My team is responsible for performing a VAT audit on Employee Expense Reports. The team consists of 50 full time employees and 20 temporary employees. Each year we review over 700,000 Expense Reports and over 5.5 million invoices for some of the biggest companies in the world. Of these Expense Reports only 41% and 11% of the invoices contain any VAT.

The process as it stood involved each auditor reviewing the Expense Report and where there was VAT, they would capture all relevant information required to recover VAT from the various governments in Europe.

I was tasked with reviewing our main audit process with the aim of simplifying the process and reducing the cost of performing the audit. I needed to change the process as we did not want permanent team members and temporary team members performing the same functions as this could potentially lead to labour relation issues.

I first reviewed the entire process and identified the individual elements in the process. I mapped out a potential process and reviewed with my team leaders and took on board their suggestions. After this I met with my Director and IT managers to ascertain if the new process would be achievable.

The new process would essentially break the process into two separate processes; the first would require temporary team members to review all Expense Reports and capture images of the Expense Reports and invoices where there was deductible VAT.

Once the Expense Report data had been received from the clients Expense Management System and the image captured for the Expense Report, then it will move onto the next stage of the process where the permanent team members will be allocated the Expense Report to data capture all relevant VAT information.

I worked closely with the IT department to develop a prototype application to image capture the Expense Reports and invoices at this stage in the project it was only necessary to have a screen that would replicate the actions of the process. I developed some matrices to capture the timings, Expense Reports scanned, invoices reviewed and invoices scanned- as this was the most important factor in moving forward with the project or not.

I also put together a team to complete the tests, it was important that the team was carefully representational of the different levels of auditors so as not to skew the end results. I selected team members based on time with company, their general productivity output and their accuracy as these were all metrics that were already recorded. A considerable level of Expense Reports was included in the test. The team met regularly to discuss the progress and any issues and observations they had to offer. These were all recorded to provide feedback when moving on to the next phase of the project.

Once it was established that there were significant savings to be gained from changing the progress (17% per Expense Report cost), I presented the findings to the other stakeholders in the project. Firstly, the HR department were satisfied that the change in the process would be acceptable from a labour relations view point. IT development time was then allocated to work on the new applications and integrations. The new process required obtaining new hardware, developing a new application and new features to an existing application.

The new application would involve selecting the relevant Project ID, recording the unique Expense Report number and capturing the image if required. If there was no deductable VAT, then we would press a radio button indicating this in the application. After discussions with the project team it was decided that this would be a necessary step as it ensured that we could classify the Expense Report as having been received and audited but no VAT to deduct. This action would change the status of the Expense Report in the main VAT application to completed.

The next step was to integrate the new application with our existing VAT system. This required a lot of meetings and input from various departments. I coordinated this phase and was responsible for collating various requirements and desired features from the processing team, the quality department and reviewing these with the IT team to determine what was and was not achievable. This involved numerous follow-up meetings with the relevant teams updating each of the progress and changes of the development.

As there was buy-in from all team involved in the project, when it went live, although there was some push-back, overall it was very successful, especially considering we were completely changing a process that had been in place for over 20 years preceding the project.

**1. Work efficiently and effectively on a project as part of a team.**

**2. Contribute to the strategy of a team in achieving project goals.**

**3. Explain the business strategy of an employer and how a team's work relates to it.**

**4. Work autonomously on specified tasks relating to a project.**