SAP Concur ⓒ

Public Sector | eBook

Maximizing Municipal Spend

Spot Budget Shortfalls and Control Employee Spending

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**Every municipality knows the budgeting process is inevitable — a necessary part to keep the city up and running. But the truth is, the budgeting process can be downright difficult.**

Not only are you and your finance team tasked to forecast annual expenditures and revenues the city will incur, but you must also update the five-year financial plan, engage in strategic conversations with the City Council, and attend other public hearings to determine what projects to prioritize. This process often takes hundreds of hours of your staff's time to research, analyze, and crunch the numbers needed in preparation for the annual budget presentation.

And while you and your team are eager to dive into how the city can best utilize its resources to benefit its citizens, the process of getting the financial data your team needs is strenuous.

In this eBook, you will discover the four challenges to managing spend, along with solutions on how to increase visibility and gain control so your team can achieve city projects and goals.
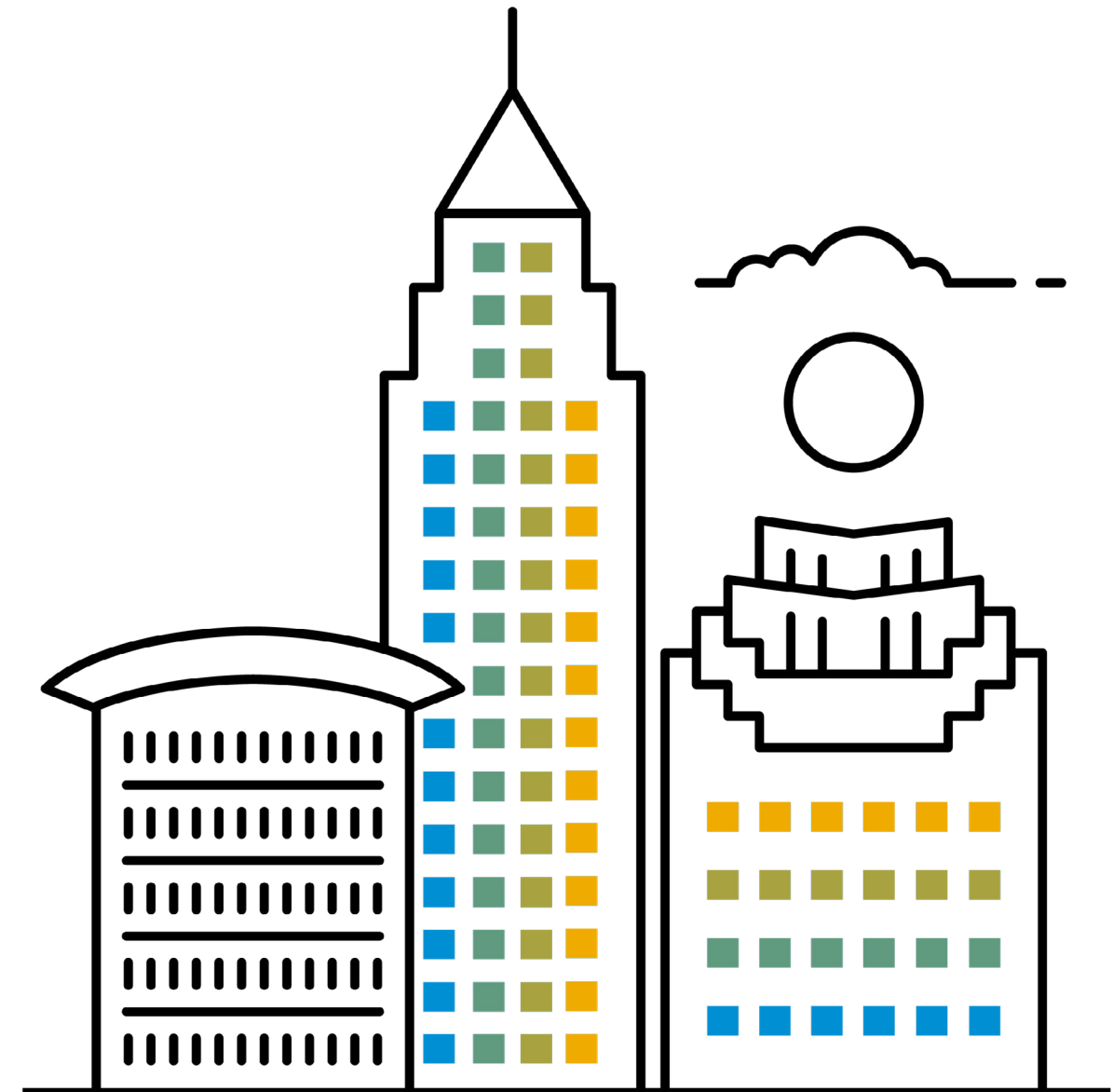
Challenge

