Automation or Illusion?

Is Your AP Automation Solution Actually Doing the Work, or Is Your Team?

Most AP automation solutions merely digitize invoices and run basic PO comparisons to check if they are ready for coding and vouchering for payment. But in reality, very few invoices arrive with perfect data. When they don't match exactly, your team is stuck manually reconciling the differences. Few solutions possess the machine learning, advanced calculations and inference capabilities required to validate, GL code, and voucher complex invoices, let alone handle the manual data entry needed to get that information into your ERP.

These semi-automated bottlenecks continue to drain your time and money. To truly free your procure-to-pay team for higher level work, you need **full** automation that eliminates manual labor entirely, from initial invoice receipt to final ERP payment.

The IntelliChief AP automation framework delivers this via a hyper-efficient strategy that first maximizes the number of invoices that can be processed autonomously with Straight Through Processing (STP), and then streamlines workflow for those that cannot be resolved without intervention or approval:

1. **Autonomous Zero-Touch (Up to 90% STP):** Validation, matching and coding discrepancies are automatically resolved and posted in the ERP without human assistance.
2. **Semi-Autonomous Low-Touch (Remaining 10%):** When policy or material variances require human eyes to resolve discrepancies or acquire approvals, IntelliChief AP Automation slashes resolution time by isolating only the variance to be addressed – often requiring just a single click to process and post in the ERP and without signing into the ERP system.

Both workflows are essential, and both workflows must manage and route invoices based on legal and corporate governance. Without this approach, full automation remains elusive.

The IntelliChief Difference

By leveraging advanced ERP integration and sophisticated technology – like AI for document identification and validation, and machine learning for ERP field level matching – IntelliChief handles simple **and** complex AP invoices without halting the financial controls in your ERP system:

Category	Standard AP Automation	The IntelliChief Approach
1. Exceptions Within Defined Tolerances (Purchase price variance, unplanned freight, shipping, or handling fees, partial shipments, back orders, damaged goods, quality hold, over shipments.)	Freezes the transaction. Requires manual lookup, calculation, and re-keying inside the ERP.	**Autonomous:** Auto-applies tolerance rules, executes inline mathematical conversions, and books variances. **Semi-Autonomous:** Routes the exact line-item conflict to the buyer for resolution and approval, logging full approval workflow detail.
2. Complex Payment and Allocation Structures (Retainage, lump sum, evaluated receipt settlement, progress billings, milestone applications, consignment inventory, stored materials, multi-department GL splits, special charges, freight invoices, multi-currency fluctuations, tax jurisdictions and tax-exempt status.)	Rejects the document because progress values, withholdings, or other unique invoice anomalies do not align with ERP data.	**Autonomous:** Automatically calculates and posts split- ledger allocations, separates retention liabilities, and makes other adjustments directly in the ERP. **Semi-Autonomous:** Delivers milestone-tracking and detailed invoice type reporting directly to project managers.

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3. Complex, Mixed and Multi-Line Invoices (Invoices that span across multiple pages where the total line items vary dynamically from month to month, or invoices that contain a mix of inventory goods (PO- based) and professional services (non-PO based) on different lines of the same invoice.)	Rejects the document because there is no PO to validate against, inability to distinguish line items on a mixed invoice, or inability to parse long, complex documents.	**Autonomous:** Easily reads, classifies, and captures data from complex documents and autonomously processes the invoice by following business rules and learned workflows. **Semi-Autonomous:** Isolates issues, delivers detailed history of approval workflow, and navigates multi-level approval hierarchy with escalation timers.
4. Intentional Approvals (High-dollar CapEx, audits, policy-driven signoffs.)	Stalls workflow. Forces managers to hunt for supporting documents inside ERP systems.	*Manual oversight is required by design.* **Semi-Autonomous:** Delivers a 1-click approval package—invoice, PO, and original contract—directly to the executive's mobile device.
5. Missing or Mismatched Data (Unit of measure conversions, item or part number mismatches, parent/subsidiary vendor mapping, poor scans resulting from skewed, low resolution, smudged, folds/creases, handwriting on invoice.)	Freezes the transaction. Requires manual lookup, calculation, and re-keying inside the ERP.	**Autonomous:** Automatic AI clean up, inline mathematical conversions and table lookups, by vendor, to match ERP data fields. **Semi-Autonomous:** Routes the exact line-item conflict for resolution and updates tables for processing that vendor's invoices.

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6. Data Validation and Compliance (Active vendor verification, tax ID (TIN/EIN) and W-9 compliance check, active PO identification & status check, bank account and routing number integrity, remit-to address mismatches.)	Freezes the transaction. Requires manual lookup, calculation, and re-keying inside the ERP.	**Autonomous:** Uses sophisticated algorithms to clean up and interpret data. **Semi-Autonomous:** Routes the exact line-item field conflict for manual correction.
7. Recurring Non-PO Invoice Processing (Invoice within historical tolerances, complex-split GL coding invoices, retroactive contract pricing verification for tiered service rates, emergency non- registered vendor payments.)	Freezes the transaction. Requires manual lookup, calculation, and re-keying inside the ERP.	**Autonomous:** Uses ERP connected logic and tolerances for auto GL coding and invoice processing. **Semi-Autonomous:** Routes the exact line-item field conflict for manual correction.
8. Accounting, Vendor Management and AP Performance Calculations (Calculating AP liability, debit memo processing, vendor delivery performance and cost saving performance metrics)	Monthly, Quarterly and Annual accounting period closing procedures complicated by liability and cost saving calculations.	**Autonomous:** Uses ERP to automatically calculate liability, discounts taken, and penalties for all PO and non-PO invoices, including high value invoice analysis **Semi-Autonomous:** Provides invoice detail behind all liability and performance calculations.

4 Questions to Qualify Vendors

1. When an invoice requires a manual sign-off, does your system deliver the full context and related documents (original PO, contract, and receiving slip) to the approver on a mobile screen, or must our approvers search in the ERP?
2. Can we configure different escalation paths based on the exact type of discrepancy (e.g., routing price variances to purchasing, but quantity mismatches to the warehouse or buyer)?
3. Does your automation solution require ERP sign-in to correct mismatched data in the ERP, GL code line items not included on a PO, or process and voucher the invoice to be paid?
4. What does it take to onboard a new vendor or update a vendor profile for new invoice formats in your automation system, and how does that impact my ERP?

Discover how IntelliChief engineered manual friction out of enterprise AP. Visit IntelliChief.com to schedule a customized, ERP-specific demo.