

GP OPTIMIZER MAGAZINE

Summer 2018

Customer Service Edition



Five Scenarios Where Subscription Billing Problems Can Lurk

Transparency at the Heart of Customer Satisfaction

Creating and Maintaining Raving Fans – Externally AND Internally

GP OPTIMIZER MAGAZINE



Welcome to the Summer 2018 Edition of the GP Optimizer Magazine! Not sure exactly what you're reading? The GP Optimizer is a digital magazine comprised of articles provided by Microsoft Dynamics GP Add-On Partners. Each article focuses on making your investment in Microsoft Dynamics GP more worthwhile by addressing issues and providing remedies.

In our last edition, we tried something new: all the content addressed one cohesive theme of 'Targeting Growth'. That was well received, so here we go again! In this issue, we focus on Customer Service.

Our contributing ISVs share unique ideas on creating 'Raving Fans' from adding automation, improving business process, and increasing transparency, to using a Customer Relationship Management system, going paperless, and so much more. We hope this relatable topic will provide solutions applicable to your current business plus inspiration for future endeavors!

Rockton Software has been in the Microsoft Dynamics GP Channel for over 18 years. We've established ourselves as fervent supporters of the greater Dynamics GP Channel, and we want you to excel in business by leveraging the abundant tools and knowledge available from our friends in the community. We are proud to continue offering this valuable resource to Dynamics GP users everywhere.

Thank you to all the participating ISVs—AvidXchange, Binary Stream, Horizons International, ICAN Software, Integrity Data, JOVACO, Metafile, and Panatrack—for their help in producing this great magazine, as well as their commitment and support to the Microsoft Dynamics GP Channel.

Take a look and let my team know what you think - your candid thoughts are always appreciated.

Enjoy!

Mark Rockwell
President, Rockton Software



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On the Cover

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Automate Cash Receipts So You Can Spend More Time Helping Your Customers

Written by David Eichner, [ICAN Software](#)

Dynamics GP users who enter cash receipts that are to applied to a single invoice often wish that they could just enter the invoice being paid and have the entire cash receipt entry done for them.

One such Dynamics user had modified their sales invoice document to include a barcode for the invoice number on the invoice stub that would be returned with payment. With Automatic Cash Receipts, they are now able to barcode read or manually enter the invoice number on a floating window above the cash receipt window and have the entire cash receipt window populated and the apply to the specific invoice done automatically. They can change the cash receipt amount if full payment of the invoice was not received. Otherwise, they can simply hit ENTER key and move on to the next invoice being paid. This allows them to enter a large number of cash receipts in a very short period of time.

Other users of Dynamics GP need to be able to provide a cash receipt to customers when payment is received. Print Cash Receipts allows them to print a cash receipt document from the cash receipts window or from the AR transaction entry window. Users can also reprint cash receipt documents from the AR inquiry windows as well. The cash receipt document can be modified with Report Writer to include company logo or other changes necessary.

When entering a cash receipt for a large number of invoices, many Dynamics GP customers grow frustrated with the lag that occurs as each invoice is marked for apply. Mass Apply Receivables allows one customer to enter a cash receipt for a very large amount and then import the apply data for that payment against hundreds of thousands of invoices. Once imported, Mass Apply Receivables can be run in a mode that automatically applies the specific one-to-many apply records imported.

Many customers record returns in Sales Order Processing that need to be applied to a specific invoice. If they store



the invoice in the Customer PO Number field, Mass Apply Receivables can be run in a mode that searches for and automatically applies any payments, returns or credit memos that reference a specific invoice.

Other customers just want to run an auto apply process across a wide range of customers and document dates... without having to do it one customer at a time. Mass Apply Receivables can also be run in an auto apply mode that auto applies open documents for a range of customers and document dates. It also can be restricted by customer class if needed. And it can auto apply within documents with matching prefix values!

These products are just a few of the many great products from ICAN Software Solutions. We make solutions that turn hours into minutes... [GP](#)

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MetaViewer Paperless Automation for Microsoft Dynamics is designed with your budget in mind, robotically capturing information, eliminating paper-based processes, and automating workflow.

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RPA for a Competitive Edge

Written by Alyssa Putzer, Communication Specialist, [Metafile Information Systems](#)

Today's society is moving faster than ever, and as technology continues to develop and robotics become more prominent, it's important that businesses stay ahead of the curve as best-in-class companies in their industries. Robotic Process Automation (RPA) software is an investment in staying ahead of that curve and in gaining and maintaining a competitive edge in the market. And when your customers and vendors are looking for instant gratification, faster-than-light response times and no back-and-forth, it's up to your team to implement technology that keeps operations working smoothly and efficiently, automating repetitive tasks and eliminating manual human intervention. Your team also wants to work for a company that's on top of state-of-the-art tech, because no one wants to be stuck doing menial tasks when they could be tackling larger projects.

The right RPA solution implemented in your company means that you can offer services, information and customer service faster, more seamlessly and accurately than the competition, giving you an advantage by aligning your business processes with the needs of the people inside and outside of your organization.

Whether you're in retail, hospitality, manufacturing or healthcare, you want your company to be a leader, best-in-class and the first name that comes to mind when people consider services in your niche market. RPA is the ideal asset in making sure that you are moving ahead of the competition by automating previously manual processes and modernizing at the rate that your customers and vendors desire.

Here's how:

1. Product development and enhancement: RPA allows you to make your business processes faster and more efficient, which allows your team to gather and analyze data and information necessary to



make product improvements, hasten development or get goods in your customers' hands before your competitors do. Become the go-to service provider for your customers by gaining their trust and continuing to develop and enhance your offerings. Best-in-class companies are surpassing their competitors by bringing the cutting-edge products and services to the market ahead of their rivals. How can you do this? By allocating the time employees are spending on tedious, manual tasks to product improvement and development.


2. Paper and storage overhead cost reduction: Your paper, storage and printing is costing you crazy amounts of money. However, the more money you save by eliminating these paper-associated costs is money that you can put toward more strategic investments, like technology. Competitive companies know exactly how much paper and manual data entry costs and take steps to reinvest



that money into things like RPA and other tech, putting them miles above challengers.

3. Increased control and regulatory compliance: Information governance is at the forefront of so many executives' minds, so it's important to know that you're in control and your company is remaining compliant with record retention laws – laws that others in your industry may be neglecting. When information and data is stored physically on paper, there's greater risk of security breaches, fraud and non-compliance. Automation software assures that there's a record of who touched a document when, what they did with it and what happened to it after it was in their virtual possession, while also storing it and making it accessible in the future through a simple search, just in case you need to reference it again.
4. Increased visibility and strategic decision-making: Being more strategic in making business decisions is vital in surpassing your competitors. It allows you to be more agile and savvy, take more risks

and make more intentional investments that will move your company forward. With access to business data, you can better utilize structured and unstructured information that is streaming in instead of just letting it disappear in cyber-space. The data is organized and indexed accurately (and automatically), so you have the intel necessary to make calculated decisions for continued growth. One strategic business decision that companies often implement is the expansion of RPA into additional departments within the organization, making your company that much more agile.

