

IT'S A

NO-  
BRAINER



Why AR Automation Is the Go-To  
Tool for Organizations



**BLACKLINE**

# NO-BRAINER

## *noun*

A quick and easy decision that produces significant results with minimal effort.

## What Makes a Business Decision a No-Brainer?

Talk to any CFO or finance lead and they'll tell you improving cash flow is at the top of the agenda. They'd also love for their people to be able to concentrate on higher value tasks and spend less time on manual processes prone to error and delays.

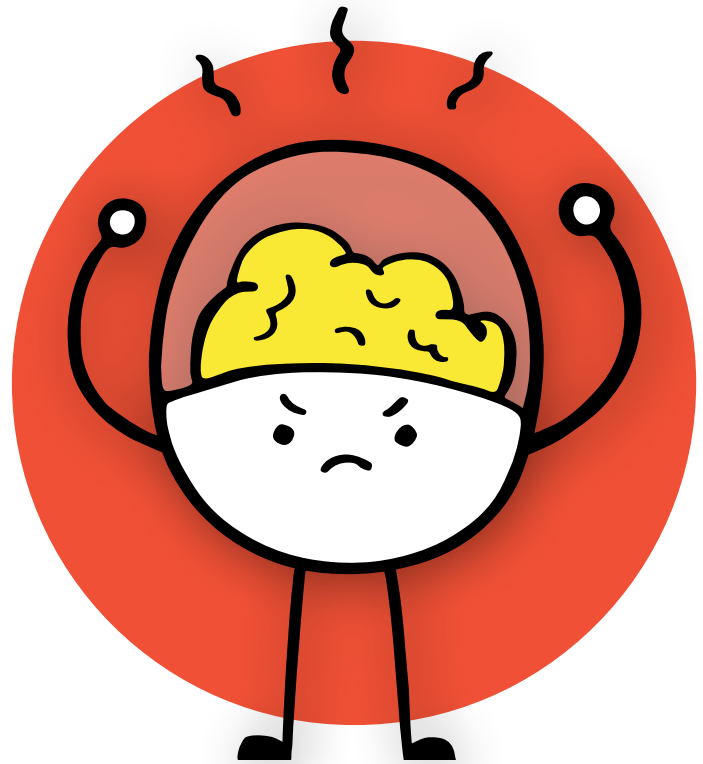
Talk to any accounts receivable manager, credit professional, or order to cash professional and they'll probably say the same.

BlackLine's AR Automation platform is specifically designed to reduce the high level of manual processing needed to carry out what is, after all, a fairly routine task: applying customer payments to open invoices in a timely manner.

In this guide, we'll show you why AR automation is a no-brainer! We'll also demonstrate why BlackLine's Cash Application module, combined with AR intelligence, is a game-changer, unearthing hidden customer behavior data in real time.



# What's Holding Your Teams Back from Moving Forward?



Is it a lack of time? Maybe you don't have enough hours in the day to get everything done. Perhaps you have too many manual processes? Is there fear of change, wondering if you might encounter too many stakeholders stuck in their ways and reluctant to embrace new technology?

For whatever reason, digital transformation is currently out of reach—at least, it feels that way.

With so many complexities around modernizing your finance operations, it can be difficult to see a way forward. But if there's one thing we can take away from [PwC's 22/23 working capital report](#), it's that companies need to be more agile:

'The lack of agility in adapting working capital levels to disruptive external events is a concern as we face continued challenges in the global supply chain.'

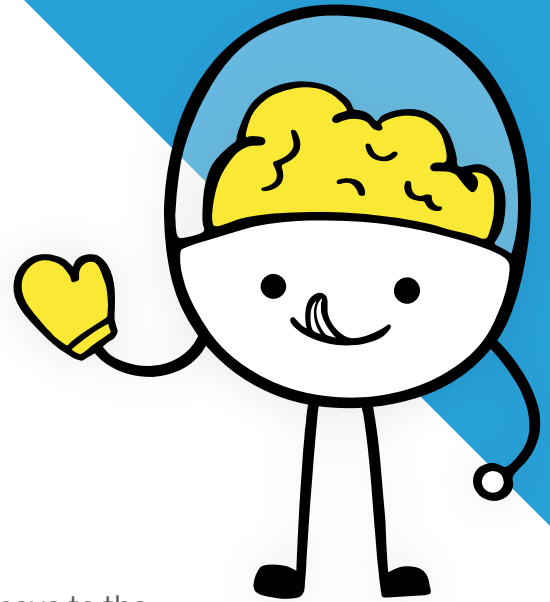
At BlackLine, we make AR Automation a no-brainer with some customers up and running in as little as 90 days. Say good-bye to manual processes, they are simply not sustainable.

