



The Global e-Invoicing Network

Computacenter reduces Accounts Payable costs

Introduction

Computacenter is Europe's leading provider of IT infrastructure services, helping its customers with their choice and procurement of technology as well as configuring, testing, integrating and supporting it within the enterprise.

Computacenter is also one of the largest resellers of IT equipment in the world and this, coupled with its consultative role across numerous industries means that the company has a great many suppliers, some of whom it has very high value relationships with.

Improving procurement

Computacenter, like most corporates is always looking to improve the efficiency of its operations. One area where Computacenter saw an opportunity to reduce costs was in Accounts Payable. The company was keen to move to electronic invoice delivery and eliminate the costs of paper handling and data entry but was concerned that suppliers might not embrace such an initiative. This worry was born largely out of the company's experience with electronic invoicing via EDI, which insisted suppliers invest heavily in hardware and software and adhere to standard data formats.

"EDI required both us and our suppliers to expend a great deal of effort in sorting out the technicalities of each company-to-company link," says Karen McNerney, Financial Controller at Computacenter. She continues: "Beyond the technical issues both parties needed to get approval from Customs and Excise.

"Supplier adoption was always going to be a critical issue for us. Clearly without a critical mass of our suppliers on the network the initiative would be hard to justify. But we've enjoyed high levels of suppliers sign up, exceeding our expectations"

*Karen McNerney
Computacenter*





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As a consequence EDI was only an option for our largest UK suppliers.” In fact, we had adopted electronic invoicing via EDI for only three of our largest suppliers over a three year period.

Ease of Adoption

OB10 works with suppliers’ existing infrastructure and accounting systems regardless of their sophistication, make or the configuration that they have been given. OB10 is unique in that it will accept any invoice format a supplier cares to provide and convert that into the format required by a buyer’s accounting system, all without the need for buyers or suppliers to install any hardware or software. Consequently joining the network a simple one-off process, there are no mandated data formats or technical integration issues and suppliers can be transacting on OB10 within 48 hours of subscription. Once on the OB10 network, suppliers can send electronic invoices to any of their customers.

OB10 and Supplier Enrolment

Computacenter’s success with supplier enrolment is down to a combination of factors. In the first instance, as outlined above, subscription is painless. Secondly, there is no need for subscribers to seek clearance from HM Revenue and Customs to send and receive invoices electronically, as the OB10 service fully complies with the necessary legal requirements laid down both in the UK and by tax authorities across Europe. Thirdly, there are clear benefits for suppliers, notably that OB10 provides guaranteed and speedy invoice delivery - invoices are no longer lost in the post, delayed within an organisation or subject to data re-keying errors that may lead to exceptions and late payment (something Computacenter is keen to eliminate). These factors account for the fact that, increasingly, buyers joining the network are finding that many of their suppliers are already subscribed and using OB10 to submit invoices electronically to other customers. Indeed, many suppliers on the network actively promote their ability to send electronic invoices via OB10 as an additional service to clients.

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*Karen McInerney
Computacenter*





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For those suppliers that aren't on the network OB10 runs a proven supplier enrolment programme, helping large buyers achieve critical mass. The Computacenter experience is a testament to the success of that programme. "We're extremely happy," says Karen. "OB10 benefits us by reducing our accounts payable costs, and benefits our suppliers because we are able to pay them on time and deal with disputes and exceptions faster. In fact we're now looking to use OB10 for outbound invoices as a way for us to make things easier for our customers, save us the hassle of printing and posting paper invoices and hopefully enjoy prompter payments ourselves".

Results

Today, suppliers accounting for over 60% of Computacenter's annual invoice volumes are using the network and the company is confident that the majority of their suppliers will be using the network within the next 6 months. "In the near future we expect to be receiving a minimum of 80% of our invoices electronically," says McInerney.

About OB10

OB10, the leading global e-Invoicing network simplifies and streamlines the complex invoice process. Neither client organisations nor their suppliers are required to implement any hardware or software, and OB10 is independent of data file formats. OB10 can reduce the cost of paper invoice processing by typically 60 percent and can deliver an ROI in less than a year. Operational across Europe, North America and Asia, OB10 is compliant with the requirements of VAT, tax and e-Invoicing legislation and receives invoices from suppliers in over 100 countries.

Customers include:

Agilent Technologies, Barclays, Cargill, DHL, DSG International, Eli Lilly & Company, Fisher Scientific, General Motors, GlaxoSmithKline, Hewlett Packard, IBM, Imperial College, Kellogg's, Logica, Norwich Union, SaraLee, and Steria.