DOHERTY ENTERPRISES, INC.

"Docufree has created a very streamlined Accounts Payable process for us. We now have greater visibility and accountability than we ever had before."

Danny Bratcher
Controller

Industry: Restaurant

Application: Accounts Payable

Client since: September 2015

Locations: 150+ Nationwide

Docufree Services: AP Automation; Document Imaging; Data Extraction & Validation; Systems Integration; Document Storage & Retrieval

The Doherty Group
A Recipe for AP Efficiency.

Running a successful restaurant is a difficult balancing act that requires store managers to constantly be on top of both back-of-the-house and front-of-the-house operations. They need to properly run their location and be as fiscally responsible as possible while having the freedom to focus on providing superior service. While administrative work is part of the job, you want them out on the floor turning guests into repeat customers, not stuck in the back-office processing invoices.

At the same time, restaurant owners need accurate, up-to-date data from the invoices flowing in for a complete picture of inventory and cash flow performance, and suppliers need to be paid on time and held accountable to contract prices.

That's a tall order when the accounts payable process is still largely manual, paper-driven and managed by multiple disparate business units.

This was the case for The Doherty Group. As one of the largest franchise restaurant owners in the country, Doherty was struggling to make sure paper invoices sent to their 150-plus different restaurant locations were processed timely and accurately.

Store managers manually keyed in stacks of invoices when they had the chance, then overnighted a package of the originals to corporate headquarters. For the accounting office, that meant being inundated with thousands of invoices from hundreds of different suppliers every week—all of which had to be validated before the data could be transferred to the accounting system. Over time, shipping costs, delays, missing information and a high potential for data entry errors can add up and create unnecessary risks such as duplicate, missed or incorrect payments, poor food cost data, inventory issues and soured vendor relationships.

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Doherty recognized the value of automating the accounts payable process but did not want to place the burden of scanning and indexing documents on their managers. So, they did some research and found that many of the AP processing solutions they reviewed claimed their software would be able to magically index the invoices using optical character recognition (OCR). But, based on the quality and inconsistent formatting of the invoices they receive, Doherty knew OCR would not be able to produce the level of accuracy they needed on data extraction, forcing their staff to manually work any exceptions which could still lead to errors and incorrect payments.

"In our environment, invoices come in many sizes and shapes with a varying degree of quality. Some are hand-written, some have kitchen grease and coffee stains on them, and some have notes scribbled in the margins so we knew some of the data would be misread or not read at all," states Daniel Bratcher, Controller of Doherty Enterprises.

That's when Daniel approached Docufree.

"Their solution, approach and willingness to cater to our business's needs sounded better than the others. They guaranteed results. We didn't have to invest in or implement software, worry about the limitations it might have, or hope the end result was going to be acceptable. They have all the state-of-the-art data extraction tools but, they add a layer of human intervention to clean up the automated results, providing us with the outcome we needed—accurate data delivered on time."

Automating Accounts Payable.
Docufree helped Doherty create a centralized, automated AP process based on accounts payable best practices and driven by detailed business rules that ensure invoices are processed efficiently and consistently every time. This includes document imaging, data extraction, exception handling and workflow automation delivered over Docufree's proprietary cloud platform with human verification services performed by their certified subject matter experts.

Once Doherty's invoices are digitally received, Docufree uses elements of intelligent capture recognition, machine learning, artificial intelligence and robotic process automation combined with their trained professionals to index, validate and match invoices to Doherty's vendor tables. The data is then exported directly into MS Dynamics and Rosnet, Doherty's accounting and restaurant management systems. Docufree's secure cloud-based platform keeps a record of every invoice processed along with a full audit trail and links the digital image to Doherty's systems.

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> "We can now better manage our invoices. We have improved visibility and accountability into our AP process. And, even as we grow and invoice volumes increase, our staff can spend more time on strategic tasks and less on administrative chores."

"If we need an invoice, we no longer have to search for it. We simply click a link in our systems and the image appears."

The Bottomline.

Docufree was able to implement a nearly touchless invoice processing solution that even today, years later, continues to be a valuable part of Doherty's accounting function by reducing costs and turnaround times, enforcing compliance, and helping them achieve greater levels of control, productivity and accuracy.

"Innovation, efficiency and people empowerment are really important to us. And Docufree helps us meet those initiatives. We can now better manage our invoices. We have improved visibility and accountability into our AP process. And, even as we grow and invoice volumes increase, our staff can spend more time on strategic tasks and less on administrative chores. These are the kind of partners companies need more of."

About Doherty.

Doherty Enterprises, Inc., operates five iconic national brands including Applebee's Neighborhood Grill & Bar, Panera Bread, Chevy's Fresh Mex, Quaker Steak & Lube, and two of its own concepts, The Shannon Rose Irish Pub and Spuntino Wine Bar & Italian Tapas. Today, Doherty is a regional powerhouse with over 150 restaurants in New York, New Jersey, Georgia and Florida.

About Docufree.

Docufree is a business process services provider with leading capabilities in large volume document conversion, data capture, process automation, analytics and enterprise information management. Docufree securely manages and modernizes data interactions among humans and systems to create value for both clients and their customers—from digital on-ramp preparation to new hire onboarding and offboarding, invoice processing, customer care and distributed payments administration.

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