1 A Slow, Cumbersome Manual Expense Process

On any given day, there are an unknown number of expense reports out there orbiting the office. As employees sit down to pore over their crumbled reports, only to notice some of the receipts have been lost, they painstakingly copy details over to forms or spreadsheets while attempting to match credit card charges to the right expense lines. Although they aren't always sure if their expenses are within policy, they still print out their claim, staple receipts to their reports, make necessary photocopies, and cross their fingers it all goes through okay.

Sound familiar? This inefficient and error-prone expense process isn't only leaving your employees feeling frustrated, it's also lacking the visibility and insight you need to see where your city's budget is going.

Solution

Automate Expenses to Simplify

Automating your travel, expense, and invoice process takes away the cumbersome and manual tasks like populating spreadsheets, stapling receipts onto pieces of paper, copying, submitting, and filing expense reports – all which take up your team's valuable time.

When you simplify how your employees work, you increase productivity and free up time that could be spent better elsewhere, such as compiling actionable reports for key stakeholders or predicting city cash flow on a month-to-month basis.

2 No Visibility or Control Over Employee Spending

Whether you are trying to cut costs or expand the cities resources, making informed spending decisions is key. To stay on top of cash flow, you need to know where and how your money is being allocated, ideally as it's being spent. Spreadsheets, paper receipts, late submissions of expense claims, and lengthy approval processes all stand between you and a clear picture of your cash flow. Then there's other common expenses that often get left out of the picture like invoices, p-cards, and mileage.

These types of increasingly decentralized spending will demand your systems to work harder and reach farther to capture what's being spent. And if you can't connect to all that data, then you can't be sure your funds are doing what you want.

Solution

Connect Data Together for a Complete View of Spending

Connecting all of your city's transactional data together to include travel, expense, invoice, and mileage is the best way to gain ultimate visibility and enable strategic control.

When you can see exactly where your city's budget is going – and ensure that policy is being enforced on all of your spending platforms – then you can start to reduce unnecessary expenses and redirect your city's budget to where it matters most.
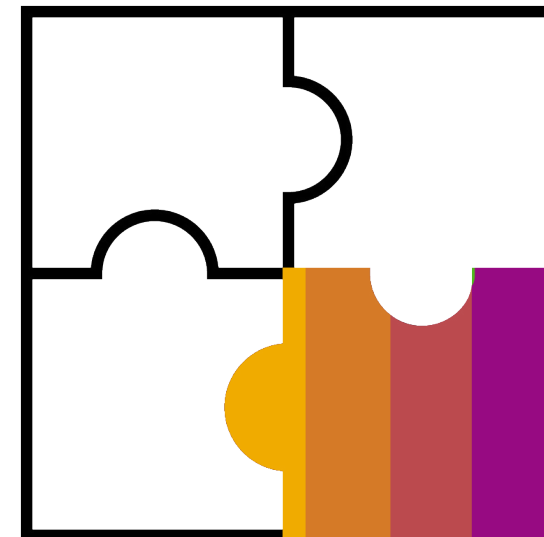
Challenge

3 High Risk of Incorrect and Fraudulent Payments

If you consider the tedious tasks behind completing an expense report, it's no surprise humans can make errors. In fact, a report from the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) found that nearly 1 in 5 expense reports contain errors, costing an extra 52 dollars and 18 minutes to fix each one.[1] Unfortunately, acts of fraud can be even more detrimental. A report from the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners found the median loss of fraud for public administration to be $125,000 per case and last a median duration of 16 months.[2]

If you don't know where your current policy is located or what it says, then chances are your employees don't know either – and that's an even bigger problem. Complicated, outdated, or nonexistent expense policies create compliance risks and leave your city vulnerable to fraud.

