

# Bentall Kennedy



Though the accounts payable team at Bentall Kennedy did their best to manage 9,000 vendors and 1,000 paper invoices every day, the sheer volume of documents traveling through the organization was a difficult burden to overcome. Implementing Perceptive Software process and content management software helped Bentall Kennedy streamline the accounts payable process companywide, speeding the payment cycle and saving \$1 million annually.

## Identifying an opportunity

Bentall Kennedy is Canada's leading real estate advisory and service organization, serving major institutional and private investors, supplying a range of asset management, property management, leasing and development services to clients that represent more than \$22 billion in real estate investments.

Managing accounts payable processes across 50 office locations involved a time-consuming, multi-step process involving several desks, couriers and offices. Throughout the process, employees made multiple copies to retain records, creating an environment with duplicate copies, redundant data entry, an inability to track invoices and a turnaround time of up to 30 days.

"Processing invoices from desk to desk with multiple people touching and entering the same information was quite slow and onerous for our payment staff," says Ben Adams, director of business process at Bentall Kennedy.

Seeing an opportunity to improve and exert more control over the process, the management team implemented document management, imaging and workflow from Perceptive Software.

"We chose Perceptive Content because it gives us an automated solution that integrates with JD Edwards, improves transaction data quality and is easy to use," Adams says.

## Accelerating the process

Bentall Kennedy streamlined its accounts payable process from start to finish, trimming weeks from the payment cycle. Invoice data is captured at each location, coded, and routed electronically for approval, accelerating the process at every stage.

"With Perceptive, we can capture an invoice in one location in the morning and cut a check from our head office that afternoon," Adams says. "That was never possible with a desk-to-desk process."

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## Meet Bentall Kennedy

### The opportunity

Processing 1,000 invoices across 50 office locations every day was cumbersome and costly, leading to an unnecessarily long payment cycle, redundancy and lots of paperwork.

### The outcome

A more streamlined AP process is saving \$1 million annually, accelerating the payment cycle and providing instant access to information and a detailed audit trail.

**Products in use:** Perceptive Content

**Integration:** JD Edwards EnterpriseOne

**Implemented In:** Accounts Payable, Purchasing, Contract Obligation Management



With Perceptive automation capabilities, Bentall Kennedy can process a higher volume of invoices and transactions with fewer staff. Not only was the company able to eliminate redundant efforts and reallocate resources, it can also access reports on employee performance.

### Improving data quality

Employees scan invoices immediately as they arrive at distributed office locations. Using optical character recognition (OCR) technology, information such as vendor, invoice number, date and amount is automatically extracted to an e-form, where users can validate the information. Because Perceptive Content and JD Edwards are so tightly integrated, data in the Perceptive repository is pulled from JD Edwards in real time, making it impossible for users to select vendors that are not qualified and active.

"The integration between Perceptive and our JD Edwards system ensures data is accurate," Adams says.

It's critical that invoices go to the correct person at the correct time, but that wasn't always easy with a paper system. With Perceptive Content, once the invoice is coded and ready for approval, AP clerks route it forward through a workflow that follows rules based on the invoice data, such as invoice amount.

"We have routing rules in Perceptive that ensure 100 percent compliance to our business rules, 100 percent of the time," Adams says. "It's a clean, controlled environment."

The organization also uses Perceptive to process more than 3,000 purchase card transactions each month, which account for nearly 20 percent of its invoice load. Leveraging the same approval workflow, Bentall Kennedy has reduced the time it takes to settle with the bank from 42 days with a manual process to 32 days with Perceptive.

### Increasing visibility

Adams says another advantage to Perceptive is the enhanced invoice visibility and reporting capabilities. Users can look up invoices when needed, regardless of where documents are in the process, eliminating waste from making copies before forwarding documents. "There is no such thing as a lost invoice anymore," Adams says. "Authorized users can look in Perceptive to see where invoices are in the process and take action if needed."

A paper-based system could lead to disputes over invoices, but audit trails in Perceptive eliminate questions about who did what. Approvers see not just the invoice but exactly where it is being coded, and every detail—what actions were taken, when, and by whom.

### Managing contracts and obligations

Perceptive also helps Bentall Kennedy fulfill and manage its contract obligations. Contracts are stored electronically, and as deadline dates approach for certain obligations or other defined events, alerts are automatically sent to asset managers via e-mail to review the contract and take action. Using Perceptive ensures asset managers don't miss contractual agreements because contracts are not manually retrieved from a file cabinet.

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**Ben Adams**

Director, Business Process  
Bentall Kennedy

### Bottom-line benefits

Implementing Perceptive Software from Lexmark provided a way for Bentall Kennedy to save a significant amount of money across the organization. Though the company instituted dramatic process enhancements and invested in complex technology, the organization achieved payback on its entire investment in just 11 months. Bentall Kennedy calculates the hard-dollar savings at \$1 million a year.

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