

Customer Stories

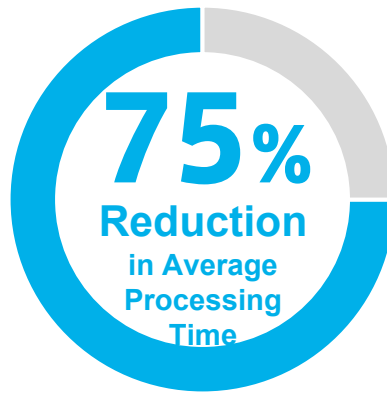
Vol.1

Fast Accounting Co., Ltd.

Transforming Accounting with AI: Remota & Robota



Nissin Foods Holdings Co., Ltd.



Kuraray Co., Ltd



Asahi Kasei Corporation



KOKUBU Group Corp.



OMRON EXPERTLINK Co., Ltd



Ajinomoto Financial Solutions, Inc.



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Automate Invoice Data Entry and Decision-Making to "Remota" and "Robota"- Reducing Operational Strain

Asahi Kasei Corporation

Business Overview: Fiber, Chemical, and Electronics Business
Housing and Building Materials Business
Pharmaceutical, Medical, and Critical Care Business

AsahiKASEI



Kazuo Tohana

Seiji Mishima

Asahi Kasei Corporation, a comprehensive chemical manufacturer founded in 1922, started with synthetic chemistry and fiber businesses. The company has since diversified its operations in response to societal and environmental changes. Today, it operates across three main sectors: Materials, Housing, and Healthcare, supporting people's lives with a wide range of businesses.

The company promotes DX (Digital Transformation) as an essential initiative to advance its business sophistication. It focuses on developing digital professionals and implementing DX initiatives across business divisions, R&D, and back-office operations.

To improve efficiency in invoice processing, Asahi Kasei adopted "Remota" and "Robota." We spoke with Mr. Mishima and Mr. Tohana to learn about the background of this implementation, its effects, and their future outlook.

Background & Challenges

Addressing Challenges in Invoice Processing Efficiency and Accuracy

— Please briefly describe your company's DX (Digital Transformation) initiatives.

Mr. Mishima: We have outlined a DX roadmap to guide us towards a stage where all employees can operate with a digital mindset. Our entire group is systematically implementing digital transformation efforts.

Mr. Tohana: In the accounting field, our policy is to eliminate non-core tasks and create an environment where employees can focus on high-level decision-making tasks, such as leveraging data for strategic decisions and establishing financial structures. To achieve this, we have introduced new systems and redesigned our business processes.

Mishima: With an aging population, securing skilled personnel has become increasingly difficult. Additionally, frequent regulatory changes require constant adjustments from the accounting department. By utilizing IT and AI, we aim to eliminate manual paperwork and improve both operational efficiency and accuracy.

— What challenges did you face before implementing "Remota" and "Robota"?

Mishima: Our project started with the need to phase out our in-house transaction processing system due to



Seiji Mishima,
Lead Expert, Tax Office,
Accounting and Finance Department



Kazuo Tohana,
Deputy Manager,
Accounting and Financial Operations Reform Office,
Accounting and Finance Department

maintenance costs and workforce constraints, transitioning to a more standardized system.

As part of this transition, we initially decided to outsource the processing of over 1,000 employees' transaction entries. However, given the sheer volume of work, the outsourcing costs turned out to be extremely high. This led us to explore system-based solutions to optimize processes and reduce outsourcing expenses.

Tohana: With approximately 360,000 transactions processed annually, a significant portion of our work involved payment transaction processing. To address this, we first introduced the invoice management system "Concur Invoice." We then sought additional tools that could automate data entry tasks—such as inputting amounts and business partner information—and reduce the risk of human errors. This led us to explore OCR (Optical Character Recognition) technology.

— What made you choose "Remota" and "Robota" over other solutions?

Tohana: During our evaluation, we compared multiple systems and found that "Remota" and "Robota" had a significant advantage as they were designed specifically for accounting functions. Their high accuracy in reading invoices and adaptability to changes such as the introduction of Japan's Qualified Invoice System made them the clear choice.

Another key benefit was their learning capability—not

only could they improve accuracy over time based on our inputs, but they could also learn from other companies' processed data. We anticipated that as "Remota" and "Robota" became more sophisticated, error correction would become less necessary, leading to faster processing times.

Implementation Benefits

A Seamless Workflow: Easy for Staff, Simple to Manage

— How are "Remota" and "Robota" currently used in your operations?

Mishima: We scan and convert invoices into PDFs, which are then processed by "Remota" and "Robota." The extracted data is transferred into "Concur Invoice," where payment request data is created. Key tasks, such as entering amounts and dates and performing initial categorizations for accounts and business partner codes, are handled by "Remota" and "Robota." The review and final verification of input data are delegated to external partners. Consequently, end-users only need to submit invoices, and the processed data is returned as a finalized application, significantly reducing workload.

— What benefits have you observed since implementing "Remota" and "Robota"?

Tohana: One of the initial concerns was outsourcing costs. However, the savings from implementing

"Remota" and "Robota" exceeded the system's operational costs. Additionally, error rates in invoice processing have dropped, successfully reducing workload and human errors as initially intended.

Mr. Mishima: A key qualitative benefit is the seamless adaptation to Japan's Qualified Invoice System and Electronic Accounting Record Keeping Law. By integrating "Remota" and "Robota" with BPO, we have minimized manual intervention and decision-making by our employees. Instead of training over 1,000 employees on regulatory changes, we only need to provide updates to approximately 30 external partners, significantly reducing the burden of compliance training.

Another significant qualitative effect has been the enhanced visibility of our operations, uncovering numerous areas for further improvement. The implementation of "Remota" and "Robota" has played a critical role in resolving hidden inefficiencies within our processes.

— What do you believe were the key factors behind the project's success?

Mishima: We entrusted project management to an external partner, allowing our internal team to focus on strategy, policy formulation, and employee communication. This emphasis on change management was a crucial factor in ensuring a smooth transition.

Tohana: We actively exchanged feedback with employees who were familiar with on-the-ground operations and conducted multiple online training sessions to minimize the burden of transitioning to a



new system. By addressing each challenge step by step, we were able to implement the project successfully.

| Future Outlook

Aiming for Fully Automated Transaction Processing

— What are your future plans, and how do you expect us to support you?