1. GBTA, 2015. How Much Do Expense Reports Really Cost a Company?
2. ACFE, 2018. Report to the Nations.

Solution

Detect and Prevent Incorrect and Fraudulent Payments

Mistakes or fraud can take a toll on your city's budget. To prevent this, you need to make policy compliance both easier for employees and more visible for you. That way you can spot out-of-policy spend when it happens, prevent losses, and control employee spending.

Detect and prevent fraud before it happens by pro-actively enforcing corporate spending policies and automatically flagging non-compliant transactions.
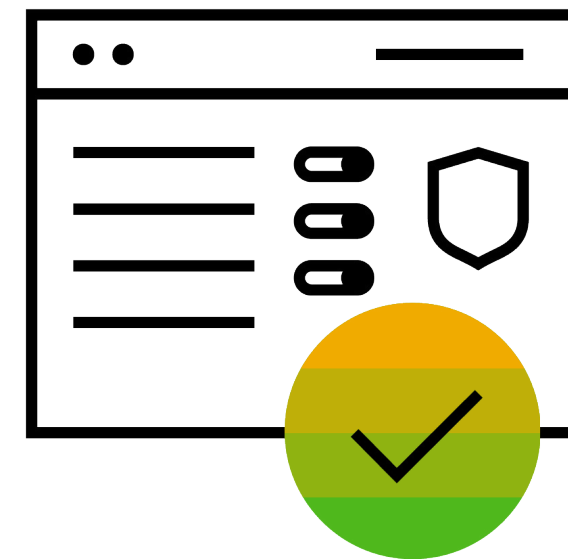
4 You Can't Direct Spend to Where It Matters Most

Without automation to enforce policy compliance or streamline processing, your city's finance team is focusing all of their time on administrative tasks rather than value-added initiatives. But if you want to be strategic with spend, then your finance team can no longer be viewed as a cost center.

Empower your city's finance team with the tools and time they need to review actionable insights so you can identify ways to invest wisely to meet the city's current demands and fuel growth for the future. Analyzing spend data to direct budget dollars will also help shape your city's priorities and avoid overspending when trying to serve your citizens' constantly changing needs.

Solution

Get Strategic with Spend

To direct city planning efforts you'll need access to a consolidated, continuously updated view of spending – a tool that synthesizes expense, invoice, and even travel-request data from all employee spending. With all that data in hand, you'll not only be able to see what's happened, but what's about to happen. And that's the only way to ensure your budget is directed to the city's top priorities.

How SAP Concur Can Help

Transforming local government spend management beyond automation with a connected, flexible end-to-end solution, SAP Concur delivers complete insight and control over employee-initiated expenditures. Simple to use and built on a powerful, open architecture, we empower cities to easily create a customized, compliant workflow, regardless of existing technology, partners, or processes. Effortlessly adapt spend management protocols to changing requirements, policies, and mandates, as well as disruptive and innovative technology. And with SAP Concur's mobile solutions, city employees and contractors can securely and effectively manage their travel and spending from any location, on any device. SAP Concur enables your city to manage employee-initiated spend so that you can focus on your mission.

