Nando's NZ streamlines the AP process to improve efficiency, visibility and control.

Founded in 1987 in South Africa, Nando's casual dining restaurants famous for their flame-grilled PERi-PERi chicken are now found in 24 countries. Today, there are over 26 Nando's restaurants in New Zealand. When the Nando's master franchise for New Zealand ownership changed in 2014 it was easier to have an external accounting firm managing aspects of the finance function. However, as the Nando's business grew, the finance team wanted to have greater visibility and control over the AP process and day-to-day processing

To gain greater control over their AP process Nando's New Zealand brought the accounts payable process of their corporate restaurants in-house. Using Xtracta to automate the data capture of invoices into their accounting system Nando's have greater visibility of expenses down to store-level and are now more productive, efficient and paperless.

Taking back control with Xtracta

"When you are handling up to a 1000 invoices each month, there will be queries that arise and errors. When you have to reach out to a third party to remedy those, it takes time. Invoice processing, including approval, is more efficient and cost-effective to manage in-house," says Nando's New Zealand accountant, Vaneeta Bhula.

In looking for a solution to help automate the AP process in-house, their accounting firm introduced them to an IT partner who recommended Xtracta. Through its automated processes, Xtracta removes an organisation's need for manual data entry. It simplifies data capture and organisation by extracting data from any type of document, making it suitable for businesses who receive, upload and process a high number of supplier invoices – such as organisations operating in the hospitality sector. If the supplier can generate a document – either digital or physical – Xtracta can send the required information straight to the customer's application software. Powered by artificial intelligence technology, Xtracta's data extraction functionality is versatile and easily integrated with other business management systems.

Time saving and efficient

She says Xtracta's technology is saving the support office team a significant amount of time and they have since gained greater control. "The business is rapidly growing, and there are not enough hours in the day to achieve value-add tasks. When you have a time-saving tool like Xtracta, it increases efficiencies and frees staff to focus on value-add projects."

Nando's invoice processing is now in-house and fully automated. "The invoices come in from suppliers to a Nando's email address which auto-forwards to Xtracta in the cloud. Our accounts payable team logs into the system to review and check that Xtracta has mapped the correct information, and then clicks a single button to push it through to our accounting software." Xtracta also uploads a PDF of the invoice into the accounting software. "Now that we have the software bedded in, we may look to use it to automate other business processes."

"Xtracta's technology is ideal for organisations operating in the hospitality sector who have to process a high number of invoices month to month. The Xtracta team is easy to deal with and the technology is extremely robust. The entire process is now paperless. We don't have to do any manual data entry and if we need to find a particular invoice, there is an electronic copy of it within our accounting software."

Using the Xtracta API removes the need to build and maintain complex EDI and Xtracta can be customised to meet a business' unique requirements and workflows. It is ideal for cloud integrators looking to build industry specific solutions for their customers as it can be embedded as white-label technology or used within a connector. Customer set up happens in a matter of days and efficiency gains are achieved from day one.

"Every business is different and has its own unique business processing quirks. That's why I appreciate a product like Xtracta. Nando's asked for things to be done in a certain way and I liaised with the experts at Xtracta to achieve it," says Nando's IT Partner, Toni Baldwin.

Automatic expense tracking

One of Nando's 'must have' functions was the ability to add a tracking code to match invoices against individual restaurants. "We view and analyse profit and loss statements for each of our corporate restaurants, rather than a simple consolidated P&L," says Bhula. "It was crucial that Xtracta could map all of our transactions with the restaurant they related to so we could achieve a granular view of how each restaurant was performing." Nando's IT partner customised Xtracta to use a code within their accounting software as a way of identifying the purchases of each restaurant. "When Nando's in Queen Street, for example, purchases chicken, there is a unique mapping code that identifies that restaurant. This means that Nando's has the ability to view the exact expenses for each particular restaurant."

Says Bhula: "Our IT partner customised Xtracta's workflow so it also maps the supplier account code and we know what expense item it relates to. That information is pushed into our accounting software automatically, meaning we no longer need to manually enter or check it."

"Xtracta automates repetitive tasks, freeing staff to concentrate on value-add projects"

Vaneeta Bhula
Accountant, Nando's New Zealand (right), with Toni Baldwin, Nando's NZ IT Partner."