

Future-Ready SAP Financial Operations:

Gordon Food Service's Path to Automation and Efficiency

Delivering Seamless Invoice Processing at Scale

Gordon Food Service (GFS), the largest family-operated broadline food distribution company in North America, serves a vast network of restaurants, schools, hospitals and other foodservice operators. With more than a century of history and a commitment to customer service, GFS found its operations challenged by bottlenecks in invoice processing.

To maintain high operational standards and scale efficiently, GFS partnered with **Avantra**, the intelligent observability and automation platform designed for SAP landscapes. The goal: automate key financial workflows, eliminate manual delays, and deliver consistent, transparent service across its SAP and Ariba systems.

THE CHALLENGE

Stuck Invoices, Manual Overhead, Hidden Risk

Despite its operational excellence, GFS faced the following issues:

- **Invoices from its SAP Ariba procurement network** were getting stuck before reaching its SAP S/4HANA system - and GFS was not being notified of failures.
- **On a weekly basis**, about 50 invoices failed to flow correctly, resulting in 10–15 hours per week (≈ 330 hours per month) of manual investigation and correction work.
- **The lack of visibility and automation** meant that financial operations were at risk of delayed payments, lower productivity and hidden inefficiencies - despite a well-managed enterprise environment.

GFS needed a solution that delivered end-to-end transparency, real-time alerts and automation of repetitive tasks so its teams could focus on value-added work rather than chasing stuck documents.

THE SOLUTION

Automated Process Monitoring & Workflow Integration

GFS implemented Avantra in a rapid deployment (just four weeks) to deliver key capabilities:

- **Custom checks** were created to monitor statuses in Ariba and SAP (e.g., "Approving", "FailedPaying", "FailedExternalPush", "Reconciling" or "Paying").
- **The integration leveraged API-based monitoring** of master data and transactions between Ariba and SAP, enabling traceability of invoices and purchase orders.
- **With almost 160 built-in best practice checks as a foundation**, the GFS team tailored their automation workflows quickly to meet their unique business context.
- **The result:** when an invoice hit a "stuck" state or unusual condition (e.g., credit with negative amount, purchase requisition older than two days), the system automatically flagged it and triggered the right workflow.

These innovations gave GFS a single-pane view of financial operations across Ariba and SAP, enabling proactive response rather than reactive firefighting.

THE IMPACT

Significant Time Savings and Cost Reduction

The outcomes for GFS were measurable and immediate:

- › **Approximately 330 hours saved monthly** in manual invoice-flow investigations.
- › **Around US \$200,000 saved annually** in people-hours by automating the invoice-monitoring process.
- › **~25 % reduction** in monthly operational costs associated with the SAP/Ariba monitoring and workflow function.
- › **Faster resolution** of invoice flow issues, improved transparency and reduced risk of delayed payments or service disruption.

In effect, GFS transformed a hidden-cost manual process into an automated, transparent one - freeing teams to focus on higher-value work, while ensuring finance operations remain reliable and scalable.

AT A GLANCE



The Challenge

- Invoices stuck between Ariba and SAP S/4HANA with no visibility
- 50 + weekly invoice failures leading to ~330 hrs/month of manual work
- Hidden costs and risk due to lack of automation and traceability

Benefits with Avantra

- ~330 hours saved per month on manual invoice workflow tasks
- ~US \$200,000 annual cost savings in people hours
- ~25% lower monthly operational cost for SAP/Ariba monitoring
- Full traceability of invoice flows, proactive alerts and integrated workflows

THE TAKEAWAY

From Hidden Waste to Intelligent Efficiency

Gordon Food Service's implementation of Avantra demonstrates how enterprise-scale organizations can move beyond monitoring to intelligent process automation. By focusing on a high-impact area - invoice flow from Ariba to SAP - GFS eliminated significant operational waste, improved transparency, and created a foundation for future automation efforts.

For any organization handling high volumes of inter-system transactions, GFS's journey underscores the value of combining observability, automation and custom workflows to achieve both cost savings and operational agility. With Avantra in place, GFS is well-positioned to scale its financial operations, deliver consistent service and free its teams to focus on innovation rather than firefighting.



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Want to see how Avantra can transform your SAP operations? Book a demo.

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