

The Strategic Platform: Prioritizing all P2P needs

With a heavy focus on requisitions, some finance automation software can become a partial solution, leaving behind key procurement and finance functions. Instead, business leaders should look for an AI-driven platform that they can grow into, not outgrow.





Why a partial solution won't solve your P2P problems

A great end-user experience is the starting point for driving high user adoption and has always been a critical component of a successful procure-to-pay (P2P) process. It's become fashionable to refer to this starting point as "Intake", and while recent intake solutions have brought some innovation to the industry, the fundamentals of a successful P2P process remain the same. Intake lives in the very early stage of the P2P process, but as seasoned procurement and finance leaders know, an array of challenges and opportunities exist up and down the P2P process. Intake-focused solutions often support simple use cases for indirect spend, but don't address key finance needs, including travel, expenses, cash management, and payments. In the absence of these crucial functions, finance leaders are forced to add on and invest in additional point solutions, only to find that they now have expensive, redundant software and many of their processes are still disjointed and manual. Instead, proactive finance and procurement leaders need a unified, scalable total spend management platform, equipped with end-to-end visibility and artificial intelligence (AI), to provide robust reporting and analytics and enhanced compliance. Having AI, including machine learning (ML) and generative AI (GenAI), integrated throughout a platform enables organizations to maximize margins and grow efficiently.



Focusing narrowly on upstream P2P automation carries risks

By prioritizing intake over other important capabilities and functions, finance and procurement leaders run the risk of establishing inadequate and inefficient spend processes that will be more difficult and costly to upgrade over time. Changing processes down the line is disruptive to stakeholders, as it stretches IT resources and requires additional employee training hours that prevent the business from moving forward.

Without a robust AI-driven platform equipped with compliance and risk management capabilities, it will be difficult to effectively enforce procurement policies, ensure regulatory compliance, monitor supplier performance, and mitigate fraud and supply chain threats. In the absence of adequate controls and oversight, achieving SOX compliance and preparing audits becomes that much harder and time-consuming. Plus, it adds more work to overstretched Accounts Payable (AP) teams who benefit from full automation and defined processes. Ultimately, intake-focused software is limited in its capabilities, and it leaves your organization unprepared as you scale and mature.

6 key limitations of intake-focused software that will hold you back

Because intake software wasn't built with finance in mind, it often lacks crucial capabilities and AI-driven insights that fast-growth companies need to optimize margins, ensure compliance, and grow sustainably. This is why some intake software positioning itself as a full intake-to-pay solution can be thought of as an "intake-to-pray it works" solution – it's not mature enough for growth, scalability, or adaptability, especially given today's increased complexity, tighter constraints, uncertainty, and volatility. Intake-focused software has the following limitations:

- 1 Lack of end-to-end visibility:** Intake software often focuses only on the initial stages of procurement, such as requisitions and purchase orders, without providing comprehensive visibility into the entire spend lifecycle. This limited view hinders effective cost management, creates additional work hours manually chasing down paper invoices and reconciling payments, and prevents strategic decision-making. It creates blind spots for operational improvements and bottlenecks across departments where manual processes get stuck in silos.
- 2 Insufficient process integrations:** Intake-focused software only addresses specific stages of procurement, resulting in broken processes. This lack of integration between various P2P capabilities and other applications, such as sourcing and contract management, can lead to inefficiencies, data inconsistencies, and increased manual work. In addition, some intake software has a limited ability to integrate seamlessly with an ERP and other business technology, falling short of its promised potential to serve as an orchestration layer. Because native intake capabilities don't meet all unique needs, having integration partners that can meet more complex needs is critical.
- 3 Incomplete data analytics and reporting:** Intake software allows for basic reporting capabilities, such as CSV extraction, but lacks proactive financial reporting tools, such as audit trails of all P2P processes, approvals, controls, and fraud and risk monitors, that make the complexity of compliance and audit readiness simple. The basic reporting that comes with intake software is also missing advanced analytics, making it more difficult for procurement and finance leaders to spot trends, bottlenecks, and inefficiencies for accurate financial planning. They also lose out on cost-saving opportunities that rob their company of time and money. This limits the organization's ability to execute data-driven decisions and make continuous process improvements. Due to these drawbacks, intake solutions aren't able to leverage data across the whole P2P process to improve the user experience and deliver actionable insights to finance leaders.