Staying ahead of the competition is important for survival in today's fast-moving economy. As businesses invest more in technology and delegate more processes to robotics, they move toward the head of the pack in their industry. Gain a competitive edge and let your employees do what they do best: work strategically and use the information available to stay on the cutting-edge of their industry. 

Managing Long-Term Investment Assets in Dynamics GP

Written by David Eichner, [ICAN Software](#)

Dynamics GP users who need to track holdings of long-term investment assets such as stocks, bonds, collateralized securities, gold, land, etc. know the difficulty of properly accounting for such holdings in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP).

In many cases, organizations have been tracking such assets within complicated Excel spreadsheets manually maintained by accounting staff. A normal scenario is one where all purchases and sales are manually added to the worksheet and where staff regularly have to manually update the current market value of the investment holdings. We met with one organization whose normal procedure was to spend hours each evening looking up each investment's market value on Yahoo Finance and copying/pasting that value into each row of the spreadsheet. They would also spend days at the close of each month trying to reconcile the spreadsheet and identify the inevitable human errors introduced by the manual processes of maintaining the spreadsheet.

Investment Assets for Dynamics GP provided them with a full sub-ledger module in Dynamics GP for tracking buys/sells of investment holding within different trading accounts. And with one click of a button, Investment Assets downloads market values off the internet for all of the thousands of investments within their system. It allows them to import investment masters, buy/sell transactions, investment-related cash transactions like dividends and interest, and market values provided by their investment broker in a file format.

Some organizations need to be able to accrue interest on interest-bearing bank accounts in one month and then post the receipt of the accrued interest in the following month. Investment Assets provides this functionality with the ability to accrue with either Daily Balance or Average Daily Balance interest accrual method.



Other organizations spend time and effort tracking interest accruals and amortization of discount/premium on amortizable investments like bonds. Investment Assets automates interest accruals for interest-bearing investments and also automates the amortization of discount/premium of amortizable investments.

Family Office organizations that track investments for the members of high net worth families need to be able to track investments within trading accounts by the owners/beneficiaries of those trading accounts. Investment Assets tracks owner percentage of holdings so that a report can be generated for each family member showing their percentage of the market value of investment holdings in accounts that they have a percentage ownership within.

Investment Assets is just one of many great products from ICAN Software Solutions. We make solutions that turn hours into minutes... [GP](#)

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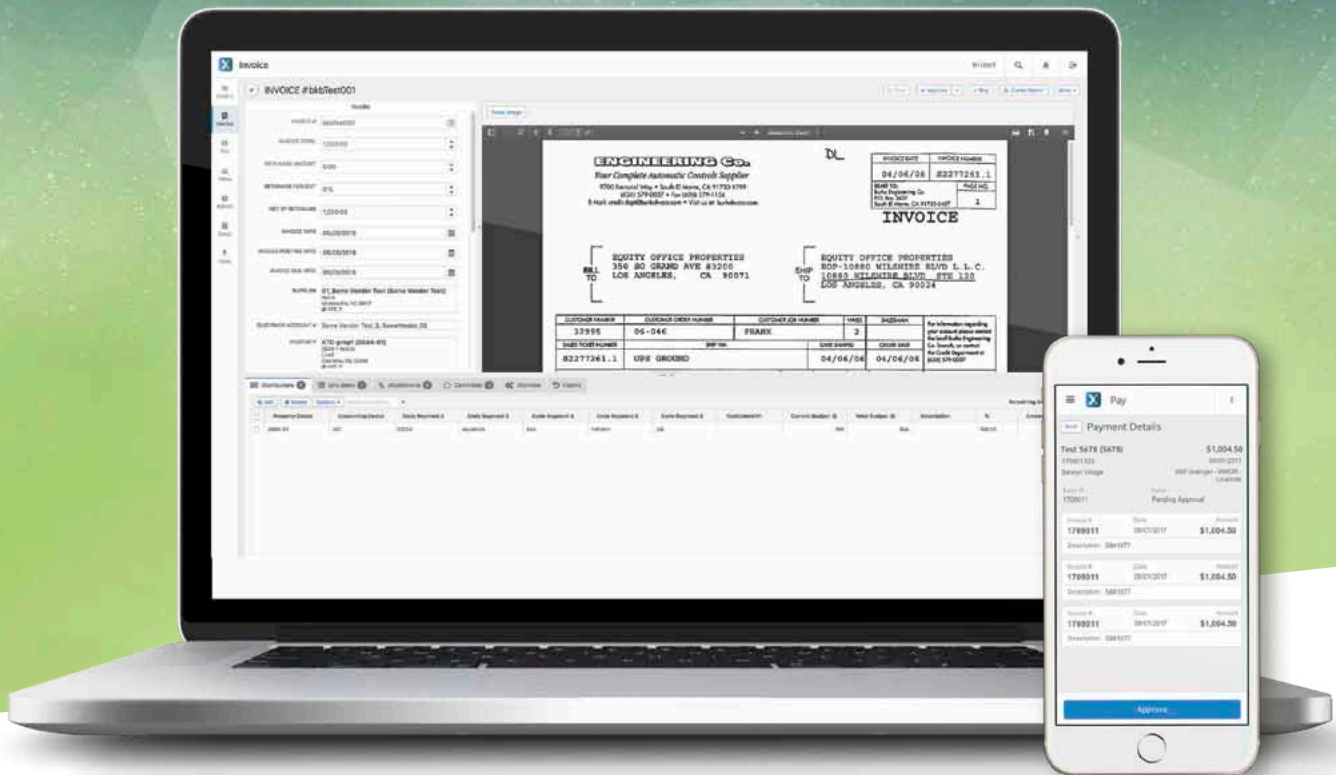
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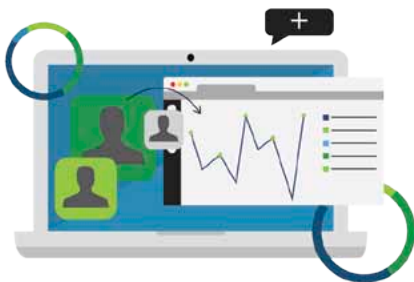
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AP Automation Solutions

Written by Michael Praeger, CEO & Co-Founder of [AvidXchange](#)

The accounts payable process is filled with tasks that drain hours from the workday. Finance departments are stuck balancing the time spent on managing vendor relationships and achieving business goals. Weighing the desires and demands forces AP staff to work smarter, not harder, for a healthy financial future.

