



Case Study

# Heineken France

Accelerates Its Financial Transformation  
Program with Basware

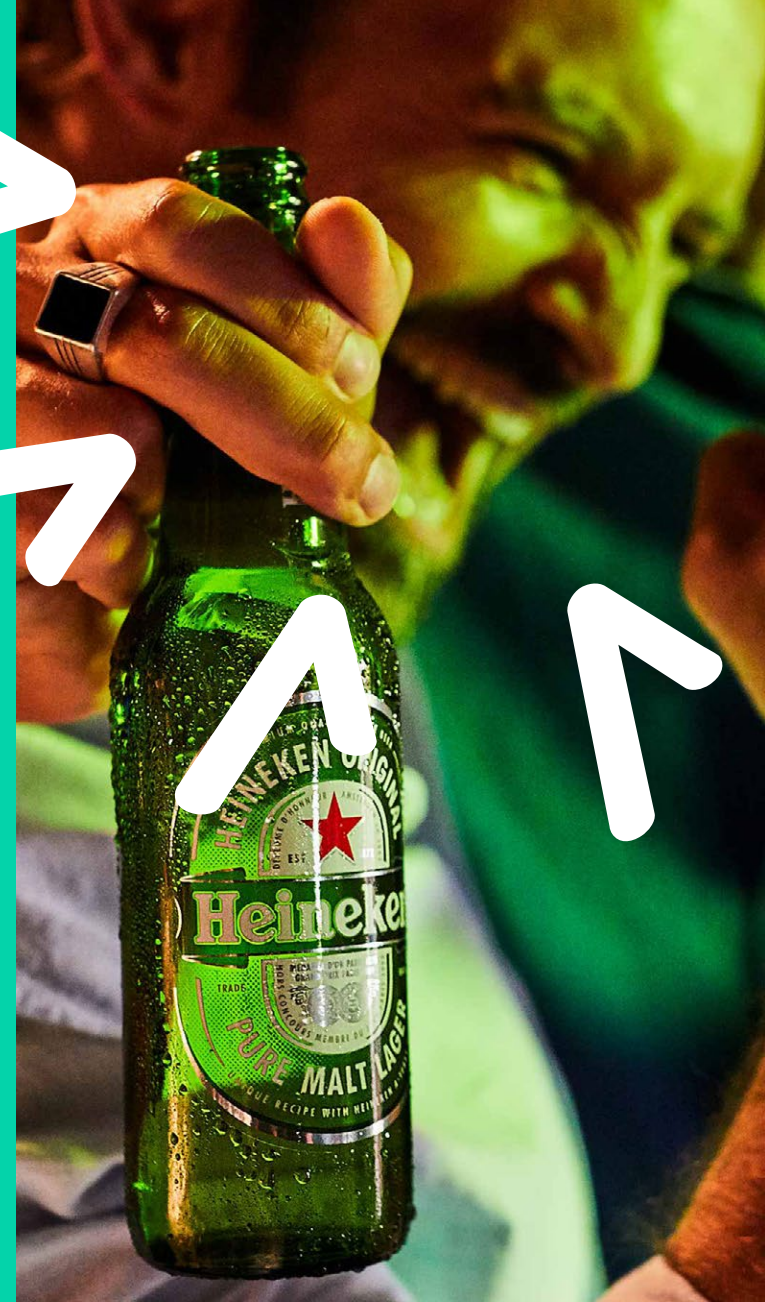
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✓✓ The Basware solution enables us to manage these dual flows as well as different formats, such as EDI, PDF, and paper.”

Stéphane Declair, Accounting Manager, Heineken

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**Industry:** Food & Beverage



**Regions:** Global



**Solutions:** Basware AP Automation





**The Heineken Group is one of the world's leading brewers. A family business since its founding nearly 150 years ago, the company now operates in 160 countries.**

In the US, Heineken focuses on brewing and distributing its products through a robust distribution network. In France, Heineken operates in a dual market: both as a brewer and as a distributor of beverages to the Cafés-Hotels-Restaurants (CHR) sector through France Boissons. With almost 46,000 customers, including 30,000 CHR establishments across France, Heineken is now the leading distributor of beverages and services for out-of-home professionals. The company generates \$1.8 billion in sales in France and \$38 billion worldwide.

**50% Reduction:**

Invoice backlog reduced from 8,000 to 4,000 over five years.

**100% Automation:**

All purchase-order invoices are seamlessly routed for approval.

**95% On-Time Payments:**

Supplier payment compliance improved from 75% to 95% over two years.