Tohana: While we have achieved significant automation in payment processing, we still rely on about 30 external partners for data verification and adjustments. Our goal is to reach full automation, where "Remota" and "Robota" independently complete payment transactions. We aim to refine internal rules and datasets to improve decision-making accuracy within these systems. We also hope for your support in further enhancing the performance of "Remota" and "Robota".

Mishima: We still rely heavily on scanned or PDF-based invoices, but with the emergence of standardized digital invoices, we foresee a shift towards fully digital invoicing workflows. By further optimizing non-core accounting tasks, we aim to leverage the freed-up time and accumulated invoice data to contribute strategically to business management.



Reducing Invoice Verification Workload by 50% "Robota Has Become an Indispensable Tool"

OMRON EXPERTLINK Co.,Ltd

Business Overview: HR Services for OMRON Group
General Affairs Services for OMRON Group
Accounting Services for OMRON Group



Ayako Hinoki

Michiko Yamamuro

Kumi Kakahara

Masao Sasaki

OMRON EXPERTLINK is responsible for the HR, general affairs, and accounting functions of the OMRON Group in Japan. With a mission to "improve our lives through our work and contribute to a better society," the company focuses on enhancing service quality, operational efficiency, and professional talent development.

To streamline accounting operations, OMRON EXPERTLINK introduced Robota. We spoke with key members from the Finance Management Department about the implementation, its impact, and their future vision.

Background & Challenges

Automating Visual Checks of 7,000 Payment Slips Using OCR Technology

— Please give us an overview of your company.

Mr. Sasaki: We handle the HR, general affairs, and accounting functions of the Omron Group in Japan. Our primary goal is to consolidate and standardize processes across group companies, improving governance and operational efficiency while delivering high-quality services.

— What challenges led to the decision to implement Robota?

Ms. Yamamuro: A major challenge in our accounting department was securing sufficient resources to consolidate and standardize payment processing operations. To address this, we initiated a project to improve efficiency.

Ms. Hinoki: Previously, we manually verified approximately 7,000 payment vouchers each month. This included checking the payee, amount, tax, and account details. Since it was difficult to verify the accuracy of vouchers based only on invoices, our team frequently had to consult with business units to confirm details. The manual workload was enormous, and we sought a way to reduce it through automation.

Yamamuro: Additionally, we faced risks related to human error and fraud due to the manual nature of the



Michiko Yamamuro
Finance Associate,
Accounts Payable Management

process. We believed that leveraging OCR technology could help us standardize and automate invoice processing.

— What made you choose Robota?

Yamamuro: The biggest advantage was its high accuracy in reading invoices. Regardless of the format, even when multiple amounts were listed, it consistently extracted the correct values. We had previously considered OCR solutions but abandoned them due to concerns over accuracy and the need for manual adjustments. Robota's ability to function without predefined templates was a game-changer. Another key factor was the support we received from Fast Accounting. They provided expert advice on key validation points, demonstrating their deep understanding of accounting operations. When we inquired about integrating Robota with SAP Ariba, they reassured us, saying, 'It has never been done before, but we will make it happen.' Their commitment convinced us to move forward.



Ayako Hinoki
Accounts Payable Management

Implementation Benefits

50% of Payment Vouchers Now Auto-Verified

— Did you encounter any challenges during implementation?

Ms. Kakiyama: One issue was configuring the API integration between Robota and SAP Ariba. Since this was a new implementation for both our IT team and Fast Accounting's partner vendors, we had to experiment and troubleshoot extensively. However, thanks to strong collaboration, we successfully implemented the integration as promised.

— How is Robota currently being used?

Hinoki: Robota is now integrated with SAP Ariba, where it automatically verifies payment vouchers. Encouraged by its success, we are now working on integrating SAP Concur to automate expense receipt verification as well.

— What impact has Robota had on your operations?

Kakiyama: Currently, 50% of payment vouchers are auto-verified without manual review. The accuracy of Robota has reassured us, significantly reducing workload.

Hinoki: Previously, I had to check over 100 vouchers on busy days. The pressure was intense. Now, Robota handles most of the work, and I have much more breathing room.

Yamamoto: The Qualified Invoice System introduced additional verification requirements. However, Robota has adapted seamlessly, proving its value. At this point, we can't imagine working without it.



Kumi Kakiyama
Leader,
Accounts Payable Management



| Future Outlook

Increasing Automation and Expanding to Expense Processing

— What are your next steps?

Yamamuro: Our immediate goal is to increase Robota's auto-approval rate to 70%. As its accuracy improves, we will continue providing feedback to Fast Accounting to help enhance the system.

Hinoki: We are also expanding automation to expense report verification through SAP Concur. We want to eliminate the waiting time for approvals, ensuring a seamless process for both employees and accounting teams.

Sasaki: Looking ahead, we plan to integrate AI technology across our accounting operations. AI could help standardize asset capitalization, credit management, and inquiry responses, reducing reliance on human intervention.

We believe in collaborating with Fast Accounting and other companies facing similar challenges to drive innovation in financial management.



Michiko Yamamuro
Finance Associate,
Accounts Payable Management



Streamlining Accounting Approvals with Robota Reducing Approval Time by 75% with Custom RPA

Kuraray Co., Ltd.

Business Overview: Manufacturing and Sales of Resins & Chemicals
Manufacturing and Sales of Fibers



Takashi Kizawa

Seiji Akazawa

Kana Takemura

Kuraray Co., Ltd. is a leader in high-performance resins and fiber products, driven by the mission of "Doing what others cannot for the benefit of society." With a strong global presence, the company has continuously developed cutting-edge technologies and holds leading market shares in various business sectors.

As part of its company-wide digital transformation (DX), Kuraray focuses on four key areas: Customer Experience Innovation, Business Process Reform, Business Model Transformation, and R&D/Production Technology Simulation. To enhance efficiency in financial approvals, Kuraray implemented Robota. We spoke with key members of the Osaka Finance and Accounting Department about the reasons behind the implementation, its impact, and their future plans.

Background & Challenges

Enhancing Accuracy and Efficiency in Accounting Approvals

— What are your company's DX initiatives?