6 key limitations of intake-focused software that will hold you back *(continued)*

- 4** **Lack of advanced AI:** Newer intake software often lack the rich data that have been safely and ethically sourced for years, from thousands of customers and millions of suppliers, to provide organizations with valuable benchmarking insights specific to the complexities of their organization and industry. These insights are crucial in today's environment to improve margins and optimize efficiencies. Without the right data to train AI, organizations have a limited ability to understand how their performance compares to industry peers and struggle to identify inefficiencies and cost-saving opportunities.
- 5** **Limited scalability and adaptability:** Lightweight solutions struggle to adapt to the changing needs of growing organizations, and they run into problems when handling larger volumes of procurement activities or adapting to changing strategies as businesses are scaling. This makes it difficult to grow finance and accounting operations.
- 6** **Absence of a robust payments engine:** Intake software only focuses on capturing and managing purchases and related documentation. This means it's missing a large and crucial component of the P2P process – payments. Developing and maintaining payment functionality within intake software is complex and time-consuming. It must have the ability to handle different payment methods, currencies, and payment gateways, which is why most intake software requires you to purchase other software and integration capabilities for payments.

6 must-haves when evaluating a procure-to-pay platform

A procure-to-pay platform strives to create a user-friendly and intuitive solution that requires minimal training for your employees, administrators, and suppliers. In addition to having the missing criteria listed above, your provider should lead the way with a platform that supports the evolution of a collaborative organization and unifies all of the ways your business spends money. When choosing a provider, you should prioritize:

- 1 Completeness of the solution:** An end-to-end platform should grow with you and support the evolution and maturity of your organization today and tomorrow. Where will you be in five years? How about 10 years? And what will you need to accomplish those business goals? A full P2P solution should have the ability to seamlessly integrate with your ERP and also include key finance needs, such as cash management, payments, and expenses, built into its platform to support you in your growth. Is your business evaluating an IPO or other type of liquidity event in the future? The business isn't going to delay this important milestone because finance isn't prepared. Your platform should easily support the reporting, compliance, and audit requirements of a public company.
- 2 Proven track record:** Reputation and proven success are everything. You'll want to have confidence that the provider you select is financially sound, well-established, can provide customer references across a broad range of industries, and has experience working with companies scaling from 50 to 200 employees and so on. With maturity in mind, a provider should be able to support IPO readiness, audit requirements, and merger and acquisition (M&A) activities too. You'll want to ensure the vendor also has experience and expertise in implementations so that you encounter as few mistakes as possible and reap a shorter Time-to-Value. Evaluating a vendor's success doesn't stop there though. In today's economic environment, financial stability is more important than ever. Be careful to vet vendors based on how long they've been in business and what their economic outlook looks like over the next few years to minimize your risks.
- 3 Robust data analysis, reporting, and dashboard capabilities.** The numbers don't lie, which is why having reliable, consistent, and up-to-date data is critical to the health, compliance, and success of your business. To ensure compliance and accuracy, it's important to use a platform that provides a single source of truth to analyze data, evaluate trends, establish controls, and quickly generate detailed reports. With all P2P data consolidated on a single platform, organizations can gain complete spend visibility, work with their vendor to apply AI for predictive analytics, identify savings opportunities, and make more informed decisions – something difficult with fragmented point solutions. With comprehensive data analysis, a platform that provides prescriptive insights and key benchmarks will also enable you to increase profitability and optimize business performance.

