

**cevinio**

**WHITE PAPER**

**Navigating the Evolving  
Accounts Payable  
Landscape;  
A Guide to 6 Key Trends**







## **ARE YOU PLANNING TO IMPLEMENT ACCOUNTS PAYABLE AUTOMATION SOFTWARE? THEN THIS DOCUMENT IS FOR YOU**

In recent years, the accounts payable (AP) industry has experienced significant changes with the emergence of new technologies. The digitalization of finance operations has generated new processes and practices. With the adoption of this improvement, AP departments are increasing efficiency, boosting accuracy, and reducing costs.

Developments in this field are set to continue and even accelerate. To stay ahead of the curve, it is crucial for businesses to be informed about the latest trends and developments in the AP landscape.

In this document, we take a closer look at the **6 key trends that are impacting the AP industry**. In addition, we provide new opportunities for businesses to improve their AP processes.





## 6 KEY TRENDS THAT ARE IMPACTING THE AP INDUSTRY

We provide a comprehensive overview of the main AP trends, and highlight benefits, challenges, and practical insights. We offer recommendations for organizations aiming to transform their challenges into opportunities.

Whether you are a finance professional, an AP manager, or a business leader, this document will provide valuable information and guidance on advancing to AP automation.

## 1. THE TALENT SHORTAGE CRISIS IN AP; HIGHER COSTS, INCREASED RISKS

Large corporations are utilizing automation and outsourcing to meet their AP responsibilities. In 2023, (and beyond) retaining talent will continue to be a challenge. Ambitious AP agents seek companies using innovative technology to make their work interesting and challenging.

The risk of delaying progress can result in an uncompleted AP team; which can negatively compromise the execution of accounts payable tasks.

### Why is there a talent shortage in accounts payable?

Perhaps the question should be; Are there still AP professionals who want a manual and repetitive job?

The number of companies digitizing finance processes is increasing; among which include the invoice processing via the implementation of AP automation software. Such technology can replace many of the monotonous and error-prone tasks, freeing AP agents to perform more challenging and complex activities. AP agents who are highly educated in digitized finance search for organizations able to provide them with a position that motivates them. Furthermore; by using AP automation technology, companies can achieve more with less resources. This allows for savings in costs, which can translate into higher salaries for their staff and minimized employee turnover.

Companies with obsolete processes and working practices will struggle to attract and retain such profiles.

To conclude; **the use of advanced AP automation software is the first step in retaining and attracting talent.**

Companies will be able to offer AP positions with an appealing set of responsibilities and a motivating job description. By implementing such solutions, corporations will positively impact different KPIs (such as productivity by agent). The lack of technology can create an increased staff turnover rate, a low level of expertise within the department, and backlog issues and payment delays.



