



Procure-to-Pay and ERP Systems Integration Case Study

A life-sciences company was taking on one of the biggest challenges of a generation—using research and technology to **detect cancer at earlier stages when it can be cured**. Each employee played a vital role in navigating the complexity of this endeavor.

As they prepared to bring their offering to market, the company was growing fast and experiencing many of the the same **challenges** of scale that you would expect at any organization.

The Challenge

- **Volume** of purchase orders and invoices was high and ever-growing.
- Purchasing agents and suppliers lacked **visibility** to determine the status of inventory, in-flight purchases, and payments.
- It was no longer reasonable to throw more **human resources** at these escalating spend management challenges.

In 2019, the company's leadership team decided to upgrade to [Coupa](#), a more comprehensive spend management platform for enterprise-wide procurement. The goal was to **manage purchase orders, automate approval processes, drive accountability** and gain the visibility needed to make **efficient and effective spending decisions**.



Business Transitions

Just after signing a one-year licensing contract with Coupa, the life-sciences company brought on new leadership. The new team was then challenged with finding the time, a plan, and an implementation partner to start using Coupa. In the meantime, they were burning months of license fees and their spend management challenges were just getting worse.

After research and several bids that didn't meet the mark, they picked [The Hackett Group](#) as their Coupa implementation partner. The Hackett Group impressed them with a clear plan for success that mapped to their objectives, and a timeline that outpaced competing bids.

Direct Spend + Indirect Spend

As the project to manage indirect spend commenced, the new leadership came to realize that all of their current direct spend (inventory items) needed to remain in NetSuite due to business and system requirements. However, **they wanted all invoices (for both direct and indirect spend) to be processed in Coupa—on a single platform.**

The standard integration bundle between NetSuite and Coupa does not support that type of business process and associated integration. In fact, Coupa shared that **no NetSuite client had ever asked for this**, so there was no plan to ever support it. The need to accommodate invoicing processes for both direct and indirect spend in Coupa introduced frustrating cost and complexity.

Integrating Coupa with NetSuite

The Hackett Group searched for integration partners to make this work. They found several vendors that could do it, but it would more than **double the price** of the overall project and **add 6-10 months** of implementation.

In March 2020, they started working with [ApexConnect](#). ApexConnect leverages its proprietary building blocks to deliver flexible NetSuite and other ERP integrations faster and at competitive costs. For this project, ApexConnect provided a **70% lower cost of implementation** while providing a complete solution—so The Hackett Group could deliver a coherent strategy *and* complete the job fast.

How It Works

ApexConnect created integration points between NetSuite and Coupa to deliver the following:

- Indirect purchasing, inventory recording, invoice of spend originating in NetSuite is now reflected in Coupa as well.
- Direct purchasing and receipt of inventory recording originating from NetSuite is now synchronized to Coupa for invoice workflow and processing.

This allows most team members to interact with one system or the other, and for managers to have a **single source of truth** in Coupa.



From the exceptional work and quick response times ApexConnect provided, you'd think we had brought them a common challenge.

But Coupa had never had a customer ask for this before—it was truly unprecedented work, and ApexConnect delivered!



- Patrick Chan
Principal, Strategy,
and Business
Transformation,
The Hackett Group



Outcomes

The solution went live in Oct 2020, on-time and on-budget, exceeding expectations, and bringing an array of improvements to efficiency and day-to-day operations.

- **Digitized for Scale** - Countless manual and paper-based processes are replaced with digital automation. Invoices come in electronically now. There's far less manual entry.
- **Ease of Use** - Now most users can interact with a single system (NetSuite or Coupa), and management maintains a single source of truth updated in near-real-time.

- **Improved Efficiency** - All Invoicing (indirect and direct), as well as the processes to better manage inventory and business spend management, are processed more efficiently.
- **Better Decisions** - Purchasing managers have much better reporting and spend visibility now for faster and better decision-making.
- **More Control** - Fast approval workflows are in place now, allowing managers to provide approvals *prior* to purchase.

Now the life-sciences company has the **digital systems** and **connectivity** in place to achieve scale.

You have digitized. But have you connected?

ApexConnect automates cross-platform data communication for improved efficiency and timely business insights. We have processed over \$6B in spend for 187 customers across three continents. We speak debits and credits as fluently as we speak 1s and 0s, and we're adept at extracting and applying your unique business requirements.

Connect with us today to discuss how we can help connect your systems and bring order back to your business. You'll be in a winning position with a robust and future-ready spend management workflow during and after the pandemic.

CONNECT WITH US