6 must-haves when evaluating a procure-to-pay platform *(continued)*

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Advanced AI trained on the right data: To protect the bottom line and improve margins in today's business environment, finance and procurement leaders are turning to advanced technology and processes. While AI provides the ability to handle huge volumes of data, reduce human error, and automate routine tasks, not all AI is the same. The right data are crucial because any AI solution designed to support smarter decisions is only as good as the data it's built on. Data scraped off the internet (or based on surveys), collected for a few months or from a limited number of customers, and run through public LLMs will train AI-driven solutions that reflect these limitations. This does little to improve an organization's operating model and profit margins. Companies must understand the data organizations use and look for providers that use propriety, secure, and confidential data that have been safely and ethically sourced for years, from thousands of customers and millions of suppliers.

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Wide variety of use cases supported: While many fast-growth companies primarily buy software in their early stages, consider how quickly your needs can change as your business expands. Sales teams need a robust and intuitive expense solution to manage their growing territories. As you add more employees, hardware and office supply needs grow exponentially. How can you ensure they are making cost-effective and compliant purchases? Increased purchasing presents the opportunity to negotiate with suppliers, strategically manage how you pay them, and also manage your payments both inside and outside of the company. International expansion presents an opportunity and also complexity. Purchasing and payment processes need to work for your organization no matter where they are doing business.

6

High supplier adoption: To get the most out of a full P2P solution, it's not just about employee adoption rates, but it should also facilitate high supplier adoption. The best platforms will have a robust supplier network that encourages vendors to use their system through faster payments and multiple payment methods. This establishes better relationships and provides opportunities for the best discounts and savings with your partners.

How Coupa's AI-driven platform solves your P2P needs and prepares you for growth

Not only is Coupa's [Total Spend Management](#) platform equipped with the must-have criteria mentioned above, but Coupa AI is integrated throughout the end-to-end P2P process to automate and revolutionize critical functions. By capturing and analyzing all of your direct and indirect spend data against that of your peers, Coupa's P2P platform provides tailored recommendations and advanced insights, enabling customers to unlock unprecedented productivity and profitability.

From the start, Coupa's AI-powered intake easily guides users through the requisition process of approved goods, whether it's with catalog, non-catalog, Open Buy, or punchout purchases – eliminating maverick spend. Coupa's dynamic intake workflows also allow your organization to increase efficiencies by collecting relevant data from users, across documents, and reduce cycle times by submitting multiple forms to reviewers and approvers. Our unified platform provides unmatched visibility and control across the entire procurement lifecycle by connecting all P2P activities in one place and providing a single source of truth for data analysis and reporting. Coupa's advanced reporting capabilities make audit readiness simple with audit trails of all P2P processes, approvals, controls, fraud and risk monitors, and additional financial reporting tools. Coupa users also have out-of-the-box [regulatory and tax compliance](#), such as e-invoicing mandates, for over 50 foreign government-mandated electronic invoicing networks and clearance models, which reduces penalty risks. This enables you to maximize the amount of spend under management, [ensure compliance](#), increase user adoption, and optimize business performance. In addition to having a complete solution, equipped with expenses, payments, and cash management functions, here's how Coupa's platform goes above and beyond:

- **Unrivaled community-generated AI:** By leveraging AI trained on data from more than \$6 trillion of real-time global transactional spend across a network of roughly 10 million buyers and suppliers for more than 15 years, Coupa enables organizations to create margin multipliers to grow their bottom line. With data from companies of all sizes, in every industry, and across the world, the Coupa Community created a competitive data advantage that underpins Coupa's platform.

By training our AI solutions on this proprietary “community intelligence,” we ensure they provide precise, tailored KPIs and recommendations that account for each organization's unique business rules, supplier dynamics, market factors, and operational constraints. This contextual awareness is pivotal in driving tangible, transformative value across the procure-to-pay cycle.

Coupa's leading customers are proof of value and a successful adoption for buyers and suppliers. Customers in the top quartile of performance achieve the following KPIs with Coupa:

95.3%

of their spend under management

95.8%

of invoices paid digitally

93.9%

of suppliers use digital payments

Coupa's community is also proof of high supplier adoption across a broad range of industries. Ultimately, suppliers want billing and payment flexibility, streamlined information management, and exposure to a broad network of buyers. Through Coupa's digital supplier portal, vendors are able to capture these benefits and are incentivized to get onto the portal in order to get paid faster, in the channels they prefer. Through these elevated supplier relationships, Coupa's able to offer [pre-negotiated supplier savings](#).

