



CASE STUDY AGRICULTURE, MINERALS AND REAL ESTATE

Barron Collier Company

Accounts Payable

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David Shapiro
CIO
Barron Collier Company

Barron Collier Company (BCC) in Naples, Fla., develops and manages numerous land holdings across the country. As one of the largest diversified companies in southwest Florida, BCC's business ventures include extensive agricultural operations such as citrus groves and vegetable farming; commercial, retail and residential real estate development; as well as oil exploration and mineral management.

Staff at BCC headquarters handle the accounts payable processes for the more than 130 smaller companies that comprise the business, making payables one of the biggest operations in the company. Before deploying ImageNow, the centralized AP staff shuffled paper invoices through the approval process manually, and entered coding into their Dynamics GP solution at the end of the process to issue checks to vendors. In addition to the many steps involved in the workflow process before signing, BCC also required two signatures to approve each payment. BCC business managers knew that in order to make the business more effective, it was time to improve the payables process and reduce the paper build up it was experiencing.

“We had a vault in payables that was starting to overflow,” says David Shapiro, CIO at BCC. “It just made sense to move on to an electronic document management solution in our quest to make ourselves more effective.”

Selecting a Solution

BCC approached the project with several goals in mind. First, it wanted increased visibility of an invoice from the moment it was received, allowing staff to resolve vendor inquiries more easily. In addition, BCC wanted to reduce the movement of paper to decrease the risk of lost documents, reduce its paper storage needs and reduce photocopying. Finally, a key project goal was easy user adoption of the solution.

As BCC compared solutions, ImageNow and Perceptive Software stood out primarily because of the product's innovative foundation technology, as well as its ease of use and administration.

“ImageNow uses state-of-the-art technology behind the scenes that really makes a difference for us,” Shapiro says. “The ImageNow architecture is built such that there is always a way to attack your problem.”

Automating Processes

After implementing ImageNow, BCC completely automated its payables process with ImageNow in a way that maximizes its current Microsoft Dynamics GP solution, eliminates any double entry, increases visibility of invoices early in the process and improves accuracy.

When BCC receives new invoices, associates immediately scan them into ImageNow and route them through an ImageNow Workflow process for review and approval. An ImageNow Worksheet, a form attached to the imaged document, allows for the entry of additional invoice header information and general ledger account distribution coding. The AP coder then routes the invoice forward within the existing workflow process, which automatically triggers a pre-configured ImageNow Envoy remote service connection. This initiates a web service request to Dynamics GP, forwarding all necessary invoice header and GL distribution data. Dynamics GP receives this data and automatically creates the necessary payables

invoice transaction, invoice batch and all associated GL distributions. Upon completion, Dynamics GP returns a success/failure response to ImageNow Envoy, allowing the invoice to be routed to the appropriate completion or exception queue within workflow.

Immediate Visibility

Processing invoices manually had many drawbacks, including the inability to track the location of an invoice. Now as invoices arrive, they are immediately scanned and indexed in ImageNow along with any supporting materials needed for review. Administrative assistants enter initial coding information in the ImageNow Worksheet.

"Before using ImageNow, if a vendor called, we would wander around the building to see who had the invoice," Shapiro says. "Now within a day of getting the piece of paper, the invoice is in ImageNow and becomes visible so we can do a query and immediately see whose queue the invoice is in."

Achieving Tighter Controls

Using ImageNow, BCC can enforce tighter controls on invoices and track every step of the process, something that was virtually impossible in a paper environment.

Using a manual system, the approver signed an invoice for a certain amount and sent it to the AP clerk for entry into Dynamics GP. If the AP clerk made a simple mistake, a \$10,000 invoice could become a \$100,000 check without the approver knowing.

Now AP associates enter the coding and invoice information into an ImageNow Worksheet early in the process. Using ImageNow Envoy, the data in this form is pushed through web services to BCC's Dynamics GP application, which means the approved amount is exactly what goes into Dynamics GP.

"ImageNow allows us to have tighter controls on our processes. Once an invoice is approved, it can't be paid for anything less or more than the amount indicated by the approver. We didn't have that before using ImageNow Envoy," Shapiro says.

Tighter controls increase the level of accuracy for processing documents. Before using ImageNow a simple data entry mistake could result in an impossible combination of companies and GL codes. Now AP clerks enter project and GL coding into an ImageNow Worksheet that is built to look very similar to what clerks filled out on paper. ImageNow Worksheets, however, provide a layer of validation for each piece of data. Once the company is selected, only that company's vendors

can be selected. Once a vendor is selected, only the corresponding GL codes can be selected, which ensures no impossible combinations of codes can be pushed through the process.

Ease of Use

Easy user adoption was a key reason for selecting ImageNow. Shapiro conducts user training himself, usually taking about an hour to show end users all they need to know.

"Originally we were concerned about how hard it would be to learn a new system, but ImageNow is just so intuitive that our staff has no problem picking it up," Shapiro says. "They absolutely love ImageNow."

ImageNow creates a sophisticated solution for BCC's business needs, but requires little administrative effort to maintain.

"ImageNow is very easy to administrate. It doesn't require much work at all, and it pretty much takes care of itself," Shapiro says.

Cost and Time Savings a Bonus

Though cutting costs was not an original project goal for BCC, the company believes ImageNow will also provide cost savings. The organization will print one less piece of paper for every check, eliminate off-site storage fees and reduce photocopying.

"There will be cost savings from using ImageNow, but we opted not to focus on that so our users would not feel intimidated by us looking for pennies to justify the system," Shapiro says. "Our administrative assistants love ImageNow, and that's more than enough to prove its worth."

Shapiro also describes ImageNow as a big time saver when having to track down invoices. Because all invoices are indexed and organized in ImageNow, what once could have involved a trip out to one of the dirty, unappealing off-site storage facilities now just takes a few seconds to find in ImageNow.

Partnering to Advance the Solution

Shapiro says working with the Perceptive Software team has been a good experience and the product itself is easy to customize. BCC plans to continue rolling out new functionality to make additional processes more effective, such as using reports for check signers that further simplify the check signing process.

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Quick Stats

- Main Campus: Naples, Fla.
- Business ventures: agriculture, minerals, real estate

The Challenges

- ▶ Increase document visibility
- ▶ Reduce physical movement of documents
- ▶ Eliminate need for filing time and storage
- ▶ Increase internal controls
- ▶ Easy user adoption

The Results

- ▶ Invoices are visible in ImageNow early in the process
- ▶ ImageNow Workflow eliminates need to transport paper documents
- ▶ All documents stored in ImageNow are instantly available
- ▶ ImageNow Worksheet validation provides increased controls
- ▶ Easy to use interface allows for quick user adoption

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