Case Study | Stinson Morrison Hecker

"It was clear they needed to automate their manual, time-intensive, error-prone process."

INDUSTRY: Legal   **EMPLOYEES:** 300+   **PRODUCT:** INVOICE

Automating a Manual, Paper-based Process

Stinson's Accounts Payable (AP) workflow was a manual, paper-based process with clerks performing data entry – nothing was automated. It was clear they needed to automate this time-intensive, error-prone process. They were looking for a paperless solution that would enforce firm policies and internal business rules, make better use of employees' time, offer end-user reporting, deliver detailed spend by vendors, and streamline the approval workflow process for speed, accuracy and consistency.

Why Chrome River

After reviewing many other AP automation solutions, including Elite WebView, Extensity, a payroll system, and a few banks that offered automation around AP, Stinson felt confident that Chrome River INVOICE was the best choice for automating the workflow of their manual AP process. Another factor was that INVOICE easily integrates with Chrome River EXPENSE and Thomson Reuters Elite financial management system. The team that made the final decision to implement Chrome River INVOICE included Terry Brummer, COO; Doug Doerfler, CFO; and Valerie Husbands, Director of Accounting.

Company Profile

Stinson Morrison Hecker LLP provides sophisticated corporate, transaction and litigation legal services to clients ranging from Fortune 500 corporations and privately held companies to emerging businesses. With more than 300 attorneys in eight key markets—Kansas City, St. Louis and Jefferson City, MO; Overland Park and Wichita, KS; Omaha, NE; Phoenix, AZ; and Washington, D.C.—Stinson Morrison Hecker LLP provides a wide range of services, capabilities and areas of expertise.

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Quick Two-Phase Rollout

Stinson began their two-phase rollout of Chrome River INVOICE by discussing the general ledger account postings and the appropriate approval routing based on amount and type of expense. Once their internal routing rules were created, they began training the administrative approvers and invoice entry staff. Phase 1 of the rollout was implemented for administrators, and a month later Phase 2 of the rollout was implemented firm-wide for all client charges. Following the firm-wide rollout, Stinson offered one-on-one training for secretaries and attorneys on an as-needed basis. Two follow-up training sessions were held during quarterly secretarial meetings.

During the training and implementation process, Stinson's trainers—including Valerie Husbands, Lene Robles, and Beth Thoren—created slides with side-by-side comparisons to show users their old process and the corresponding process in Chrome River INVOICE. These visual comparisons facilitated quick user adoption and made it easy for them to see exactly how the new system worked.

Because Stinson had previously implemented EXPENSE and the secretaries had already realized the benefits, they were receptive to implementing Chrome River INVOICE. INVOICE was well received, and the legal administrative assistants were pleased to have the ability to process their own invoices and track the paid status. As is true with most implementations, there were some challenges, but within two weeks of implementation the AP group significantly reduced their data entry time.

Distinct Benefits, Staff Reduction and Cost Savings

Chrome River INVOICE provides Stinson Morrison Hecker with many clear benefits. Their AP process has progressed from using 46,000 sheets of paper per year to being completely paperless. This has also eliminated the need for permanent storage of 18 boxes per year.

Goal

Automate a manual, paper-driven accounts payable process to enforce internal business rules, streamline approval, deliver detailed spend by vendor, and offer detailed end-user reporting through a paperless system.

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LET BUSINESS FLOW

"Stinson's trainers created slides with side-by-side comparisons to show users the old process and how the new process would work in Chrome River INVOICE."

Because approval routing rules are built into the system, invoice approval is quick. With the old manual system, employees had to hand-carry invoices and track down approvers. Because they now have electronic copies of invoices, they no longer need to request copies from the accounting department. They have also gained the ability to track invoices from entry through payment, and they can quickly and easily access information on paid vendor invoices.

Over the past several years, automation has enabled Stinson to reassign the AP staff from seven fulltime employees and one fulltime supervisor to one employee and no supervisor. This is another resounding benefit of automating the AP process.

"They also have gained the benefit of tracking invoices from entry through payment."

Personalized Support

At the beginning of the implementation process, the Chrome River project manager jumped in and got a good feel for how Stinson does business, stayed a step ahead in anticipation of their needs, and helped to pull Chrome River resources, if needed, to get the job done quickly. Chrome River's Help Desk was very responsive during Stinson's "go live." If a new rule or a new widget was needed, they made sure it was completed in a timely manner. Stinson has found the Help Desk team to be very knowledgeable about Chrome River's applications, with a good understanding of Stinson's business rules. Through the entire process, Chrome River worked effectively in a team effort to ensure a smooth

Why Chrome River?

Easy-to-use interface that integrates with Chrome River EXPENSE and Thomson Reuters Elite financial management system.

Benefits

Automated, comprehensive, paperless AP process that tracks invoices from entry through payment.

"The Chrome River project manager who was assigned to Stinson jumped in and got a good feel for how they do business, stayed a step ahead in anticipation of their needs, and helped to pull Chrome River resources."

Benefits

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Life after INVOICE

There is a time commitment involved in training the staff and rolling out the system; however, Stinson feels that the many benefits they gained from automating their AP process were well worth the time invested. The time frame from start to firm-wide "go live" for INVOICE was just eight weeks. Stinson is pleased with the decision to implement Chrome River INVOICE in conjunction with EXPENSE and would recommend Chrome River to any organization.

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