Solve the Paper Problem

Paper-based processes are the root of some of the most common pain points in the accounts payable process, including manual work, lost invoices, and stacks of paper invoices spread throughout departments. Despite high costs and fraud risks, paper checks continue to reign as king of the B2B world. According to [PYMNTS.com](#), processing one paper check can cost businesses almost \$10. For companies to save money and time, they're adopting an automated solution to streamline this process.

AP automation solutions allow finance departments to archive historical invoice and payment information electronically. Cloud-based storage makes immediate recall and auditing simple with 24/7 access.

AP automation solutions that integrate with [Microsoft Dynamics GP](#), like AvidXchange, offer flexibility and full control by streamlining workflows based on your business' current rules. In fact, top performing companies that implement AP automation solutions see a reduction in manual mistakes.

Ease the Auditing Pains

Finance departments dread "Audit Day." Auditors and finance departments spend days hunting for paper invoices and copies of corresponding payments to trace back to their origin and complete the audit trail.

With AP automation solutions, invoices are stored electronically making it easier for auditors to access the details



they need to perform a seamless audit. According to recent [APQC](#) findings, top performers complete the auditing process six times faster than low performers. They're also spending less than 25 cents for every \$1,000 in revenue, while bottom performing companies are paying at least \$1.40. The report makes it clear that archaic accounts payable processes are to blame for wasted time and money.

The problem solver is a simplified, streamlined AP automation solution. After [automating with AvidXchange](#), Dynamics GP users can expect:

- Elimination of paper and walls of filing cabinets
- Easy electronic searching capability
- Reduced risks of fraud
- Significant time savings and reduced operating costs

Keep AP Fraud Attempts Under Control

To no surprise, an estimated 48% of [fraud attempts](#) stem from paper checks. Fraudsters are searching for new scams to lure businesses out of big bucks and proprietary account information that could hurt the business' financial future. To protect your business, AvidXchange provides fraud protection by flagging duplicate invoices and generates a 'Positive Pay' file for every payment made via paper check.



Drive Big Decisions with Big Data


Decision-makers are focused on big data to make the final call on purchases, investments, and partnerships. They'll have access to data-driven reports within AvidXchange based on your business' AP transactions that impact the bottom line.

Make Month-End Closing More Efficient

Gathering payment and vendor information for month-end or year-end can be time-consuming. Finance departments spend more time collecting information than they do assessing it. Pairing AvidXchange with Microsoft Dynamics GP allows users to track the status of any invoice, anytime -

without wasted hours. Having flexibility and visibility into the AP process enables the finance department to assess productivity and reduce invoice approval cycle times. After automating, your business will have the historical data and reporting it needs to improve internal controls without the need for additional documentation.

Next Steps?

The B2B world is evolving and more businesses are trusting technology to ease the pains of manual, paper-based processes. We've got a few other ways that we can help relieve some of the headaches and hassles when it comes to your payables. Visit MARKETING.AVIDXCHANGE.COM/GP-OPTIMIZER to learn more! 

Phoenix 2018 Summit GPUG

To my favorite (and I think best!) User Group,

I can't wait to welcome you to GPUG Summit Phoenix - THE Microsoft Dynamics GP event of 2018. Held October 15-18 at the Phoenix Convention Center in Phoenix, Arizona, this year will be bigger and better than ever.

From the inaugural GPUG Summit in 2007 with just over 100 attendees, to last year's Summit with around 2,000, the GPUG community just gets better with age! The strength of the community is due to people like you. Your peer-to-peer learning and collaboration make it possible for us to continually equip Dynamics GP users with the tools they need to succeed and GPUG Summit is no exception.

Here are the top three things I'm looking forward to this year at Summit:



KNOWLEDGE-SHARING.

There's no better way to learn than peer-to-peer with other Dynamics GP users. Share and learn broadly across a variety of content tracks that feature role-based learning.



COMMUNITY.

Structured and authentic opportunities abound for meeting your peers, creating lasting connections who will help you answer your burning questions at Summit and at home.



APPRECIATION.

At Summit each year we recognize our community leaders and volunteers who dedicate their time to make GPUG the thriving community it is.

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"Welcome to 2018, our best year yet!"

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Sincerely,

Bob McAdam,
GPUG General Manager



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Five Scenarios Where Subscription Billing Problems Can Lurk

Discover the new way to manage your subscription billing on Microsoft Dynamics GP

Written by Tudor Hofnar, Business Analyst at [Binary Stream Software Inc.](#)

Many businesses are adopting a subscription model rather than billing the customer once – eliminating barriers to expensive solutions, while giving the ability to manage customer relationships over long periods. More and more industries are starting to feel this shift in billing, requiring innovative ways to overcome the challenges brought on by subscription billing models. In this article, we will go over five potential billing scenarios you may encounter and how you can manage them using Microsoft Dynamics GP enhanced with Advanced Recurring Contract Billing from Binary Stream.



Problems with the Current Model

If you find yourself moving towards the subscription billing model, you may have noticed some gaps that your current Microsoft Dynamics GP does not bridge. Your system is not designed to manage the value of your recurring customer relationships. As a result, excessive manual work required to manage monthly invoicing is starting to strain the organization.

Your goals should include doing more with fewer systems and points of failure, so you can decrease the risk of incorrect data entry and errors. You'll want to achieve financial clarity and forecast revenue accurately to make better decisions by analyzing the profitability of different revenue streams. Consider generating quicker quote-to-cash cycle to facilitate strategic growth targets. Finally, with new GAAP and IFRS standards, you'll want a system that ensures compliance.

Until now, you were able to get by using spreadsheets and separate systems, but if your business is growing, you should be starting to worry about potential lost revenue due to missed billing. Below are five example situations where these risks of complex subscription billing processes could lurk.

#1 – Flat Price Membership at a Gym

Let's start with the simple Flat Price subscription model, often seen with gym memberships.

With a flat rate membership, customers sign up for their service and pay a set amount each month. In the context of the gym membership, you have constant re-occurring payments coming in at the end of every month.

#2 - Pay-as-you-go Billing by a Telecom Provider

A little more complex is the Pay-as-you-go model, where customers subscribe to a service and are billed on a usage basis. Most phone plans and prices are determined heavily by the amount of data used over the course of a billing period.

At the end of each billing period, the external system tracking your customer's usage needs to integrate with your billing system at the end of the billing period to ensure amounts are invoiced accordingly. Additionally, you may provide limits on the amounts a customer has to pay. For example, you can charge \$1 per GB used but with a minimum of \$100 payment per month. Or, provide a plan which includes 100 minutes per month but charge \$0.25 per additional minute. This results in payments each month that are highly variable based on customer behavior.

