

Industry: Business Services**Company Size:** Large**Employees:** approx. 10,000**Headquarters:** Chicago, IL, USA**Challenges:**

- Help the business grow through a center-led operating model for Procurement.
- Increase spend visibility by eliminating overwhelmingly manual and disjointed procurement practices at multiple offices.
- Streamline the company's financial systems to better manage and track compliance.

Solutions:

- [Procure-to-Payment](#)
- [SIM](#)

Results:

- Bringing procurement and invoicing onto a single digital platform transforms the operating model to one that withstands auditor and investor scrutiny.
- Driving buyer and supplier adoption of the platform provides significantly enhanced spend visibility for smarter decisions and consistent compliance.
- Managing a single control process for SOX and ISO27001 simplifies day-to-day operations and gives compliance officers more time to monitor changing regulations and proactively identify how to respond to them.

Thoughtworks Stays at the Forefront of Digital Innovation with Coupa

As a US-headquartered global technology consultancy deeply committed to continuous evolution and improvement, Thoughtworks always seeks to apply its principles internally. With widespread global operations across 18 countries, the company recognized an opportunity to optimize its decentralized operating model for procurement and manual processes for invoice approvals where:

- Employees frequently emailed their purchase requests to AP – who then had to identify whether a contract was in place with the vendor.
- Spend visibility was low and teams were unable to self-service data analysis.
- A growing collection of one-off financial controls would require very manual ways of working to provide evidence during audits.

Sticking with the status quo would have limited the company's capacity for future growth and innovation. And from an operations standpoint, "payments would slow down, relationships would sour, and critical services could be disrupted," reflects Johan Mills, now Global Head of Business Services, and previously Global Procurement Lead, at Thoughtworks. He came on board to establish a stronger procurement function that helps the company continue to deliver software excellence at scale globally with greater consistency.

Choosing a P2P system that supports profitability and growth

Thoughtworks decided to invest in a P2P platform to meet its longer-term growth and compliance needs. Thoughtworks selected Coupa based on:

- **Geographic coverage:** Teams that were spread across 18 countries could now access a single source of financial truth and more easily get the goods and services they needed.
- **Scalability:** "We understood Coupa as a platform we could grow into, rather than out of," Mills explains. Scalable and built-in financial controls give leadership teams the tools they need now and in the future, while compliance to key metrics are also captured during vendor on-boarding, such as Code of Conduct and Sustainable Procurement Policy acceptance.

- **Availability of key integrations:** With Coupa's open architecture, single code line, and no-customization approach, Thoughtworks integrated only the business processes that support its growth. Certified, pre-built extensions help solve specific business challenges faster and keep Thoughtworks agile.

Transforming to a center-led operating model for Procurement

The Coupa platform underpins how Thoughtworks redesigned its operating model for procurement. "For compliance with rigorous standards such as Sarbanes-Oxley Act (SOX), we chose a vendor equally committed to upholding these demanding requirements" describes Mills.

"We focused on things like process and compliance, as opposed to adding people to the team/team members," he continues. "We really drove as much compliance as possible in the back end of the source-to-contract process."

Mills also wanted to bring as much spend under management as soon as possible. This is one of the many ways procurement provides valuable support to finance teams. Spend managed on a unified platform automates and enhances fraud prevention for increased control and reduced risk.

98%

of vendor spend going through Coupa

99%

recurring spend vendors onboarded to Coupa

100%

geographic coverage with all countries using Coupa

1

single process articulated to auditors (both SOX and ISO27001)

Creating margin multiplier effects through compliance

Post-deployment, there is strong adoption of Coupa across company offices. This allows Thoughtworks to benefit from Coupa's "margin multiplier effect" – compounding operational improvements that have an outsized positive impact on margins. This includes:

- **Resiliency:** "If you're operating in multiple countries with variations of SOX controls, that can be a painful thing to maintain because not only do you have to stay on top of the evidence for the variations to the SOX controls, you also have to make sure that the different teams are able to articulate how the process works in line with that particular SOX control. Whilst we very recently went back to being privately-held, when we were public between 2021 and 2024, we had one set of Global SOX controls and it's so much easier to gather evidence for and articulate under a single narrative," says Mills.
- **Growth:** Enhanced spend visibility allows business teams to maintain real-time visibility of their spend.
- **Efficiency:** Acquired companies can be onboarded, and it's easier to track compliance thanks to one standardized way of working across all countries.

“Coupa is a SOC I compliant vendor, which means that Coupa is operating to a very high standard themselves internally. So you don’t need to worry about having a vendor that doesn’t have appropriate controls.”

– Johan Mills, Global Head of Business Services

What’s ahead: Unlocking funds for growth through payments

With the platform deployed across the company, Mills and his team have several larger initiatives ahead of them. One of them is to automate AP processes and reduce manual invoice handling. “We are still on our journey with Coupa and our next step is to automate invoice matching so we can get invoices into our Coupa environment with zero-touch,” explains Mills. “This will be a game-changer in freeing up Accounts Payable bandwidth to prioritize more strategic initiatives.”

What’s ahead: Leveraging purpose-built AI

Thoughtworks has been taking [a phased approach](#) to rolling out AI within the business. The Coupa platform has been instrumental in creating the foundation for success. “We’re targeting AI within the P2P space right now,” Mills explains, “because that is where we have data. Without the right dataset, the right processes in place, and clarity within the business about what AI should achieve, it can be very difficult to measure how successfully AI is delivering to the expected business goals and outcomes.”

“For me,” continues Mills, “AI is about augmenting our teams – supercharging them to do more, such as scaling processes quickly and delivering more value to the business. So going forward, a lot of our procurement KPIs will target that, looking at how AI can help our people speed up processes such as raising POs and processing invoices.”

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