## 2. EXPANDING AP ROLES; ADDING VALUE TO THE ACCOUNTS PAYABLE FUNCTION

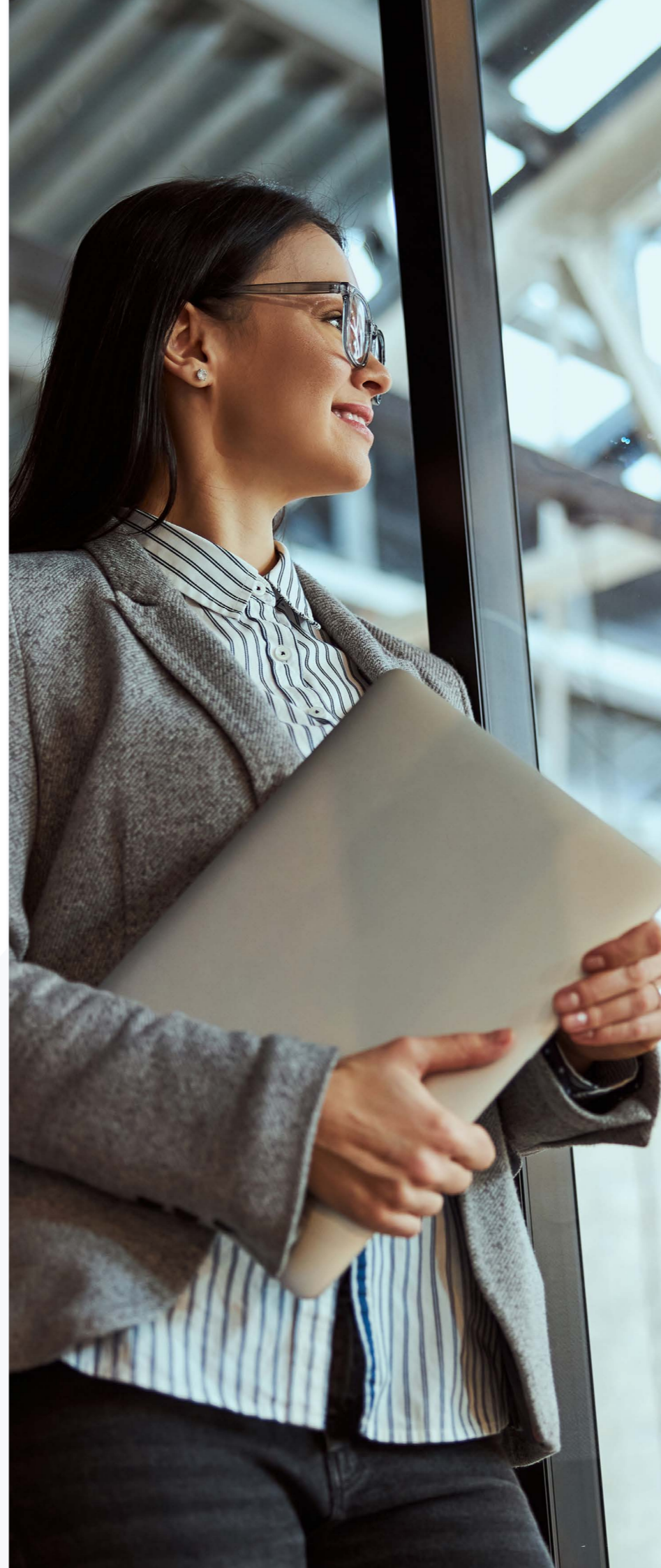
As accounts payable automation grows, manual tasks become less necessary. This frees up time for AP agents to handle more complex tasks. To make the most of this opportunity, finance leaders need to identify these new tasks and ensure their team has the skills to perform them.

**Data Analysis:** automated accounts payable solutions gather valuable data. AP agents need to understand and analyze this data to make informed decisions and suggest improvements.

**Supplier Relationship Management:** technology has transformed how organizations deal with suppliers. AP agents with strong communication skills and business knowledge can improve supplier relations and streamline invoice processing.

**Automation:** while AP automation platforms aim to be user-friendly; agents still need to learn how to maintain and optimize the system over time. IT skills will help them work more independently.

Training existing staff or hiring properly skilled AP agents will optimize the accounts payable automation process and handle added tasks and responsibilities effectively. Automation won't necessarily lead to headcount reductions, but will change the responsibilities of the AP agents, and allow them to manage larger invoice volumes with the same number of people.



## 3. AP FRAUD ALERT; PROTECTING YOUR BUSINESS FROM UNSCRUPULOUS ACTS

Large corporations are prime targets for fraud due to their size and high revenue. AP fraud can cause significant financial losses and damage a company's reputation. It is crucial for enterprises to stay vigilant and take proactive measures to protect their business from unscrupulous acts such as:

- Submission of false invoices or invoices with different bank account details
- Transactions performed by unauthorized individuals
- Suppliers overbilling or requesting double payment
- Dummy POs created by internal departments to increase the number of PO-based invoices (to improve their KPIs)

### How can companies protect themselves from such actions?

AP automation software provides the ability to implement strong controls, monitor transactions, and automate a variety of checks. As a result, enterprises can prevent fraud and mitigate other risks.