#3 - Tiered Pricing by a Telecom Provider

Let's say your strategy to maximize revenue is to package services into different plans, pricing your plans in ways that motivate customers to buy more or upgrade can help to meet this goal. This is called the Volume Discount model.

In a volume discount model, you define price brackets and when customers move to the next bracket, they receive a better price. In addition to the Volume Discount model, you may extend this model to offer Tiered Pricing. In this scenario, you charge your customers \$5 per GB up to 100 GB; \$4 per GB between 100-200 GB and only \$2 per additional GB.

#4 - Flat Tiered Pricing for Cloud Software Solutions (SaaS)

Another model would be the software-as-a-service industry where you would charge customers based on pre-defined price brackets based on number of users.

In addition to the price brackets you may offer a free account, for 1-3 users, with the option to upgrade to the Basic package once they outgrow the free account and need more users.

With this approach you would bill customers monthly based on brackets similar to the following:

- Basic \$10/month (1-5 users)
- Standard \$20/month (6-10 users)
- Enterprise \$50/month (11+ users)

#5 - Milestone Billing for Construction Contracts

Moving into a more 'concrete' industry where you use contracts to bill your customers, consider a construction or property development business. Typically, you would deliver a new construction in several phases, or milestones.

You may need to split out your contract into multiple milestones and only bill the customer when the milestone has been completed. By splitting up the contract into

milestones you would also need to ensure that you recognize revenue from your customers when it is earned, that is when the milestone is delivered. This results in a highly variable flow requiring manual intervention on each invoice.


Closing the Gaps in Your Billing Operations

Although there are multiple approaches to achieve your new goals, only one solution is fully integrated into your Dynamics GP system, reducing the time and effort required by your accounting or billing staff. This solution is Binary Stream's Advanced Recurring Contract Billing (ARCB) solution.

ARCB allows you to:

- Eliminate manual processes and spreadsheets
- Empower customer self-serve with payment methods leading to faster cash
- Extend your existing Dynamics GP system, rather than adding an additional billing system
- Retain your current business process and allow the solution to adapt to it
- Reduce the length of the quote-to-cash cycle
- Forecast future revenue streams and analyze which streams are successful and which are not (profit ability of business lines)
- Record revenue in period in which it is earned
- Complete month-end tasks (invoicing and recognizing revenue) in shorter time period

ARCB from Binary Stream enables you to meet all of your complex billing scenarios, and grow your business through improved decision making based on accurate revenue data.

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Statistical Process Control Encourages the Whole Organization to Contribute to Customer Service Goals.

Written by Frances Donnelly, C.Q.P.A., Director of Product Development, [Horizons International](#)

Whether your business is service, distribution or manufacturing based, achieving and maintaining high levels of customer satisfaction is always a goal. Too often though, we monitor and measure customer satisfaction only around data from our sales and customer service departments.

Is measuring customer satisfaction based solely on sales and customer service data the best approach for delivering improvements?

We don't think so.

It is actually highly likely that organizations with this philosophy are inadvertently *creating a negative culture of finger pointing and blame*. After all how fair is it if the sales person has to take the hit on commission for the return of defective product when they have no control over the defect?

Companies who focus their evaluation of customer satisfaction just on these two areas are not taking advantage of key values employees identify for inspiring loyalty. Employees want to feel their efforts are contributing to the success of the company. Research shows employees are most likely to experience this when there is a high correlation between how they are enabled to do their jobs and the final quality of their products. By limiting the focus of our measurement we are failing to leverage the motivational benefit of allowing employees to realize their contribution to quality outcomes.

What can we do to change the paradigm?

To create change you need to visibly distribute responsibility throughout the organization by establishing measurements in all departments or functions that have an impact on customer satisfaction. It is key here that the measurements be visible, relevant to the function or department being measured and that they make sense. By developing data collection around the relevant measures you are providing a vehicle for recognizing everyone's contribution to the organization's success.



The contribution of statistical process control and HACCP.

In manufacturing operations statistical process control has long been utilized to help organizations monitor and improve the outcomes of their processes. In food processing and other industries where it is difficult to test or sample products without destroying them we often find HACCP methods deployed to monitor and keep production on track. In both cases there is a need for frequent and timely recording of relevant data and the monitoring of that data to determine trends and promptly take corrective action. Each of these programs are great examples of how measurement disbursts responsibility for success throughout the organization. The

measurement events inherent in these programs help every employee understand and participate in contributing to operational success and the goal of customer satisfaction.

Access to the right tools holds companies back.

The reason companies do not follow the SPC or HACCP model in all their operational areas is often sourced in the difficulty of coordinating and publishing that data in an enterprise wide method. Paper and pen, spreadsheets or strategically placed white boards can begin our processes for data collection. Over time we see such tools lose value and erode the credibility of our programs because they require tedious efforts to transcribe data so it can be published in formats that are accessible on a companywide basis.

Rapid feedback is where paper fails.

Challenges like this mean companies that could benefit from real time monitoring and communication of their performance data don't engage in these activities unless compelled to do so by regulatory or other requirements. Products and processes vary greatly from company to company and accommodating this range of demands requires very flexible software solutions. This requirement for flexibility is most frequently met with paper based systems, but such systems, as already stated, often fail in delivering the most cost effective outcomes because of their inability to be responsive in a timely manner. Paper based data has to be transcribed before it can be analyzed delaying the ability to identify actionable trends. There is a significant need to switch from paper to software but a limited selection of suitable solutions hampers that effort.

The hurdles in switching from paper to software.

There are software solutions for quality control. They are not widely deployed because they carry high price tags that are frequently based on user counts. Access based on per user cost is not an intuitive model for a quality application because the goal of quality is to have everyone involved. Less



costly solutions tend to be single point of use so they may enable data analysis but they have cumbersome interfaces for data access.


These are just some of the roadblocks that businesses encounter when deploying organization wide measurement systems.

Cost effective solutions from Horizons.

The development and release of Quality Essentials Suite tackles these roadblocks while providing support for organizations with significant Certificate of Analysis requirements. Our license model supports unlimited user access for either single or multi company applications which allows us to deliver an affordable solution. We provide end to end functionality from data collection to analysis and reporting, enabling the full benefits of quality control and assurance. Our installation is client/server based so users can easily publish and distribute the data across the organization enabling full visibility of performance.

Statistical process control and capability measures now added.

We also offer tolerance reports that graph statistical limits and generate process capability values in line with Six Sigma and other standards. This additional reporting functionality incorporates the range of calculations that support Cpk and related capability values and indexes.

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Transparency at the Heart of Customer Satisfaction

Written by Jonatan Coutu, General Manager, [JOVACO](#)

Better Insights for Project-Based Businesses

Customers have come to expect the highest level of service from their partners and suppliers: nowadays, ensuring world-class customer service is necessary for your organization to set itself apart from the competition. Of course, at its most basic expression, providing stellar service to your customers means ensuring their satisfaction.