Mr. Akazawa: Our DX vision is to integrate digital technology into our business to enhance competitiveness and contribute to society. Across all departments, we actively promote digitalization, data utilization, and workflow optimization.

At Osaka Finance and Accounting, we saw a need to modernize repetitive processes such as payments and invoice approvals, and adopted an end-user development (EUD) approach, where we create and optimize our own tools.

— What challenges led to the decision to implement Robota?

Akazawa: Approval processes were a major bottleneck. At peak times, we processed around 1,000 payment approvals and 500 expense reimbursements daily, with a team of only 20 staff manually verifying each transaction."



Seiji Akazawa
General Manager,
Osaka Finance and Accounting Department

Ms. Takemura: Invoices and receipts came in various formats, requiring staff to spend significant time searching for key information. After the introduction of Japan's Qualified Invoice System, additional verification requirements—such as checking registration numbers—made processing even more time-consuming. Each approval took an average of 120 seconds, and during peak periods, the backlog felt endless.

Akazawa: Errors and oversights also became a risk. To improve accuracy and efficiency, we decided to leverage AI-OCR technology for automation.



Kana Takemura
Treasury Management,
F&A Digital Promotion Group

— What were the key factors in choosing Robota?

Akazawa: We discovered Robota at a SAP Concur event, where its capabilities as a finance-specialized AI-OCR stood out. After testing it for 1-2 months, we were highly satisfied with its ability to extract key information without requiring pre-defined field mapping.

We also evaluated Remota, which includes an advanced UI, but ultimately decided to customize Robota within our internal RPA framework to better suit our workflow.

| Implementation Benefits

Approval Time Cut from 120 Seconds to 30 Seconds

— How is Robota currently used in your approval process?

Mr. Kizawa: Robota extracts data from invoices, which is then cross-checked against records from Concur Invoice and Concur Expense using Excel-based automation. This streamlined workflow has significantly reduced manual intervention.

— What impact has Robota had on your operations?

Takemura: Manual verification has been reduced dramatically, and the time required per approval dropped from 120 seconds to 30 seconds. With Robota handling crucial checks, our team feels less burdened and more confident in the accuracy of approvals. We can't imagine going back to manual verification.

Kizawa: In addition to reducing workload and improving accuracy, we saw secondary benefits. Shared Excel files enabled collaborative work, improving knowledge sharing and simplifying workload balancing.



Takashi Kizawa
Leader,
Treasury Management & Credit Management,
F&A Digital Promotion Group

— What were the key factors in the project's success?

Kizawa: We took an agile approach, deploying Robota with a “start small, improve continuously” mindset. Instead of waiting for a perfect solution, we rolled out an initial version and adapted based on user feedback. This approach helped us tailor Robota to meet specific needs.

Akazawa: We also encouraged direct communication between users and developers. When team members requested a more intuitive file-splitting feature, developers responded within a day. This responsiveness fostered a collaborative environment, making adoption smooth and effective.



| Future Outlook

Strengthening Audit Controls and Further Optimization

— What are your future goals?

Takemura: Regulatory compliance in accounting is becoming more complex, and approval workloads will continue to increase. We aim to maximize Robota's efficiency through ongoing improvements in data processing and accuracy.

Kizawa: Robota freed up time for us to support business units and gain deeper financial insights. We plan to further optimize our accounting processes based on new insights from collaborative workflows.

Akazawa: With Robota handling routine verifications, we can now focus on higher-level financial analysis and risk assessment. As AI technology evolves, we are also exploring Generative AI applications to further enhance financial decision-making.

Given the rapid digitalization of accounting and back-office functions, this is an exciting time for innovation, and we look forward to continuing our partnership with Fast Accounting.



Striving for "Approval-Free" Operations: Expanding Remota Usage Based on Task Analysis

Kissei Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd.

Business Overview: Research, Development, Manufacturing,
and Sales of Pharmaceutical Products
Development and Sales of Special Dietary Foods

キッセイ薬品



Mariko Murakami

Rihito Tokunaga

Since its establishment in 1946, Kissei Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd. has been committed to pharmaceutical research and development, operating from its headquarters in Matsumoto City, Nagano Prefecture. With a firm belief that "A pharmaceutical company is nothing without research and development," the company has developed and provided innovative pharmaceuticals both domestically and internationally. Additionally, it contributes to public health through the development and sale of dietary products for patients with kidney diseases.

To improve efficiency and reduce workload in invoice processing, the company introduced Remota within its Finance Management Department. We spoke with Mariko Murakami, Senior Staff, and Rihito Tokunaga, Finance Management Department, about the implementation process, its benefits, and future plans.

Background & Challenges

Reducing Manual Entry and Minimizing Human Errors

— What challenges led to the decision to implement Remota?

Ms. Murakami: With the enforcement of Japan's Electronic Accounting Record Keeping Law, we decided to introduce Concur Invoice to meet regulatory requirements, move towards a paperless environment, and strengthen governance. Along with this, we were introduced to Remota. We had never used OCR technology before, but since we were already automating invoice processing with Concur Invoice, it made sense to automate data entry as well, aiming for a hands-free workflow from input to output.

Mr. Tokunaga: Before this, all payment information—including bank details—had to be manually entered by our finance staff across different locations. Processing 2,000 invoices per month, each taking 2-3 minutes to input, was incredibly time-consuming. Even though each individual task seemed small, the cumulative workload was substantial.

Furthermore, manual entry increased the risk of human error, requiring extensive cross-checking. Every day, our team spent long hours verifying details on invoices created across different locations. We hoped that implementing Remota would reduce these inefficiencies.

Implementation Process

Identifying the Best Fit for Remota in Invoice Processing

— How did the initial rollout go?

Tokunaga: Our ultimate goal was approval-free processing, where invoices could be processed automatically. However, since we simultaneously introduced Concur Invoice, Remota was initially overshadowed by the larger system change. For about 18 months, adoption was slow. While we achieved a significant efficiency boost compared to paper-based

processes, we realized that we needed to actively promote Remota's adoption to reach full automation. Murakami: I firmly believed that Remota should allow two staff members to process 2,000 invoices per month, freeing up time for higher-value tasks. Since we had already introduced it, we needed to change our approach to maximize its use. To address this, we started attending user meetings to learn from other companies.

— What key insights did you gain from these user meetings?

