YOURSELF. IT WILL BE GOOD FOR US, AS WELL, TO BE PUSHED A LITTLE BIT, TO USE NEW FUNCTIONALITY THAT WILL BE ROLLED OUT MORE EASILY FROM THE CLOUD VERSION.'

'WE NEED TO UPGRADE': MOVING TO THE CLOUD

Six years after EF started using Basware, it's time to improve. 'When we started, we went from manual processing to using different automation possibilities. Now people want something more efficient', says Sara.

'I know that when we rolled it out in 2012 people were very excited. Now we've reached a stage where people want something more. We have to focus on upgrading, and not just maintain what we have in place. We need to upgrade!

The new functionalities don't appear by themselves in our current version. When we move to the cloud, though, we'll get automatic upgrades, rather than just being stuck in our older version of the system. You become a bit blind when you host it yourself. It will be good for us, as well, to be pushed a little bit, to use new functionality that will be rolled out more easily from the cloud version.'

'We won't have internal issues about hosting the software ourselves, and we know we have

an organization that will support us. A cloud solution will probably be more efficient in terms of time spent in the systems for users, and how they connect.'

'It's the perfect opportunity to oversee the way we change, in terms of business processes, at the same time and question 'are we doing it the best way possible, and how can Basware help us do it better?' We don't always have streamlined processes at EF, because we try to keep an entrepreneurial spirit - except with our invoice processing!'

LIFE IS EASIER, NOW THAT BASWARE IS IN PLACE

What does life look like for EF, now that Basware is in place? Sara answers, 'It's a big difference from the perspective of both sales and school staff which, in the end, is the group of people who we want to be most happy. They don't have to manually walk around with invoices they can't find later. They can be out travelling and still review / approve invoices.

The benefits extend to finance too. 'From a finance perspective, it's a huge difference', Sara adds. 'We have all the data captured in the same way for all companies.

Our reporting has changed a lot, for the better. As a system administrator I can retrieve invoices worldwide. From a control perspective it's a big change. We could not control it before. It was very hard to detect fraud such as duplicated invoices, for example.'

In conclusion, she says, 'Basware is very much an improvement for reporting purposes and when it comes to user-friendliness it's a solution that is good for people who don't want to spend time on invoices either.'

BENEFITS OF BASWARE FOR EF:

- Control and visibility of invoices, worldwide
- A consistent experience for finance teams in an environment where changing locations often is a benefit
- More time for salespeople to sell, and not worry about paperwork
- Many different countries in one system that can accommodate diverse accounting rules, worldwide.

ABOUT EF EDUCATION FIRST

- EF provides life-changing education for global citizens. For over 50 years, their mission has been to give confidence and freedom to people of all ages, nationalities and backgrounds.
- With the desire to define your own path in life, and a little courage, EF opens up a world of possibilities.
- EF combines language training with cultural exchange, academic achievement and educational travel to deliver courses and programs that transform dreams into international opportunities.

ABOUT BASWARE

Basware is the global leader in providing purchase-to-pay solutions, e-invoicing and innovative financing services. Basware's commerce and financing network connects businesses around the globe. As the largest open business network in the world, Basware provides scale and reach for organisations of all sizes, enabling them to grow their business and unlock value across their operations by simplifying and streamlining financial processes. Small and large companies around the world achieve significant cost savings, more flexible payment terms, greater efficiencies and closer relationships with their suppliers. ©Basware 2018

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Pictures: EF