In the project world, this means delivering projects on time and on budget. Project-based companies need to have the right information at the right time to stay on top of things, keep customers informed, and make quick decisions to keep projects on track. Increased transparency and data integrity are thus essential to keep customers satisfied and ensure that they understand where the time is being spent – or in other words, where their money is going.

Proper documentation has to be supplied to alleviate their fears whenever they feel that the project is veering off course or taking too long. Things can move fast in the project world, so status reports need to be sent in a timely manner. So much can happen even within a few days that the information can be long out of date by the time it is sent to the client if too much time is spent gathering it.

How can you ensure that project managers can access and distribute this information easily, then? Here are some of the essential tools that project managers should have on hand:

- ☑ **Real-time reporting:** Web-based and customizable reports provide managers with all the details they need in real time to track the status of their projects. Advanced functionalities such as filters, searches and views allow managers to drilldown to the level of detail that they require and provide customers with all the information they need.
- ☑ **Integrated timesheets:** All staff members and subcontractors who are working on a project can enter their time, write comments and provide documentation to account for all billable and



worked hours. The integration to projects means that project managers have this information on hand as soon as it becomes available, providing customers with all the insight they require into where their money is going.

- ☑ **Detailed invoices:** No one likes to receive an invoice, but by ensuring that the information is complete and clear, you can make the experience a lot less painful. The integrated timesheets make it possible to enclose all required information (time, expenses, comments and documentation) for full transparency. The bonus for the company offering the services: the risk of bad debt and write-offs is also reduced.

With the above tools, your project managers will not only enjoy better visibility into the profitability and progress of their projects, ensuring their timely delivery within budget and scope, but customers will also benefit from the high level of transparency that they now expect from their partners and suppliers.



The Importance of a Customer Relationship Management Tool

But don't get us wrong, a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) tool is practically essential to provide outstanding customer service. By integrating a CRM solution such as Microsoft Dynamics 365 Customer Engagement to your Dynamics GP platform, you can obtain a true 360° view of your client base, projects and operations by linking client details to project data.

By integrating your ERP and CRM systems, you maximize the potential of each. Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella has described his vision for "One Microsoft" as the need to undo the silos hindering the flow of innovation and information, since the barriers of an organization or its business management system will only get in the way. This vision goes forward with a fully integrated system.

Everyone across your organization then has access to consistent data updated in real time. This means that your resources can respond to clients faster and benefit from a better understanding of their needs, allowing them to tailor the offer and services to their specific reality and provide the outstanding service that customers have come to expect today.

Here are some of the benefits that can be leveraged by integrating your Dynamics GP solution to Dynamics 365 Customer Engagement:

- ☑ **Centralized contact and client information:** Clients expect personalized, timely service from their suppliers and partners, so having their information centralized and updated in real time allows you to demonstrate your understanding of their specific

situation. Users have a better understanding of the customer's needs and wants, allowing them to provide improved service, while also reducing the number of manual entries and coding errors.

- ☑ **Better insights into the pipeline and sales performance:** Management can enjoy global visibility onto the sales pipeline as well as the workload already committed to other clients. By improving access to data, activities and operations within a single system, you ensure that all resources are mobilized and that you have all the information needed regarding future peaks and lows to guide your sales team and manage client expectations.
- ☑ **Increased visibility for account managers:** Account managers have a complete view of what is going on at any given time, allowing them to answer all customer questions and queries. Having the right information on hand at the right moment allows them to address any concerns or situations that might arise, manage expectations, and ensure a hassle-free experience for everyone involved.

In short, an integration between Dynamics GP and Dynamics 365 Customer Engagement allows your support, sales, project and operations teams to enjoy better visibility and access to data. As such, they can increase their productivity, complete their tasks and activities more efficiently, and get back to customers in a timely manner, while also ensuring transparency both internally and to customers.

For more information about how a fully integrated project management solution can increase customer satisfaction for project-based companies, visit our [website](#) or **contact us.** GP

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Faribault Wollen Mill Co.
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"PanatrackerGP worked so well right out of the box...and worked exactly the way we needed it to. The improvements were immediate and we have been thrilled with both the solution and Panatrack's caring support team."

Pat Santana
Specialty A/C Products
[Read the case study...](#)



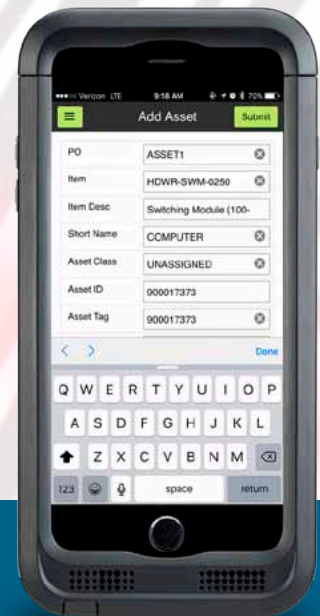
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The real cost of Fulfillment Errors – Ensuring Customer Satisfaction

Written by Alex Rode, Solution Consultant, [Panatrack](#)

As a company that relies on distributing products to your customers, you already know the value of delivering the right product at the right time. You also know how easy it is for mistakes to happen before product makes its way out of the warehouse. While Panatrack often answers questions about avoiding stock outs and handling backorders, there is another concern; incorrect shipments that result in direct and indirect costs as well as measurable customer dissatisfaction. Building and solidifying a plan to validate orders before they ship can save thousands of dollars every year and keep your customers returning.

From books to beers and shampoo to restaurant supplies, accurate and reliable order fulfillment is an ongoing challenge for any company. While many companies start out with a few key products, business growth translates to new product lines and addition distribution requirements. It's nearly impossible to track dozens or hundreds of line items and variations that pass through the warehouse every day. Adding additional warehouses or regional distribution centers to that equation can find organizations challenged with increased orders and inventory that needs to ship out. While the paper pick lists and checkmarks can work for a time, the increase in volume typically translates to a risk in the increase of errors using this method. Add new staff and staff turnover, and those risks again increase.

If you are dealing with incorrect orders reaching customers, have you considered the ongoing costs associated with righting this wrong? It is more than shipping out the correct item. It is estimated that the financial impact from a single shipping error can directly cost a company any from \$25-\$45 per order!

- Customer service or the sales team's time is involved in taking the call.
- A new order for the replacement and a pending return must be entered and tracked.



- Often to make the customer happy, the replacement order shipping is expedited so shipping costs are higher. Even with standard shipping, additional costs are incurred.
- There is the pick and pack overhead for fulfilling the new order.
- Once the return is received, overhead costs may include not just the receiving, but QA costs, repackaging, discounting, or product write-off depending on the condition of the return.