## The Context

Heineken's financial transformation has been underway for several years and is now accelerating. As part of its "Digital Backbone Transformation Program," Heineken plans to roll out SAP S/4 HANA ERP to all its subsidiaries worldwide over the next four years. Concurrently, the company aims to implement a single invoice management solution for all countries. This initiative seeks to optimize invoicing processes, improve supplier payments, and ensure compliance with various regulations on electronic invoicing, including upcoming regulations in France. To achieve these goals, Heineken has decided to migrate to Basware's automated invoice management solution.

✓✓ Today, our compliance rate for on-time payments has increased to 95%."

Eric Salimon, Accounts Director,  
Heineken France

## Europe and France: Moving Forward Together

Heineken France receives 140,000 supplier invoices annually, including paper invoices, from nearly 12,000 suppliers. These invoices are processed by Heineken's European Shared Services Center, based in Poland. Currently, the company uses SAP Central Finance alongside the Basware solution.

"In our France Boissons business, we process a significant number of invoices without purchase orders, whereas on the brewing side, 97% of our invoices include purchase orders," explains Stéphane Declair, Heineken Accounting Manager. "The Basware solution enables us to manage these dual flows as well as different formats, such as EDI, PDF, and paper."

The planned migration to the SAP S/4 HANA ERP system in France in 2027 will integrate all of Heineken's satellite solutions, including Basware.

Another significant challenge was finding a solution that could integrate with five separate ERP instances: two SAP 4.5 systems, SAP 4.7, SAP 5.0, and an in-house system, Proost.

Finally, Heineken has over 14,000 suppliers that make up its supply chain, adding additional complexity and scale to the implementation project.

## A Standardized Deployment Across Europe

With Basware's SaaS solution, Heineken France has benefited from new features and

optimized its invoice processing workflows. The company relies on its product team, based in Amsterdam, which Heineken established to oversee the deployment of Basware in new entities and to implement new functionalities.

"What we implemented in France serves as a blueprint for other countries," says Eric Salimon, Accounts Director at Heineken France. "We develop country-specific requirements, such as those based on local legislation and legal archiving timeframes. The local project team communicates its requirement with the product team and Basware, and the solution is configured accordingly. The product team ensures consistency across deployments to avoid creating country-specific features."

## Smooth Change Management in France

The deployment in France took just six months. Since this was primarily a migration from an on-premise solution to the SaaS version, users were already familiar with the Basware platform, which eased the transition. Nonetheless, some challenges had to be addressed. For instance, an approval system for each invoice line had to be introduced, which was a new process. Additional management rules were also developed to clarify what qualifies as an invoice.





## Optimized Invoice Management Processes

With Basware, Heineken has streamlined its invoice management processes before invoices enter the ERP system.

- **Brewing Operations:** For 100% of invoices associated with purchase orders, the process is seamless. Invoices are routed directly to the appropriate person for approval, as required by the purchase order instructions.
- **France Boissons Operations:** For non-PO invoices, suppliers are instructed to provide minimum required information. Approval matrices, supplier criteria, and other data are used to integrate the invoice into a workflow and direct it to the appropriate recipient.

All reconciliation processes are now fully automated.

## Improved Supplier Payment Times

The benefits of the Basware solution include significantly reduced supplier payment

times. When Heineken began its financial transformation in 2018, its compliance rate for supplier payment times was around 75%. The company used Basware's reporting capabilities to analyze payment delays and address the root causes, such as late invoice receipts or unmet supplier delivery commitments.

"We identified several reasons for these delays," says Eric Salimon. "We tackled the major issues first. Today, our compliance rate for on-time payments has increased to 95%. Over two years, we've improved by 20 percentage points. However, we are still working to address late invoice submissions by suppliers and improve purchase order coverage for France Boissons."

## Continuous Improvement Plan

Heineken now follows a continuous improvement strategy, conducting monthly KPI analyses. The company uses Basware to extract and review outstanding invoices and prioritizes them for processing. "This approach has reduced our backlog from approximately 8,000 invoices five years ago to 4,000 today," says Stéphane Declair.



## Focus on Electronic Invoicing Reform

In 2025, Heineken will focus on further optimizing its first-time matching rate and expanding its electronic invoicing capabilities.

"We've started an audit to assess our readiness for the electronic invoicing regulations set to take effect in France in 2026," concludes Eric Salimon. "We know the changes required in our systems and are now entering the active phase of our e-invoicing compliance project."

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**ABOUT BASWARE** Basware is how finance leaders in global enterprises can finally automate their complex, labor-intensive invoice processes and stay compliant with regulatory change. Our AP automation and invoicing platform helps you achieve a new level of efficiency – in a matter of months – while reducing errors and risks. We bring a unique combination of true automation, complete coverage, and deeper expertise to make it all just happen for our customers. That's why the world's most efficient AP departments rely on Basware to handle millions of invoices per year. Basware. Now it all just happens. ©Basware 2025

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