By shifting the way you do things, taking a fresh look at established ways of working, and injecting some life and energy into processes, you can shake things up and find that prized agility. Right now, there's no better place to do this in finance than AR—a part of your business that's traditionally been back office, functional and, if we're honest, limited in its perceived value. We'll explore how becoming more agile, embracing change, and ultimately automating your AR can unlock much-needed working capital to boost growth and help you hit your business goals.

# NO-BRAINER

You're cooking and need to take a hot dish out of the oven. You use an oven glove to hold it.

**THAT'S A NO-BRAINER**



## Why It Matters

In the AR sphere, being agile means being able to react and move to the beat of customer behaviors and external factors, allowing you to adapt to changing circumstances. Manual processes can be clunky and limiting—introduce automation, and you'll quickly find a better way to work.

Here are three key outcomes from AR automation:



### Release Time and Expertise

Manual AR processes can take longer than necessary, turning what should be straightforward tasks into time-sinks. And there is the increased likelihood of human error.

By ditching manual processing, you're freeing up your staff to put their time, energy, and expertise into value-adding tasks that improve business outcomes.



### Drive Results and Unlock Cash

Releasing cash from your customers is the most economical way to increase working capital with no additional costs.

Automation ensures payments are applied quickly and correctly—ensuring cleaner sales ledgers and no re-work—allowing collections teams to focus on those customers with unpaid invoices, rather than focusing on customers who have already paid and haven't had their payment applied.



### Intelligent Data Driven Decisions

AR automation helps you surface critical information—such as sales and payment performance data, customer payment trends, and debtor performance metrics including DSO and aged debt—when it matters.

With access to data that can typically be hard to find, finance leaders can improve decision-making across the board, maximizing the potential to grow and expand while enhancing flexibility.

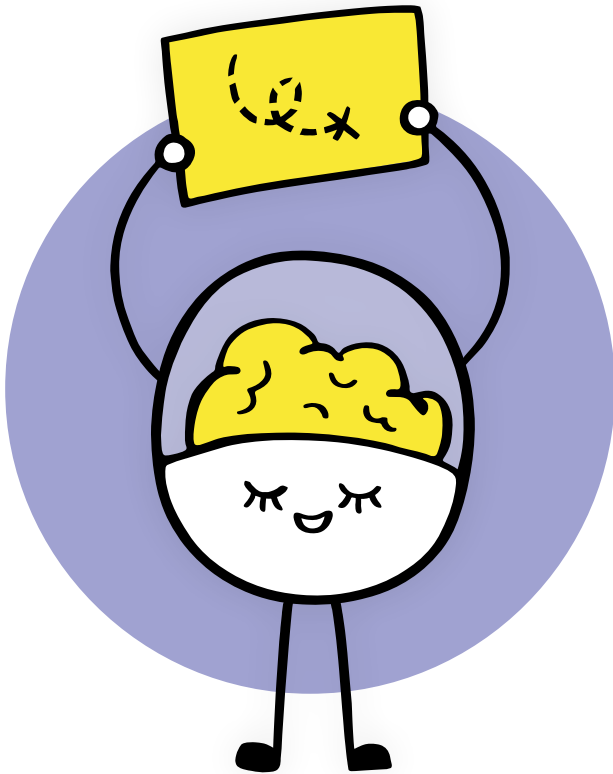
# Borrowing Cash Is Not the Solution

## THIS JUST IN

**According to the PwC report, borrowing is best avoided right now.**

Net debt reached a five-year-high and return on invested capital (ROIC) has dropped by 1.4% to its lowest level in five years.

With fragile financial markets and stringent loan terms, fueling cash flow through borrowing has become more complex and costly than ever before.



# NO-BRAINER

You wouldn't go on a journey without knowing the destination.

**THAT'S A NO-BRAINER**

## Growth Requires Agility

Midsized organizations that are focused on growth must stay agile and react to challenges quickly. Time is of the essence—but more importantly, time is money. The best way to keep pace? Boost cash flow and unlock capital now.

