

SUEZ Transforms Spreadsheet Chaos Into Strategic Procurement Intelligence with Coupa

SUEZ R&R UK is a waste recycling company with a clear mission: a world with no more waste. Operating 300 sites across the UK with 6,500 employees and £1.2 billion in turnover, SUEZ helps businesses and communities transform waste into resources through its circular economy approach. To deliver on that mission, procurement must track SME partnerships, demonstrate social value in competitive bids, and prove ESG commitments with data, not just intentions. A basic system replacement would keep operations running, but it wouldn't unlock the strategic capabilities that help SUEZ win contracts and strengthen community impact.

That's exactly the situation Robert Bailey, Head of Procurement, faced in 2022. He inherited an outdated on-premise system that hadn't been properly maintained since 2010. The platform was losing support, and more critically, it couldn't answer basic procurement questions: What do we buy? Who do we buy it from? How much does it cost? How many do we buy?

"I couldn't get that information out of the system we had. So I was frustrated. My team was hugely frustrated," explains Robert. "In a data-driven industry, that is what we need to know. If we go into a negotiation, we need to understand what the data is telling us, and that data told us nothing."

Teams worked around the broken system with spreadsheets. Supplier negotiations happened without reliable data. The procurement function operated blindly. When SUEZ partnered with Coupa in May 2022, they didn't just replace a failing system. They built a modern procurement operation from scratch, implementing the entire platform remotely during COVID across a decentralized organization. The results transformed both their operations and strategic capabilities.



Industry: Technology

Company Size: Enterprise

Headquarters: Paris, France

Employees: 6,500+

Website: suez.com

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Business Challenges

- A legacy Basware system, installed in 2010, was out of support, poorly maintained, and unable to provide basic procurement data needed for negotiations and strategic decisions
- Teams relied entirely on spreadsheets because the existing system was too unreliable to use, creating data inconsistencies and compliance risks
- Manual processes prevented the procurement team from negotiating more strategically with suppliers or demonstrating value to the business beyond anecdotal evidence

Products

- [Procure-to-Pay](#)
- [AP Automation](#)

Primary Persona

- Primary: ProcurementTBD
- Secondary: Finance

Results

- Achieved 58% first-time match rate while processing 12,000 invoices per month, with over 7,500 invoices flowing through cleanly without manual intervention
- Doubled annual savings from £6.5M to £15M in the first full year through improved data visibility and supplier negotiations enabled by Coupa
- Enabled strategic capabilities for SME tracking, social value reporting, and ESG data that support revenue generation, while Pactum AI delivered full ROI within three months

Building a data foundation for sustainable procurement

SUEZ's procurement transformation started with a crisis. Their Basware system was end-of-life, leaving them with no viable path forward. But rather than viewing this as simply a system replacement, Robert saw an opportunity to rethink how procurement operates fundamentally.

The implementation happened during an unprecedented time. SUEZ became the first company to complete a full Coupa transformation entirely online during COVID, working with implementation partner Zoomworks. What could have been a limitation became an advantage. The remote rollout forced clear communication, detailed documentation, and structured change management across 300 sites.

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From day one, SUEZ took a measurement-driven approach. Rather than implementing Coupa and hoping for the best, they established clear baselines before going live so they could prove impact.

"It was quite a significant investment for the company," Robert explains. "We need to give them something tangible. So we had these key metrics that we'd agreed with our value manager before we went live so that we had our baseline, and then we could measure it."

"Cooperation between procurement and finance was critical. Coupa gave us the data backbone to drive savings, efficiency, and measurable impact."

Robert Bailey, Head of Procurement

Continuous improvement turns efficiency into strategy

Two months after go-live, SUEZ made an unconventional decision. They launched a continuous improvement program.

"People said to me, 'Why are you doing this, Rob? This is crazy. You've just put a new product in.' But we were seeing bottlenecks starting to develop," Robert recalls, "so it made sense to stop those bottlenecks before they became big issues by putting a continuous improvement program in place."

This proactive approach defined SUEZ's Coupa journey. Regular monthly meetings between procurement and AP leadership teams became standard practice, reviewing metrics and making adjustments. The relationship between procurement and finance, previously fractious, transformed into a genuine partnership through joint sponsorship of the project.

The operational improvements compound. Processing 12,000 invoices monthly, SUEZ now sees a 58% first-time match rate. That translates to over 7,500 invoices flowing through without manual intervention. Robert estimates 35-40% efficiency gains in invoice processing.

More importantly, the clean data unlocked strategic capabilities. The procurement team can now confidently enter supplier negotiations, backed by accurate spend analysis. They doubled annual savings from £6.5M to £15M in their first full year with Coupa, a jump Robert attributes directly to improved data and process efficiency, enabling the team to do more.

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Data-driven social value and strategic growth

For SUEZ, procurement isn't just about cost savings. It's about supporting their triple bottom line: people, planet, profit, all in equal measure. Coupa's data capabilities enable this balanced approach in practical ways.

Clean spend data from Coupa enabled SUEZ to launch community-based initiatives like the Manchester Renew Hub by showing where they invested locally and how they could maximize community impact. More broadly, Coupa's supplier management capabilities let SUEZ identify and track SME relationships.

This matters because UK tenders increasingly include social value components. "We have the data now within Coupa to actually give that to our bid team to enhance their bids, so that brings additional revenue into the business," Robert explains. Clean supplier data directly supports revenue generation, not just cost control.

The AI capabilities extended strategic impact further. In October 2024, Damon Harbinson, the Procurement Process and Systems Manager at SUEZ, deployed Pactum AI for autonomous negotiations. Running the project primarily on his own with business support, the tool delivered full ROI within three months. Robert sees Coupa Sourcing Optimization as the next frontier, particularly for hazardous waste disposal, projecting at least 10% savings worth millions.

Looking forward, Robert is clear about what's ahead: "I can only see the partnership with Coupa growing as we go forward." The platform evolved from solving an immediate crisis to enabling strategic initiatives around ESG, risk management, and supplier relationships that align with SUEZ's mission of creating a world without waste.

Transform fragmented processes into strategic intelligence with Coupa's AI-Native Total Spend Management platform.

[Learn Why 3,000+ Companies Trust Coupa](#)