Murakami: One major takeaway was that successful implementations started with usage analysis. Compa-



Mariko Murakami
Senior Staff,
Finance Management Department

nies first identified bottlenecks, developed targeted improvement strategies, and fine-tuned their systems as needed. Inspired by this approach, we began actively working to expand Remota's use within our finance operations.

— What concrete steps did you take to ensure adoption?

Murakami: We first analyzed all invoices across the company to determine which departments processed payments most frequently. Instead of simply offering Remota as a tool, we proactively approached specific teams with tailored usage proposals.

For example, we discovered that certain teams consolidated invoice processing under a single person. In such cases, we introduced a workflow where invoices were uploaded into a designated Box

folder linked to Remota. This setup allowed Remota to automatically read invoices and pass them along for review, perfectly matching the team's workflow.

When we asked Fast Accounting about possible optimizations, they suggested using Box integration, which proved to be a game-changer. This level of hands-on support demonstrated their commitment to helping us succeed.

deduced to Remota. We had never used OCR technology before, but since we were already automating invoice processing with Concur Invoice, it made sense to automate data entry as well, aiming for a hands-free workflow from input to output.

Mr. Tokunaga: Before this, all payment information—including bank details—had to be manually entered by our finance staff across different locations. Processing 2,000 invoices per month, each taking 2-3 minutes to input, was incredibly time-consuming. Even though each individual task seemed small, the cumulative workload was substantial. Furthermore, manual entry increased the risk of human error, requiring extensive cross-checking. Every day, our team spent long hours verifying details on invoices created across different locations. We hoped that implementing Remota would reduce these inefficiencies.



Murakami: One major success was ensuring that once staff started using Remota, they continued using it. Unlike past initiatives where adoption faded, Remota became an integral part of daily operations.

Tokunaga: Yes, Remota is more than just an OCR tool—its integration with Concur makes it an essential component of our workflow. Because it continuously learns and improves, employees quickly recognized its value.

Murakami: Another unexpected benefit was resolving departmental conflicts regarding reissued invoices. The Qualified Invoice System required businesses to issue corrections quickly, which increased stress for invoice submitters. By implementing Remota, we streamlined this process, making it easy for departments to comply with new regulations.

Implementation Benefits

Widespread Adoption and Reduced Workload

— What impact has Remota had on your operations?

Tokunaga: Previously, invoices could only be processed at the office using physical paperwork. Now, our finance team can process and approve invoices from anywhere with just a laptop. The automation reduced workload for both the submitters and approvers, improving efficiency company-wide.



Rihito Tokunaga
Finance Management Department



Future Outlook

Company-Wide Expansion Toward Full Automation

— What are your future goals for Remota?

Tokunaga: Now that we have proven success in specific departments, our next step is a company-wide rollout. With Remota's AI capabilities improving over time, we want to expand adoption and maximize its value.

We are also exploring opportunities to integrate Robota and other automation tools into our workflow to bring us closer to our goal of fully approval-free processing.

Murakami: Once we achieve approval-free processing, we can delegate routine tasks to automation and

focus on strategic decision-making. Companies today must consider corporate governance and sustainability, and our finance department will play a crucial role in this transformation.

We want to shift our energy toward higher-value contributions, ensuring our company's long-term success.

Cutting BPO Workload by 30%: A Path to Group Standardization Through Teamwork and Leadership

Ajinomoto Financial Solutions, Inc.

Business Overview: Financial and Accounting Services for Ajinomoto Co., Inc.
and Group Companies
All Related Operations Associated with the Above



Ajinomoto Financial Solutions Corporation (AFS) operates in close coordination with the Global Finance Department of Ajinomoto Co., Inc. to streamline financial and accounting functions across the group. Currently, it consolidates accounting services for seven group companies, leveraging Operational Excellence (OE), digital transformation (DX), and external partnerships to build a robust financial infrastructure.

AFS aligns with Ajinomoto Group's Purpose—"Contributing to the well-being of people, society, and the planet through AminoScience®." By outsourcing routine accounting tasks, standardizing domestic financial processes, and promoting DX, the company sought to modernize invoice processing in preparation for Japan's Qualified Invoice System. To achieve this, AFS revamped Concur Invoice and introduced Remota, an AI-powered accounting solution from Fast Accounting.

We spoke with Keita Kida, Manager of the Accounting Planning Department, and Ryota Kashiwagi, Accounting Planning Department, who led this transformation.

Challenges

- Standardization of systems and usage procedures across group companies
- Reducing workload from manual BPO processes
- Compliance with Japan's Qualified Invoice System

Reasons for Selection

- High OCR accuracy, seamless integration with Concur Invoice, and patented technology for compliance with Japan's Qualified Invoice System

Implementation Approach

- Establishing group-wide standards rather than enforcing headquarters' standards.
- Early involvement of operational leaders and group companies
- Top-down commitment
- Focusing on creating group-wide frameworks instead of enforcing headquarters' standards

Business Impact

- Reduced standard BPO processing time by 30%
- Lower psychological burden by minimizing manual work
- Reviewed and optimized legacy workflows and outdated practices across the group
- Established a foundation for discussions on process improvement and efficiency

Future Outlook

- Enhancing accuracy of journal entry AI and master data
- Further standardization and efficiency improvements
- Expanding the use of Peppol

Background & Challenges

Standardizing Group Operations and Improving Efficiency

AFS faced three major challenges in implementing a shared accounting service across Ajinomoto Group companies:

1. Inconsistent IT Systems & Procedures – Each group company used different accounting systems and workflows, requiring standardization.
2. Manual Data Entry in BPO Operations – Routine accounting tasks were outsourced to domestic BPO providers, but most data entry was still performed manually, increasing workload.
3. Preparation for Japan's Qualified Invoice System – With the October 2023 deadline approaching, AFS needed to ensure compliance while improving efficiency.

Mr. Kida: "As we strategically consolidate group-wide operations under BPO providers, continuing manual-heavy workflows would be costly and unsustainable. Standardizing processes and reducing manual data entry were critical goals, along with compliance with Japan's Invoice System. We wanted a comprehensive solution that could tackle all these challenges at once."

After securing budget approval in April 2022, AFS began formal issue identification and solution planning in August, partnering with Ajinomoto's DX Promotion Department for system integration.