Driven by the vast range of uncertainties and disruption the pandemic has thrown into the mix, businesses have been forced to find new routes to productivity. With the first boom of growth 'jolts' arguably behind us, it's essential that your business is in prime position to catch the upcoming wave.

## Decisions, Decisions

According to [McKinsey](#), "this may be the time for CEOs to make bold decisions, reshaping the direction of their organizations and realigning capital accordingly."

Remaining responsive and flexible in resource allocation—whether capital expenditure or operating expenditure—is crucial to meet changing market opportunities.

# Why You Should Act Now

'AR automation could be useful. But our AR system already works fine, thanks. One day we could automate it, but not now.' Sound familiar?

Remember: change is opportunity. And opportunity can lead to growth. You want to be part of the AR revolution—not out of the loop and lagging. The time to act is now.

Here are a few reasons why AR automation really is a no-brainer:



## Cash is your lifeblood

Having sufficient working capital is critical for growth and wellbeing. You must demonstrate to shareholders and other stakeholders that you're managing your financial health well, and turning debts into cash faster is an integral part of this.



## Your customers are feeling the pressure

Cash is not as easily available for your customers, many of whom are making decisions every day on which suppliers to pay. They now face an additional burden to their cash flow as they start paying back loans taken out to survive the pandemic, so understanding any changes in their payment and sales behavior is critical.



## Time is of the essence

Cash flow confidence and predictability has become a significant measurement in terms of treasury activity for businesses of all sizes. Reduced cash flow into your business restricts time-sensitive functions, such as your ability to perform, pay, and invest.

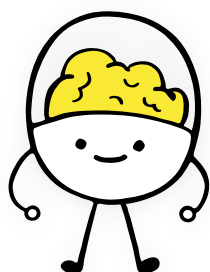


# NO-BRAINER

You wouldn't cut your lawn with scissors, hence the mower.

**THAT'S A NO-BRAINER**

# Why AR Automation Is a No-Brainer



**“BlackLine Cash Application is a brilliant product. I’d question anyone not wanting it. You can absolutely reduce your costs by at least 75%. The cost vs. benefit is a no-brainer. The solution has so much functionality and flexibility to set up processes exactly the way you want.”**

Tracey Bentley, Head of Accounts Receivable & Service Deliver

**ATKINS**



**Use Your Time to Call Customers for Cash, Not Remittances**

**Use AR automation to remove the need for remits to less than 20% and ensure payments still get applied. Create more capacity for teams to focus on higher-value tasks that drive real results.**



**Ditch the Guesswork**

**Automate accounts receivable processes to increase efficiency, improve accuracy, and remove manual processes by as much as 85%.**

**With AR automation, accounts receivable professionals can focus on managing risk and collecting cash with full visibility and control, rather than performing manual rework or chasing customers for remittances.**



**Hit the Ground Running**

**Unique pre-built rules have been developed from years of experience working closely with customers across hundreds of deployments. As a result, our customers achieve world-class match rates and benchmark standards faster than the industry average.**