- The cost of an over shipment of an item to the customer that ends up in variances and write-offs later.

While there are clearly differing factors for every company, and customer response or the value to fix mistakes will vary, there is a universal draw to saving time and money by shipping orders right the first time. Keeping customers happy results in customer retention. In a day and age where fast turn-around in receiving an order that is placed is expected, getting out orders quickly, as well as, accurately has become a requirement for success. By replacing a paper-based system with mobile and barcode technology can move your organization to continued success and growth.

The key advantages of a solution like PanatrackerGP, is the ability to give the staff picking and packing orders a tool that removes the potential for errors. A pick list sorted based on a logic pick-path through the warehouse adds efficiency. Giving pickers the ability to see where items are located without having to run back to a desktop computer will result

in time savings. Having a pick list that automatically tracks and checks off the items picked for the order based on a scan versus paper pencil removes potential for errors. Additional tools such as the ability to identify the unit of measure based on the item number scan will remove the potential of errors or a short shipment or over shipment. The option to introduce a second validation when the order is packed will increase accuracy without necessarily adding overhead. There are even more advantages to adding barcode technology if tracking lot or serial numbers. Order picks submitted update both the quantity fulfilled as well as the quantity to invoice removing risk of invoicing errors and issues with partial picks.

Other advantages of adding PanatrackerGP to your inventory management practice is the adding accountability. Each transaction is recorded in detail including the user along with the start and submit time of each transaction. PanatrackerGP transactions are easy for new users to learn and minimizes risks of a dip in efficiency when onboarding new staff. 

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Excellent Customer Service Begins with a Happy Team

Written by Rhonda Sutliff, [Rockton Software](#)

The typical path to providing better customer service is to think of ways to improve the experience for your external customers. But what if you took a completely different approach and first focused on improving the lives of your team members? In recent years, progressive employers have implemented creative ideas to improve workplace culture and team member satisfaction, and they have seen that happy employees seem to find new and better ways to serve their customers. Some suggestions:

Employee Benefits:

- ◆ Flexible hours: Allow employees to set their own schedules or to work from home based on projects, weather conditions, or specific days of the week. Offer summer hours.
- ◆ Unlimited PTO: Sometimes more PTO is needed due to medical issues or to care for family members. Studies show unlimited PTO reduces employee stress.
- ◆ Personal Growth and Development programs: Provide funds and resources to everyone to utilize toward developing their personal passions, not just their career paths. Offer workout classes, reimburse for health club memberships and education, provide lunch-and-learns on topics like Teens and Technology, Healthy Eating, etc., or even chair massages on breaks.
- ◆ Catering: Offer catered meals a few times a week. Stock break areas with healthy snacks and beverages.

Business Process:

- ◆ De-hassle Process: Instead of having management collect, address, and communicate internal needs, create a cross-company committee to handle this

process. This group establishes a routine to report, track, and fix the internal issues which require help from multiple teams. When team members drive this process, creative ideas come from the front lines. Workable solutions emerge, and cross-team relationships strengthen the whole culture.

- ◆ Push the Company Forward: You've heard it before: the best ideas come from team members. So why not dedicate time each week for them to focus on pushing themselves and your organization forward? Give them time to work on learning and exploring ideas to improve themselves and the company. This could include opening new client channels, speaking gigs, increasing their networks, studying other industries, self-improvement, etc. There are no rules or limits on what they can do. Then share this information with the group on a regular basis. This is a great way to ensure EVERY team member takes responsibility for the future of the company.

Of course, in order to provide excellent customer service, team members need the proper tools. Rockton Software offers tools to let your employees work simpler and easier, freeing up time and attention for your customers.



SmartFill - a search engine right inside GP. Type what you know to find the record you need. Don't know the Customer ID? That's fine, enter part of the name, or even the city where it is located. You determine which fields to search. With simple searches, the information is returned quickly so you can assist your customers efficiently. Not

to mention, data entry is much faster and you see needed information to help you with your day-to-day processes.

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Creating and Maintaining Raving Fans – Externally AND Internally

Written by Dan Doolin, [Integrity Data](#)

Making sure your customers are Raving Fans or, in the spirit of the summer season, “happy campers,” is important for every organization. From developing a strong product or service offering and accurately representing that offering by your sales and marketing teams to processing invoices efficiently and providing a strong post-sale customer service, we all strive for customers that are beyond satisfied, customers that become and stay Raving Fans.

Meeting Raving Fans’ expectations requires a clear “Customers First” company policy, strong internal processes (and software) that support that policy, AND hiring the right people in every department, not just Customer Service or Sales. Hiring employees who truly care, who go the extra mile, and in doing so embrace your company policy, should be a core focus. Once you have those employees in place, you need them to STAY. Engaged, productive and happy employees with the right mindset (aka strong internal Raving Fans) are key to creating and maintaining customers (aka external Raving Fans)!

Here are 3 ways to up your internal – therefore, also external - Raving Fans factor:

1) Offer benefits that improve employee financial well-being

This is a relatively new topic in the benefits conversation – for good reason. Every employee deserves financial peace of mind. Yet 70% of workers say they are financially stressed:

- 52% would find a \$400 unforeseen expense difficult to cover
- \$16,000 is the average credit card debt per indebted household
- \$37,000 is the average student debt



More than 50% of these workers say that their financial stress is affecting their work. This employee financial anxiety translates to losses totaling \$300 billion a year for American companies due to loss of concentration, motivation and ultimately loss of talent. Helping employees with their financial wellness is the RIGHT thing to do – supporting your employees AND your business with a holistic employee financial wellness business strategy. Pick programs that go beyond education and budgeting and actually put money into the pockets of your employees at no or low cost to you, the employer – that’s a win-win.

2) Offer healthcare benefits in a timely manner

The Affordable Care Act (still!) requires companies with 50 or more full-time employees (or full time equivalents) to offer affordable and quality healthcare to their employees in a timely manner and then report on all that to the IRS. Even if you don’t have 50 employees, many companies offer healthcare as a key employee benefit and need to keep track of when to offer what healthcare benefit and to whom. Integrity ACA solutions can help determine eligibility all year long and create reports on that whether for the IRS or internal departments.



Still in the dark about the ACA? [Sign up for our Summer Webinar Series!](#)

3) Process Payroll accurately

Having your payroll run smoothly with Microsoft Dynamics GP makes sure your most important resource – your employees – are happy because it enables them to get paid accurately and on time. GP Payroll out of the box works perfectly for most organizations. But sometimes, payroll gets more complicated. [Integrity Data GP Payroll enhancements](#) can help by fixing some gaps in GP Payroll, making your employees happier AND your payroll department more flexible and less stressed because they have the right tools in hand.