Solution Selection & Implementation

Overcoming Resource Constraints Through Collaboration

To choose the right OCR and AI solution, AFS conducted a detailed evaluation in collaboration with NRI System Techno Co., Ltd., an IT subsidiary of Ajinomoto Group. After comparing several options, Remota from Fast Accounting was selected based on:

- High-performance AI-OCR capabilities
- Patent-backed technology for verifying Invoice Issuer Registration Numbers
- Proven compliance with Japan's Qualified Invoice System

Reason for Selection

- **High OCR accuracy, proven integration with Concur Invoice, and patented technology for compliance with Japan's Qualified Invoice System.**



By integrating Remota with Concur Invoice, AFS enabled:

- Automated invoice reading via AI-OCR
- Seamless integration between Concur Invoice and ERP systems (SAP & SuperStream)
- Optimized approval workflows, reducing manual workload for requesters

Mr. Kashiwagi: “Although our project team was small, collaboration with NRI System Techno and Fast Accounting’s Customer Success Team played a crucial role in overcoming resource limitations. We also carefully staggered deployment across the seven group companies, ensuring a smooth transition.”

Implementation Approach

- Involving on-site operational staff and group companies from an early stage
- Commitment from top management
- Focusing on creating group-wide standards instead of adapting to headquarters’ specifications

Implementation Benefits

30% Reduction in BPO Workload & Increased Process Efficiency

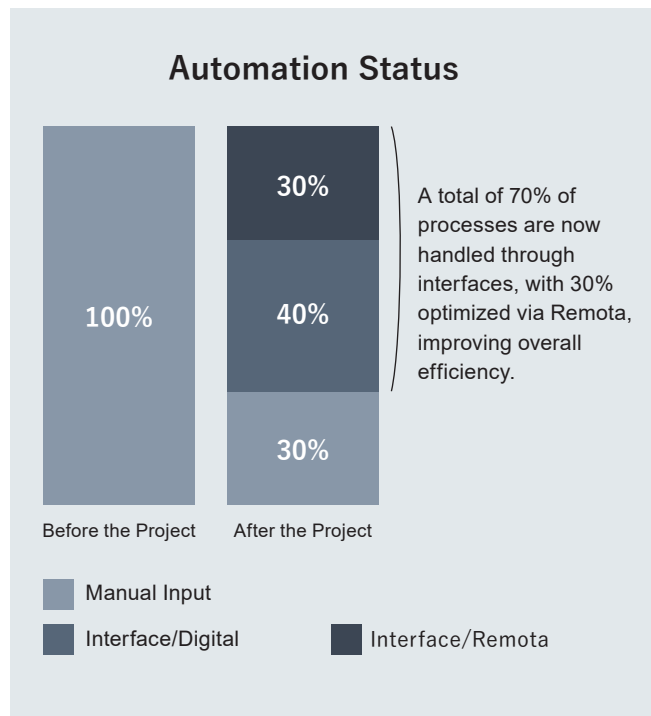
The project resulted in:

- Implementation of Remota and Concur Invoice across seven group companies
- Automation of 70% of invoices via Concur Invoice’s ERP interface
- Processing of 20-30% (approx. 3,000 invoices per month) using Remota
- Overall 30% reduction in BPO workload and cost savings

Kida: “Beyond efficiency gains, this project also fostered a culture of continuous improvement. We built strong relationships with Transcosmos Nagasaki BPO Center, enabling ongoing discussions on process enhancements even after project completion.”

Kashiwagi: “Our BPO teams also expressed positive

feedback, noting that automation significantly reduced manual entry stress and human error risks.”



Business Impact

- Reduced BPO processing time for standard tasks by 30%
- Lowered psychological burden by reducing manual work
- Reviewed and optimized business workflows and outdated practices across the group
- Established a foundation for discussions on process improvement and efficiency

Future Outlook

Shifting to Strategic Financial Management and Advanced Standardization

A key qualitative outcome of this project was the elimination of outdated accounting practices, such as:

- Unnecessary multi-step approval processes
- Obsolete requirements like handwritten receipts and personal signatures

Kida: “The project’s biggest success factor was cross-functional collaboration. Standardization across our group would not have been possible without strong cooperation between related departments, IT teams, and BPO providers.”

Going forward, AFS aims to address remaining post-implementation challenges, such as:

- Aligning supplier master data across group companies
- Ensuring consistency in AI-driven account classification across different entities
- Improving system usability for non-financial staff when selecting AI-suggested account codes

Kashiwagi: “Currently, our system sometimes displays unnecessary account codes due to inter-company discrepancies. Since Concur and Remota are linked via API, we expect future updates to refine these functionalities.”

Additionally, AFS is closely monitoring Peppol, a global standard for digital invoice exchanges. As a next step, Ajinomoto Group plans to pilot Peppol for internal invoice transactions before expanding its use.

Kida: “Ultimately, our goal is to push beyond automation—eliminating invoice processing altogether through full-scale digitalization. We are committed to continuous innovation in finance and accounting.”

Future Outlook



- Improve the accuracy of Journal AI and Master Data
- Promote further standardization, efficiency, and Peppol adoption



Achieving Paperless and Seal-Free Finance DX

Reducing 90,000 Sheets of Paper and 24,000 Hours of Work Annually

Nissin Foods Holdings Co., Ltd.

Business Overview: Manufacturing and Sales of Instant Noodles,
Chilled & Frozen Foods, Beverages, and Snacks



Nissin Foods Holdings Co., Ltd. is a leading food manufacturer in Japan, known for its flagship product, Cup Noodles. With over 14,000 employees worldwide, Nissin Foods Holdings actively operates in four global regions. As part of its long-term growth strategy, the company promotes NBX (Nissin Business Transformation) to reform its business structure for the digital age.

In finance and accounting, the company focuses on enhancing labor productivity through paperless and seal-free operations, leveraging Digital Transformation (DX). We spoke with Takeshi Miura, Manager of the Finance and Accounting Department, and Yuki Yajima, Assistant Manager, who led the implementation of Remota in their finance DX project.

Project Objective

- Achieve digital transformation (DX) of financial processes and drive internal change

Challenges

- Significant manual work and labor required to process and store 300,000 paper invoices annually.
- Human errors caused by manual tasks.
- Paper-based workflows that require physical stamps (hanko) hinder telework adoption.

Implementation

- Integration of Concur Invoice and Remota.