Learn more about how SAP Concur gives city leaders the technology and tools needed to monitor spend closely, increase productivity, and modernize processes by visiting us online at Concur.com.
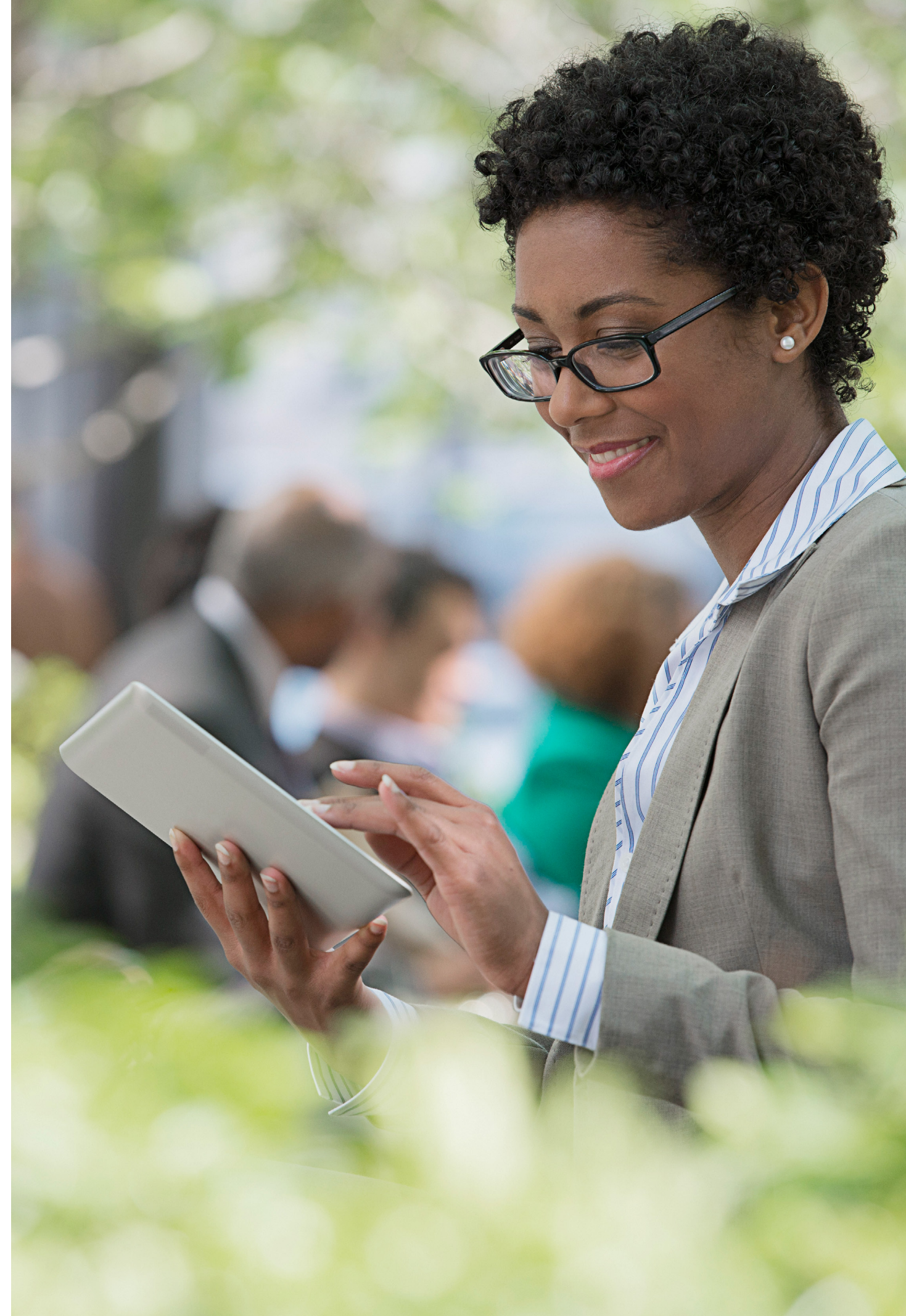
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ABOUT SAP CONCUR

SAP Concur is the world's leading provider of integrated travel, expense, and invoice management solutions, driven by a relentless pursuit to simplify and automate these everyday processes. With SAP Concur, a top-rated app guides employees through every trip, charges are effortlessly populated into expense reports, and invoice approvals are automated. By integrating near real-time data and using AI to audit 100% of transactions, businesses can see exactly what they're spending without worrying about blind spots in the budget. SAP Concur eliminates yesterday's tedious tasks, makes today's work easier, and helps businesses run at their best every day. Learn more at concur.com or the SAP Concur blog.

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