With years of experience in streamlining the invoice processing for multinational companies, **Cevinio has developed a set of features that will assist in combating fraud.** For example:

- Compliance toolbox for tax, legal and corporate compliance able to check PO and non-PO invoices
- Can check several criteria: Account Num, VAT, country, vendor, and other
- Supports configurable criteria to meet country and company regulations
- Audit trail generation, collecting all the actions performed on an invoice
- Advanced workflow experience provides an additional layer of protection as approvers can still decline the invoice in case of suspicion.

Corporations using AP automation software have minimized the risk of fraud as they protect themselves through implementing approval workflows and requirements.





## 4. AP DATA ANALYTICS; UNLOCKING COST SAVINGS, EFFICIENCY, AND CONTROL:

In the fast-paced business world, companies are constantly looking for ways to streamline operations, increase efficiency and reduce costs. The AP process, while often overlooked, is a key area with a potential for significant improvements, through the use of data analytics. By analyzing data generated through the AP process, **companies can unlock valuable insights into areas for cost savings, process optimization, and improved control.** Here are examples of insights that can be collected with AP automation tools:

**Productivity:** evaluate workload, efficiency of invoice processing and acquire insights into the way AP agents use the system. Monitor invoice processing volumes at individual, team and location level, as well as the complexity level of the invoices. Use this information to identify which vendors send the most complex invoices to process. This creates a starting point for further analysis, resulting in potential process optimization actions.

**Workload:** help the AP team prepare for the high peak periods, monitor the invoice processing throughout the year and get insight into the efficiency of the operations.

**Aging:** do you know the average time your invoices are outstanding? And by type of invoice or vendor? And most importantly, do you know why? Analytics on aging can show where the bottlenecks are and enable you to take corrective actions. Some of the most frequent issues we uncover are caused by wrong master data or bad quality invoices.

**Accuracy:** discover how efficient your AP automation tool is, find ways to increase automation levels and base your improvement strategy on real data. Our accuracy reports will enable you to identify problems and understand the root cause.

Powerful data analytics tools allow organizations to make data-driven decisions, identify areas for improvement and ultimately lead to better business outcomes.



## 5. AP GLOBALIZATION; STANDARDIZATION WITH LOCAL FLEXIBILITY

With the right AP automation tools, your accounts payable process becomes more efficient at scale. By having a standardized business process flow that can be used globally, with a central view of your suppliers and their invoices, you can manage your business in a more controlled way. However, **different countries have different legal requirements, such as tax laws or privacy regulations**. A good AP automation tool should be able to handle these differences and still work as part of a global standard process.

For global businesses, it's important to have a cloud-based AP automation solution that can be accessed from different locations. Advanced AP automation technology should allow you to process invoices in different currencies, languages, and character sets without templating. It should also be able to connect with external systems, such as government portals, accounting platforms and the multiple existing ERP systems in use.



## 6. AI AND ML DISRUPTING AP; THE FUTURE OF ACCOUNTS PAYABLE TECHNOLOGY

Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) are related but distinct concepts in the context of accounts payable automation.

AI refers to the use of technology to create machines or systems that can simulate human intelligence and perform tasks that would typically require human intervention. AI can encompass a wide range of techniques, including rule-based systems, expert systems, natural language processing, and machine learning.

On the other hand, ML is a subset of AI that involves teaching machines to learn and improve their performance on a task over time without being explicitly programmed to do so. ML algorithms use statistical models and data to make predictions or decisions.

**Let's now focus on the context of accounts payable automation:**

- AI can be used to automate tasks such as data extraction, invoice processing, and approvals. This can involve rule-based systems that apply pre-defined business rules to process invoices.
- ML can also be used to improve accounts payable automation by enabling systems to learn from data and make predictions or decisions. For example, ML algorithms can be used to automatically match invoices with purchase orders or detect fraudulent invoices.