Business Impact

- 74% of invoices are now completely paperless and stamp-free.
- Eliminated the need to store 90,000 paper invoices per year, reducing 24,000 work hours annually.
- Efforts underway to achieve zero paper storage for the remaining 30% of records.
- Contributed to a cultural shift among employees toward digital transformation.

Future Outlook

- Compliance with Japan's Qualified Invoice System (automated verification of registered invoice issuers).
- Expansion of various features to improve usability.
- Further improvement in OCR accuracy and precision.

Project Objectives

Digitalizing Finance Operations and Driving Internal Transformation

Nissin Foods Holdings is responsible for planning and executing group-wide management strategies. To achieve this, the company must have a clear grasp of the financial and accounting status of each group company while building a platform that enhances strategy execution and efficiency. Finance DX is a key initiative to accomplish this goal.

The finance DX project aims not only to digitize accounting workflows but also to transform the organization and work style through digital technology. It is structured around three pillars:

1. Workstyle Reform – Enabling remote and flexible work through paperless and seal-free finance operations.
2. Governance & Management Strengthening – Standardizing financial processes and rules across the group.
3. Cultural and Organizational Reform – Raising employee awareness of digital transformation benefits.

A key priority within this initiative was optimizing invoice and expense processing, which had long been paper-based.

Challenges

Over 70,000 Hours of Manual Work and 300,000 Paper Documents Annually

The Finance and Accounting Department of Nissin Foods Holdings handles accounting tasks for eight group companies, including Nissin Foods, Nissin Chilled Foods, Nissin Frozen Foods, and Myojo Foods. Local teams input financial data, which the headquarters checks for accuracy and processes payments.

Traditional Invoice Processing Workflow:

- Suppliers send paper invoices by mail.
- Local teams manually enter invoice details into the system.
- Approval requires stamping (seal approval), and documents are then submitted in paper form to the accounting department.
- The finance team checks entries manually and stores paper records.

This paper-based system required over 3,000 employees to handle 300,000 invoices and receipts annually, resulting in:

- Over 70,000 hours of labor per year.
- Physical storage costs for document retention.
- Obstacles to telework, as approvals required physical presence for stamping.

Mr. Miura: "The Finance DX project aimed to transition to digital invoices and AI-OCR-based automation to streamline the entire process—from receipt to entry, approval, submission, and storage—without paper or seals. The ultimate goal was to drastically reduce workload and enhance productivity."

Implementation

Integrating Concur Invoice with Remota

To digitalize invoice processing, Nissin Foods Holdings selected Concur Invoice as the main system and Remota from Fast Accounting as an AI-OCR solution to support invoice entry. Concur Invoice data integrates seamlessly with SAP ERP, forming a three-tiered system (Remota → Concur Invoice → SAP).

Since this required a fundamental workflow overhaul, the company spent six months defining the system architecture before launching the invoice digitalization rollout for eight companies in June 2021. By March 2022, the system expanded to cover expense processing for six group companies.

New Workflow:

- Suppliers submit digital invoices (PDFs via email) instead of mailing paper copies.
- Remota reads invoice data and transfers it to Concur Invoice.
- Employees review and make necessary edits within Concur Invoice.
- Approved invoices automatically integrate into SAP ERP, eliminating manual entry and paper storage.

Results

74% of Invoices Now Processed Without Paper or Stamps

By prioritizing digital invoice reception, Nissin Foods Holdings successfully achieved paperless and stamp-free processing for 74% of invoices. This resulted in:

- 90,000 fewer printed documents per year.
- 24,000 hours of manual work saved annually.
- Increased productivity and remote work flexibility.

Miura: "By eliminating paper and physical approval stamps, we freed up substantial work hours and facilitated flexible workstyles. The improved workflow also enhanced compliance and transparency."

In addition, process improvements and AI automation optimized approval workflows, ensuring that invoice verifications were faster and more accurate.

Mr. Yajima: "Since we started, Remota has been used for half of all invoices. The system continues to improve, and we see further opportunities for optimization. Conducting impact assessments helped us realize just how much paper-based processes were slowing us down."

User Feedback:

- "Since PDF-based processing was introduced, my monthly workload has significantly decreased."
- "Previously, invoice verification involved multiple steps and logins. Now, everything is viewable in one system, making approval easier and faster."

Business Impact



- 74% of invoices are now completely paperless and stamp-free (hanko-free).
- Eliminated the need to store 90,000 paper invoices annually, reducing 24,000 work hours per year.
- Efforts are underway to achieve zero paper storage for the remaining 30% of paper records.
- Contributed to a cultural shift among employees toward digital transformation.

Future Outlook

Building a Digital Invoice Ecosystem for the Future

Yajima: "As Japan transitions to a fully digital invoice system, we expect Fast Accounting to provide solutions tailored for the electronic invoice era."

- Expanding Peppol Adoption – Nissin Foods Holdings is evaluating Peppol, an international electronic invoice standard, for intercompany transactions.
- Enhancing AI-Driven Accounting Automation – The company plans to implement hyper-paste AI technology, which remembers past entries to suggest automated accounting classifications.

Yajima: "Currently, Remota reads header and detail information but does not handle accounting entries. With enhanced AI capabilities, we hope to enable fully automated expense categorization, reducing human intervention further.

Looking ahead, we aim to simplify multi-document uploads and expand automatic classification functions. Continuous improvements will make invoice processing even more efficient."

Future Outlook



- Compliance with Japan's Qualified Invoice System (automated verification of registered invoice issuers)
- Expansion of various features to enhance usability
- Further improvement in OCR accuracy and precision

This article is based on information as of March 29, 2024.



Addressing Increasing Regulatory Burdens with Automated Accounting Solutions

Predicting the Rising Workload from Regulatory Changes and Implementing Automations

KOKUBU Group Corp., a 300-year-old food marketing company, is dedicated to creating a rich food culture and ensuring stable food supply. Leveraging its nationwide wholesale network, the company continues to expand using a regionally integrated distribution approach.

 国分グループ
KOKUBU Group Corp.

KOKUBU Group Corp., a 300-year-old food marketing company, is dedicated to creating a rich food culture and ensuring stable food supply. Leveraging its nationwide wholesale network, the company continues to expand using a regionally integrated distribution approach.