Learn how Coupa's supplier network and portal make it easy for suppliers to manage their own remittance and payment information during economic turbulence, such as [bank failures](#).

- **Comprehensive payments system:** [Coupa Pay](#) allows you to automatically reconcile and easily manage all your payments to suppliers, employees, subsidiaries, and other beneficiaries in one place, regardless of which bank your organization uses and what suppliers you need to pay. Coupa also makes the payment process painless for suppliers by seamlessly integrating with your bank and allowing you to pay vendors with any payment method or rail – bank, cross border, digital check, or card. Through this robust payments engine, you gain visibility into payment statuses while reducing supplier onboarding, payment processing, and payment infrastructure maintenance efforts.
- **Quicker Time to Value:** Coupa and its partners have extensive experience doing implementations and have developed best practices specifically designed for smaller companies.

Our integrated platform provides a single, comprehensive lens for visibility into all of your spend to ensure you maximize your ROI as quickly as possible.

Customers with Coupa experienced the following Time to Value:



ScaleAI
14 weeks



Thumbtack
12 weeks



Cockroach Labs

Cockroach Labs
11 weeks



Crusoe

Crusoe Energy
11 weeks

"I always say that my love language is ROI and one of the benefits we have been able to immediately realize with Coupa is actual positive ROI. And what I mean is that we've actually been able to operate our team with a lot fewer resources than a typical team would take to process while maintaining speed and scale that the business requires."

David Hose,
Director of Financial Systems
at Bowery Farming

"Life before Coupa was the Stone Age. We were on a number of different solutions that led to process inconsistencies and confusion for our employees. We chose Coupa because it solved our immediate issues but also had the ability to take on our future challenges and address them in one place. We are able to scale with our core team on a platform that just works."

Dan O'Shaughnessy,
CFO at Formlabs

- **Demonstrated track record of value:** Coupa has a proven track record of supporting customers through important financial milestones, such as IPO and audits. Dozens of fast-growth companies, including Peloton, Reddit, and Uber, have IPOed with Coupa. While many companies we support have since become enterprise companies, roughly 50% of Coupa's customers are small and mid-sized as we continue to scale alongside our clients.

Coupa's modules and Source-to-Pay (S2P) capabilities meet the growing needs of customers as their spend management practice matures and purchasing process becomes more complex. This allows customers to take advantage of best practices derived from Coupa's expertise in helping fast-growth customers scale.

Coupa helps its customers scale: 151 Coupa customers had less than 300 employees when they purchased our P2P

- **Commitment to customers, innovation, and R&D:** Coupa is constantly striving for excellence and creating best-in-class products for our customers, but don't just take our word for it. Discover why Coupa is consistently positioned as a leader in analyst reports:
 - [Coupa Named a Leader in 2024 Gartner® Magic Quadrant™ for Source-to-Pay Suites](#)
 - [Coupa Recognized as a Leader for a Third Time in a Row in IDC MarketScape: Worldwide Accounts Payable Automation Software 2024 Vendor Assessment for Midmarket](#)
 - [Coupa named a Gartner® Peer Insights™ Customers' Choice for Procure-to-Pay Suites for the fourth time](#)
 - [Coupa Recognized as a Leader in the 2023 Hackett Digital World Class Matrix™ P2P Solution Provider Perspective](#)

Learn how Coupa's AI-driven platform can help solve all of your P2P needs

Request a Demo

Coupa makes margins multiply through its community-generated AI and industry leading total spend management platform for businesses large and small. Coupa AI is informed by trillions of dollars of direct and indirect spend data across a global network of 10M+ buyers and suppliers. We empower you with the ability to predict, prescribe, and automate smarter, more profitable business decisions to improve operating margins. Coupa is the margin multiplier company™. Learn more at coupa.com and follow us on [LinkedIn](#) and [X \(Twitter\)](#).