Some examples:

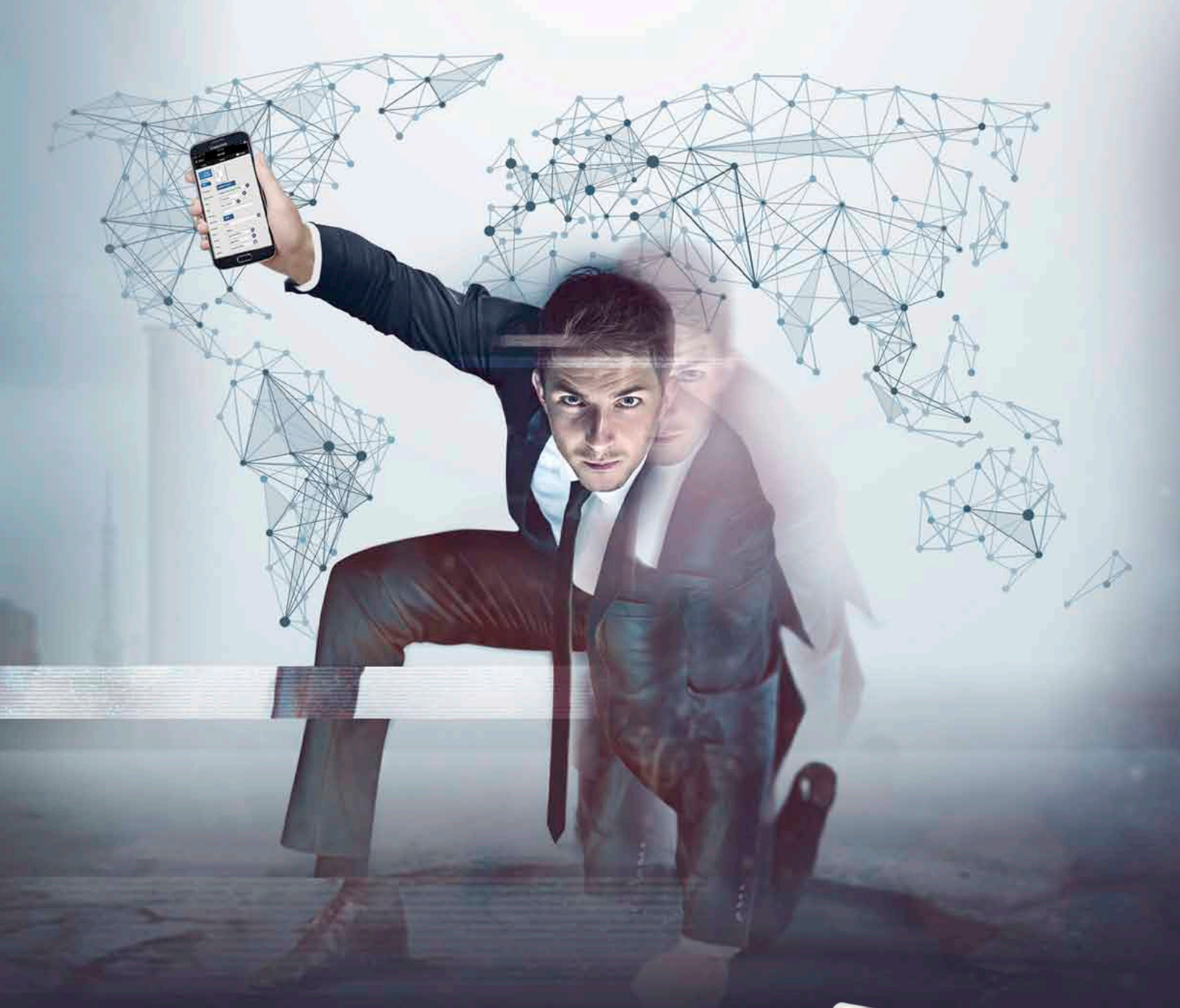
- Gain flexibility to create and manage unlimited types of leave (mandatory sick leave, comp time, intermittent FMLA...) with varying rules, while automatically tracking detailed leave history.
- Make payroll corrections and adjustments in just one step by entering a negative transaction rather than using time-intensive manual check transactions.
- Manage and accurately apply pay rate changes that take effect in the middle of a pay period.
- Set and enforce overtime rules and limits through configuration of daily, weekly, or by pay period overtime rules.

- Automate and enforce employer tiered matches and contribution limits (imposed by law or company policy) in retirement plans – even across multiple programs.
- Automatically and securely email direct deposit statements, W-2s and any other employee communication in just 3 clicks.
- Easily manage complex payroll posting requirements – such as splitting costs and expense distributions across multiple cost centers.
- Perform hypothetical net pay or gross-up calculations in seconds rather than taking the time and risk of changing data to run a mock payroll.

With a [Buy 2, get 1 Free promo](#) running through September 30, now is a good time to add these solutions to your GP Payroll system.

There is no doubt that having external AND internal Raving Fans is the cornerstone of success for any organization. Attract and retain internal Raving Fans by offering timely healthcare benefits as well as benefits that improve their financial well-being and make sure your payroll is processed in an accurate and timely manner.

[Contact Integrity Data](#) for more information today. [GP](#)



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4 Ways Cloud Procurement Builds Value and Enhances Employees' Everyday Experience.

Written by Salim Khalife, [Paramount WorkPlace](#)

Workers no longer ask for sufficient technology to do their jobs, they expect more. In fact, an employer's tech-savvy-ness ranks very high on candidates' checklist on whether to take a job or not. In addition to attracting the best and brightest employees, embracing technology brings tremendous efficiencies to modern businesses, and perhaps nowhere are those efficiencies more important than in non-revenue generating departments like procurement, expense management, and payables. Staff in these roles need access to the technology tools that empower them to work smarter, eliminate manual workflows and duplicate data entry, and free them to exercise their creativity on strategic initiatives that can directly impact the company's bottom line.

Below are four ways one technology tool — cloud procurement and spend management software - builds value in the organization by eliminating manual or redundant tasks, improving employee engagement, and empowering employees to work smarter and more strategically.

1. Integrate AP and Procurement Functions

In a recent [Paystream Advisors](#) survey, 60% of respondents cited a lack of visibility between departments as the top challenge facing their procurement and finance department staff. Poor inter-department communication was another challenge, cited by 40% of companies in the survey, and 48% felt the pain of manual data entry between applications.

Visibility, collaboration, and efficiency all get a boost from cloud procurement solutions. When payables and procurement are integrated, staff members spend less time on low-value tasks such as routing requisitions for approval, manually matching, routing, and approving invoices, rekeying invoices from one system to another, and researching over budget or out-of-policy purchases.