Growing Awareness of AI & Automation

Boosting Efficiency and Driving DX Awareness Across the Organization

KOKUBU Group began evaluating Remota, Fast Accounting's automated accounting solution, in response to Japan's Electronic Bookkeeping Act revisions. The project aimed not only at improving efficiency but also at enhancing company-wide DX awareness.

— Why did you decide to implement Remota?

Mr. Suzuki: In 2021, as the Electronic Bookkeeping Act was revised, we considered digitizing expense-related documents for compliance and efficiency. Additionally, the introduction of Japan's Qualified Invoice System in October 2023 was expected to increase the burden of invoice and receipt verification, reinforcing our need for digital transformation. Invoices required verification at the originating department before being sent to accounting teams across Japan—from Hokkaido to Okinawa.



Suzuki
Vice General Manager,
Management Headquarters &
General Manager,
Accounting and Finance Department,
KOKUBU Group Corp.

This process involved handling 400–500 invoices per month, requiring manual data entry in a short time frame, significantly burdening our staff.

Mr. Nambu: We realized it was time to fundamentally change our approach. While digitizing paper-based documents had been possible for some time, AI-powered automation was the key to driving true efficiency.

We researched various tools and discovered that many required significant manual intervention for data correction. Remota stood out with its invoice-specific AI, boasting high accuracy, even for handwritten documents. Additionally, it integrated seamlessly with our existing accounting systems, leading to our decision to implement it.

— How was Remota integrated with existing Systems?

Mr. Ishii: NTT Data Smart Sourcing played a key role in our Remota implementation.

While no extensive customization was required, careful adjustments were needed to align with our core

systems. Their deep understanding of our business and workflows ensured a smooth integration process.

Other companies implementing similar solutions often needed to change their entire accounting system, but we wanted to digitize without disrupting our existing operations.

Remota allowed us to modernize our workflow without major restructuring, making the transition easier. NTT Data Smart Sourcing's ongoing support was invaluable.

— What is the current invoice processing workflow with Remota?

Ishii: Currently, invoices are received, validated by the sales and operational teams, and forwarded to the accounting department. Based on these invoices, accounting entries are created manually. With Remota, invoices are scanned and stored in a cloud repository, automatically triggering the coding and categorization process. The AI generates structured data, which is then converted into a CSV

Support Structure During Implementation

FAST ACCOUNTING



NTT DATA

株式会社NTTデータスマートソーシング



国分グループ

KOKUBU

FAST ACCOUNTING → NTT DATA Smart Sourcing Corporation → KOKUBU Group Corp.

NTT DATA Smart Sourcing Corporation, as an authorized reseller of Fast Accounting, provides comprehensive support services, including Remota license provisioning, initial setup tailored to business requirements, and post-deployment support.

file for direct system input.

At this stage, a hybrid process remains—some suppliers still send paper invoices, which are scanned and processed through Remota. Our goal is 100% digital invoicing, but first, we need to educate our internal teams and **gradually expand usage across departments.

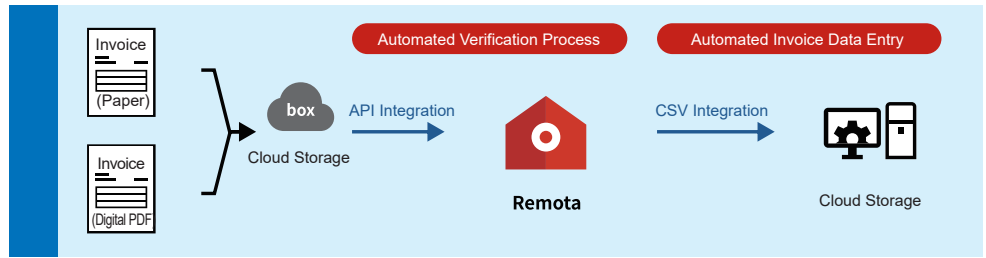
— What has been the impact of Remota implementation?

Suzuki: We estimate that Remota has cut workload by approximately 30% across accounting and related departments. This improvement benefits not only finance but also sales and operational teams, reducing manual processing requirements.

Nambu: By automating invoice categorization, even employees without accounting expertise can handle invoice processing. Accounting work often appears highly specialized, but standardization through AI ensures uniform handling across the entire group, which is a major achievement.

Ishii: We are witnessing a cultural shift towards AI, automation, and efficiency improvements across the organization. The accounting function

Post-Implementation Workflow



has traditionally resisted change, but this project has encouraged a mindset shift—from listing what can't be done to proactively finding solutions.

— What are the future plans for Remota expansion and AI integration?

Suzuki: Currently, Remota is implemented only in Tokyo, but we plan to expand it nationwide, ensuring that the benefits we've seen so far multiply across the company. The next phase is full adoption and integration.

Through this project, we've recognized AI's power firsthand. Our finance teams will continue exploring new AI applications, thinking beyond traditional approaches.

Nambu: AI and automation will eventually make manual approval processes obsolete, shifting our focus to strategic financial management. Beyond invoice processing, many data-intensive workflows remain, offering further opportunities for automation. Our priority is to fully digitalize these workflows while maintaining operational excellence.

Continued Collaboration with Fast Accounting & NTT Data Smart Sourcing

— How will KOKUBU Group continue its DX transformation?

Ishii: By expanding our digital capabilities, we can unlock even greater efficiencies. Collaborating



Nambu
General Manager, Management
Integration Department,
KOKUBU Business Expert Corp.

with Fast Accounting and NTT Data Smart Sourcing, we will continue enhancing our automation capabilities and exploring new business applications for AI.

Suzuki: This project has allowed us to connect with like-minded companies who share our commitment to finance transformation. Traditionally, accounting functions have limited external collaboration, so this experience has been invaluable. We look forward to continuing this journey with Fast Accounting and NTT Data Smart Sourcing, ensuring we remain at the forefront of digital finance innovation.



Ishii
Group Leader,
General Accounting Division,
Accounting and Finance Department,
KOKUBU Group Corp.