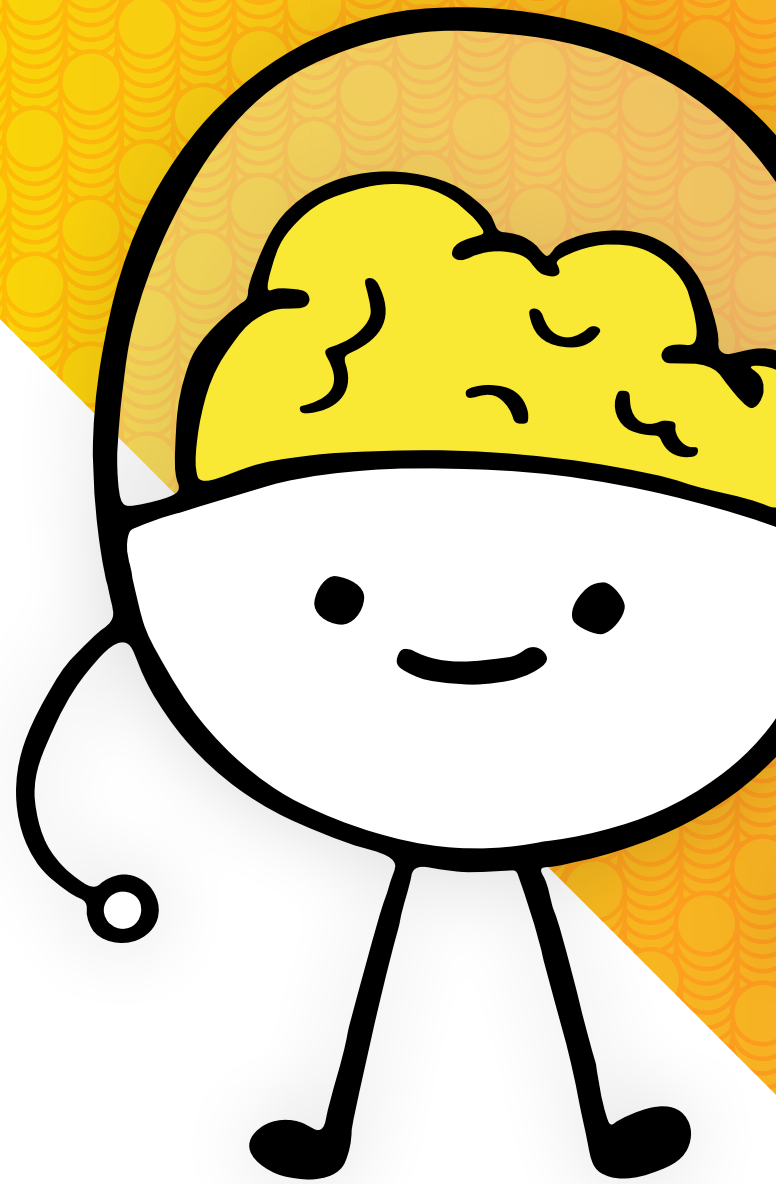
**Get up and running with BlackLine AR in as little as 90 days with match rates of up to 85% in this time.**



# Predictable Cash Flow Is a No-Brainer

BlackLine's AR automation solution helps you increase cash flow, improve customer relationships, unlock resource capacity, and drive strategic business outcomes.

By applying intelligent automation and the latest in reporting, you can remove manual processes once and for all, freeing up your staff to focus their time and energy on actions that drive results. Plus, with access to a wealth of critical data, AR professionals can improve decision-making with decision intelligence, ultimately taking actions that add value and deliver results.



## Not all solutions are created equal. Here's what you get with BlackLine:



A reliable, secure, scalable platform requiring minimal IT resources and no time-consuming upgrades



Built by AR professionals, for AR professionals, so teams can operate processes efficiently and effectively



Unified and able to work with any ERP solution, including any bank, any currency, and any country



# How Brambles Uses BlackLine AR Automation

**Brambles helps organizations in more than 60 countries move goods across the world. Previously, the brand outsourced its cash application process which was costly and difficult to manage.**

With so many global sites, each geography had unique processes and requirements. Having separate systems wasn't an option, as Brambles' primary goal of bringing cash management in-house was to gain complete visibility and control.

## How BlackLine Helped

Introducing BlackLine AR automation was a part of an overall operational improvement strategy that freed up cash flow and reduced capital spending while the company continued to grow. Brambles chose to systematically implement the solution region by region, applying lessons learned as they went. This enabled Brambles to standardize the process while still adhering to local requirements.

Certain teams were able to move from manual processing to an auto-match rate of over 75%. Overall, company-wide auto-match rates rose from less than 38% to over 80%, and as high as 92% in some places.

**“With BlackLine AR automation, all parts of the process—application rates, turnaround time, unapplied cash, and team performance—are monitored and measurable. When we see an area for improvement, we can identify exactly what needs to be done and predict how the customer will benefit. Onboarding new employees and acquisitions used to be quite challenging. Now, it's easy because the AR automation does most of the work.”**

Christoph Koenig, Director I2C, Service Delivery EU & Global Process Owner

## Brambles

# NO-BRAINER

## There Is No Wrong Time to Make the Right Decision

Whether you're battling silos or tackling time-sinks, automating your AR with BlackLine is a sure-fire way to create cohesion and free up employees' precious hours. Ditching manual processes not only streamlines workflows but allows staff to focus their time and energy on activities that add value to your business.

BlackLine's solution provides you with the ability to unlock cash, increase capital, and build resilience. This informs better business strategies, enabling you to kickstart productivity and helping you achieve your goals.



**One thing is clear:  
AR automation is a  
no-brainer, and the  
time to act is now. By  
seeing change as an  
opportunity, you can  
reap great rewards—now  
and down the line.**