Integrating procurement and payables automates workflows, provides a single source of the truth accessible



to all authorized employees, enforces business rules automatically, delivers visibility into purchasing activity, and promotes collaborative, real-time communication across the two departments. The result is lower procurement processing costs, and an empowered workforce able to focus more time on activities that add value.

2. Embrace Mobile Capabilities

It's no secret that your firm's employees rely on their mobile devices, both in and out of the office. With that in mind, it only makes sense to put the functionality they need to do their procurement and expense management tasks on those mobile devices.

By empowering employees with the ability to create requisitions and capture and submit expenses from their mobile devices, they can accomplish these tasks on their schedule, whenever and wherever they are working. In addition, mobile capabilities enable authorized personnel to view and approve requisitions and expense reports from their team while they are on the go — speeding the process and driving efficiency. Mobile solutions have been found to increase user adoption rates — a key driver of ROI in your procurement and expense management solutions.



3. Leverage PunchOut Catalog Capabilities

PunchOut is the name given to the technical protocol that allows you to directly connect to suppliers' product catalogs from your organization's cloud procurement application. If your supplier supports PunchOut, your company's shoppers can browse and shop in real-time on a vendor's website—from within your cloud procurement application. Upon check out, just like in your own guided buying catalogs, your cloud procurement software creates a requisition, ready for review and approval.

The advantages of using PunchOut are significant, both for procurement staff and for the employees that use it to shop. Since shopping occurs in real time on the vendor's site, pricing and quantities are always up to date; you don't have to maintain the information as you do with your own catalogs; and the requisitions are created automatically with no manual data entry. Shoppers gain a better user experience, as they are shopping on a familiar website, accessible from right inside the cloud procurement application. It adds up to more spend under your control, time savings throughout the cycle, and overall improved efficiency.

4. Assemble Guided Buying Catalogs

Your procurement department works hard to establish preferred supplier agreements offering the best terms and pricing, but these can be tested when someone in the organization needs to buy something. Guided buying catalogs are an easy and effective way to direct users to the right items, the right policies, and your preferred suppliers.

Guided buying catalogs empower users across the entire organization to shop for goods and create requisitions when and where it's convenient for them, without the need to search out the best supplier and pricing for each item. The use of catalogs also helps your procurement team be more efficient with their time. Rather than entering

purchase orders, they can spend time developing supplier relationships, for example, to ensure the company is always getting the best pricing. The requisitions created as part of the shopping process are automatically routed for approval, speeding the purchasing cycle and eliminating the manual touchpoints that frustrate stakeholders and compromise efficiency and accuracy.

Guided buying catalogs enhance the overall user experience by speeding, simplifying, and automating routine purchase requests so buyers and procurement staff can get back to their jobs.

Technology is the enabler

Like virtually every other vital business function, the procurement cycle benefits from a strong process framework, enabled by technology. Cloud procurement solutions provide that technology framework, building efficiencies and business value throughout the procurement cycle, and enabling your entire team to focus their attention on the organization's core mission.

We invite you to view this on-demand webinar, to learn more about how cloud procurement solutions build value in organizations (and earn CPE credits!), starting by automating processes and reaching the pinnacle by empowering your workforce.

About the author:

Salim Khalife is the founder, president and CEO of Paramount WorkPlace, a technology company that develops, sells, and supports advanced web-based and mobile requisition, procurement, and expense software solutions for mid-market organizations. The company introduced its first cloud-based SaaS requisition application in 1997, and continues to innovate and expand its partnerships and integrations ever since. Learn more at www.paramountworkplace.com. GP

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FASB ASU 606 Revenue Recognition Simplify Periodic Revenue Recognition Calculations

Written by Jim Beers from [Olympic Systems, Inc.](#)

Overview

By now everyone has read one or more presentations about the five step revenue allocation process mandated by FASB ASU 606. This article will suggest methods to make the periodic revenue recognition calculations more manageable once the “Five Step Revenue Allocation” process is complete.

There are many details in the ASU 606 revenue recognition standards. This article makes two points.

1. The “Five Step Revenue Allocation” process will result in one of three types of revenue recognition components:
 - Performance Obligations
 - Contract Assets
 - Contract Liabilities
2. The periodic calculation of earned revenue and costs will fit into one of these three component forms.

Practical Expedients

The first step in evaluating revenue recognition policies is to review and (when appropriate) apply the “Practical Expedients” ASU 606 provides to avoid the new, more complex analyses to determine the amount and timing of revenue and cost recognition for contracts. These are summarized with link references to the original standards in a paper titled: “FASB ASU 606 Practical Expedients” at: <http://www.projectcost.net/revenue-recognition>

Contract Components

Each contract subject to ASC 606 has some or all of the following components.



1. Contract Performance Obligations are:
 - Defined as a promise to transfer a distinct good or service that the customer can benefit from the good or service either on its own or together with other resources readily available to the customer.
 - Activities undertaken to fulfill a contract are not considered a performance obligation unless those activities transfer a good or service to a customer.

The calculation for a Performance Obligations is:

Revenue: (% Complete Performance Obligation) X (Contract Price)

Cost: (% Complete Performance Obligation) X (Budget Cost)

2. Examples of Incremental Sales Costs include:

- Sales Commissions
- Set-up and Mobilization Costs
- R&D to Support the Contract

The standard required that Incremental Sales Costs be capitalized and amortized proportionately with the Transfer of Goods and Services to the Customer for the related Performance Obligation. The standard provides additional guidance to simplify calculations by declaring that Incremental Sales Costs are related to a single Performance Obligation or the entire contract.

The calculation for most individual Contract Assets is:

Revenue: Performance Obligation % Complete • Contract Allocated Revenue

Cost: Performance Obligation % Complete • Contract Asset Cost

3. Examples of Material Future Benefits Include:

- Price Concessions
- Reward Points
- Return Options
- Performance Bonuses

The calculation for most individual Contract Liabilities is:

Revenue: Quantity • Stand-alone Allocated Revenue Unit Price

Cost: Quantity • Unit Cost

Where Quantity = the quantity exercised or option expired.

Summary


Once the “Five Step Revenue Allocation” process is complete the information needed to calculate earned revenue include:

Performance Obligations: Performance Obligation Percent Complete

Contract Assets: Performance Obligation Percent Complete

Contract Liabilities: Qty. Realized + Qty. where the Contract Term has expired

Create periodic reporting to routinely provide these progress measures and organize the calculations into three types to simplify the routine periodic revenue recognition calculations.

Contact Jim Beers at (206) 547-5777 x 111 to discuss your firm’s contract terms. 

More Background and Discussion

This article builds on our previous study guide available at: <http://www.projectcost.net/revenue-recognition>

The standard itself can be downloaded from fasb.org at:

http://www.fasb.org/jsp/FASB/Document_C/DocumentPage?cid=1176164076069&acceptedDisclaimer=true