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Automating Invoice Reading with Remota: "Seeing is Believing"

H2O Retailing Corporation

Business Overview: Operating Department Stores, Supermarkets,
Shopping Centers, Specialty Stores,
and Convenience Stores
A Core Member of the Hankyu Hanshin Toho Group



Hajime Nomura
Head of Finance, H2O Retailing & CEO, Hankyu Act Fou

H2O Retailing Corporation operates various retail businesses, including department stores, supermarkets, and specialty shops across the Kansai region. Hankyu Act Four was established in 2003 to handle finance and payroll services for the 46 companies under the H2O Retailing Group. By centralizing operations, the company not only reduces administrative burdens on individual businesses but also enhances efficiency and accuracy, enabling employees to focus on core business operations.

To digitize financial operations, H2O Retailing adopted Concur Invoice as its invoice processing system. To further reduce manual data entry, the company introduced Remota, Fast Accounting's AI-OCR solution that seamlessly integrates via API with Concur Invoice. Initially rolled out to select group companies, the system is planned for full-scale adoption across the group. We spoke with Hajime Nomura, Head of Finance and Accounting at H2O Retailing and CEO of Hankyu Act Four, about the decision to implement Remota and its impact.

Challenges & Objectives

- Reducing the workload of invoice data entry and enabling a paperless process.

Reasons for Choosing Remota

- High recognition accuracy.
- A solution that eliminates the need for predefined templates by learning accounting-specific documents in advance.
- Regular AI updates to improve text recognition accuracy.

Business Impact

- Reduced workload for data entry and verification tasks.
- Cost savings through paperless document management.
- Expecting further benefits with expanded implementation in the future.

Background & Objectives

Minimizing Invoice Processing Burden and Promoting Paperless Operations

Hankyu Act Four handles finance for 44 companies and HR operations for 35 companies within the group. While invoice processing had already been centralized as a shared service, the reliance on paper-based approvals (stamps) and manual data entry was a major bottleneck. To enhance efficiency and digitization, the company decided to implement Remota, aiming to eliminate paper storage and reduce associated logistics costs.

Selection Process

Highly Accurate and Template-Free Data Extraction Solution

During the AI-OCR evaluation, the company compared multiple solutions before selecting Remota for its high accuracy.

Mr. Nomura: "Not only does Remota excel in character recognition, but it also eliminates the need for predefined invoice templates, unlike other AI-OCR solutions that require extensive manual setup. Initially, we considered defining invoice formats ourselves. However, we realized that the process was far more complex than anticipated, and improving accuracy would require constant manual adjustments. Remota, on the other hand, uses deep learning to automatically recognize various invoice formats, eliminating the need for manual configuration. Regular AI updates ensure that recognition accuracy continues to improve, making it a clear advantage over other systems. The frequency of these updates was another deciding factor."

Reasons for Choosing Remota



- High recognition accuracy.
- A solution that eliminates the need for predefined templates by learning accounting-specific documents in advance.
- Regular AI updates to improve text recognition accuracy.

Implementation

How Was Remota Rolled Out Across the Group?

When providing shared services to multiple companies, gaining stakeholder buy-in is often a significant challenge. Each company has unique suppliers, transaction types, and invoice formats, leading to resistance when changing workflows.

"Each company understands the need for digitization. They recognize that reducing paper usage benefits the environment and that automation reduces manual errors and improves efficiency. However, when it comes to implementation, employees accustomed to paper-based workflows often resist change. For instance, some teams rely on physical invoice copies to track multi-step processes, while others provide detailed verbal explanations to managers before approvals.

Rather than forcing uniform processes, we focused on understanding each company's specific needs, gradually introducing customized workflows to ensure smooth adoption."

Given the varying IT infrastructure and digital literacy levels across group companies, the company adopted a tailored approach for each implementation phase.

Regarding Fast Accounting's customer support, Mr. Nomura shared his impressions:

"Their response time has been outstanding, and they are extremely thorough. Our team has also noted how proactive and detailed they are in providing real-time updates on maintenance schedules and issue resolutions."

Results

Optimizing Data Input and Validation, Cutting Storage Costs

By July 2022, Remota had been implemented in 16 group companies, automating invoice extraction and data entry. Hankyu Act Four, which handles paper-based invoices for multiple companies, digitized these documents through Remota. Initially, there were concerns about accuracy, but as implementation progressed, skepticism turned into confidence.

Nomura: "We quickly realized that Remota's accuracy was far beyond our expectations—a case of 'seeing is believing.'"

Since some companies still process both digital and paper invoices, the impact on overall cost and efficiency gains is still evolving. However, as more companies adopt digital invoices, we expect clear efficiency improvements and cost reductions."

Additionally, switching to digital invoice storage reduced warehousing, shipping, and labor costs related to physical document handling.

"Our immediate goal is to increase the adoption rate of digital invoices across all companies. Once fully implemented, we believe it will completely transform our operational efficiency."

Business Impact



- **Reduced workload for data entry and verification tasks.**
- **Cost savings through paperless document management.**
- **Expecting further benefits with expanded implementation in the future.**

| Future Outlook

Enhancing OCR Accuracy and Taking a Holistic Approach to Workflow Optimization

Nomura: "Internal transactions within group companies still rely on paper invoices, which limits efficiency. To fully optimize processes, we need to digitize intercompany transactions as well.

Retail companies, particularly food wholesalers, frequently work with small independent vendors. For example, at local food fairs and department store events, many transactions involve small-scale farmers or artisans, who often rely on handwritten invoices. By further expanding Remota's usage, we can automate invoice reading for these vendors, significantly improving efficiency.

In the long run, I believe true optimization can only be achieved when all transactions—both internal and external—are fully digitized. We are prioritizing the expansion of digital workflows across the entire group."

Expectation for Peppol Integration

Nomura: "Our ultimate goal is not just digitizing paper invoices, but receiving them electronically from the start. While Remota currently processes paper and PDF invoices, the next step is establishing a platform that allows direct receipt via Peppol. We hope to see proactive efforts in this direction."

Fast Accounting became the first Japanese member of Open Peppol, the organization managing Peppol's global framework, in May 2021. In July 2022, it was officially accredited by Japan's Digital Agency as a Peppol service provider.

Moving forward, the integration of Concur Invoice and Remota will expand to 10 additional companies, including Hankyu Hanshin Department Stores, in April 2023. By October 2023, the rollout will extend to 10 more companies, such as Izumiya and Hankyu Oasis, in the food retail sector.

The full implementation is expected to be completed within the 2023 fiscal year, with the goal of establishing a fully operational electronic data exchange platform by 2024.