We can conclude that when AI and ML technologies are used for accounts payable automation, AP teams benefit from minimal manual effort, avoidance of human errors, fraud prevention, and time and cost savings.






## LET'S WRAP UP:

The evolving accounts payable landscape presents new challenges and opportunities for businesses. From the rise of artificial intelligence and machine learning to the importance of data analytics, it is important to stay up to date and make smart decisions.


By working on these key trends, companies will streamline their AP processes, make higher profits and improve AP performance.

At Cevinio, we understand the importance of staying on top of the continuously advancing AP landscape. That's why we offer a comprehensive accounts payable invoice automation solution that helps businesses unleash their full potential. If you're ready to take your AP processes to the next level, we invite you to **connect with us**  and discover how we can help.



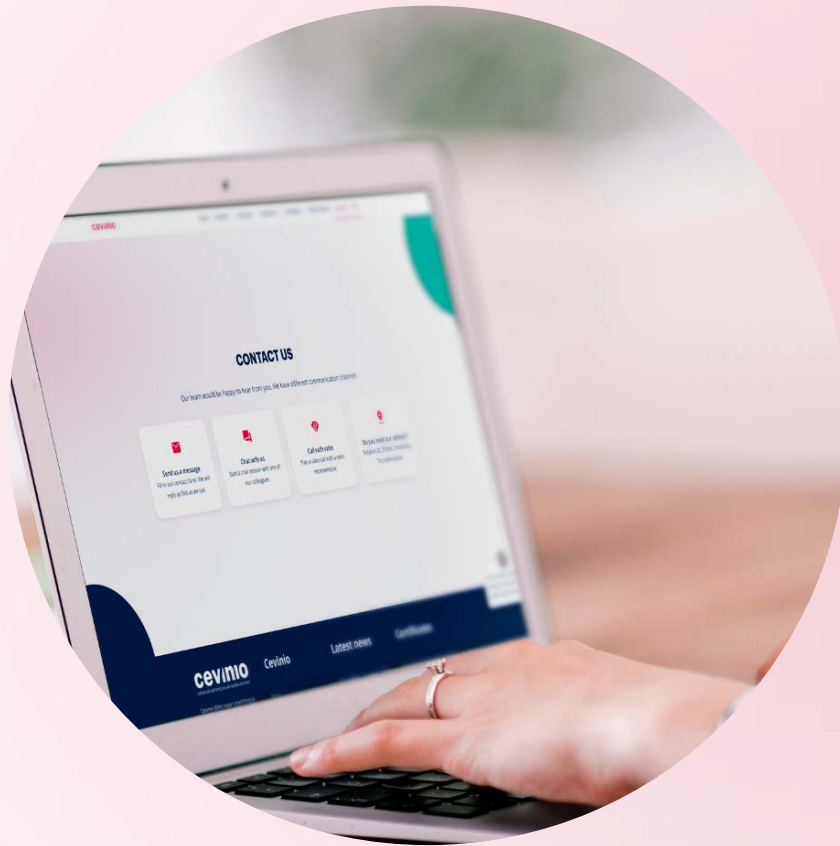


## ABOUT CEVINIO ACCOUNTS PAYABLE AUTOMATION SOLUTION

**Cevinio**  is a SaaS-based Accounts Payable Automation solution that brings productivity to the Invoice to Pay process. With over 15 years of experience in building smart finance algorithms, Cevinio helps its customers to eliminate a large portion of the manual work needed to process incoming invoices, lower costs, and improve compliance. At Cevinio, we apply state-of-the-art robotic process automation.

Cevinio's mission is to help corporations transform and standardize their invoice processes with a global solution that is multi-language, multi-country, and can handle the complexities associated with having multiple ERPs at the same time.





## **CONTACT US**

**Discover how Cevinio can drive your  
invoice process transformation**



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