American Airlines' Record to Report Processes Take Off, Leaving Spreadsheets on the Tarmac

Business Drivers to Automate

American Airlines gained their sterling market reputation in part by staying ahead of the curve – which is becoming increasingly difficult. "Everyone is trying to do more with less, and that's a big part of our vision," shared Alison DeVad, Director of Automation Systems for American Airlines. "We're continuously looking to transform and optimize, and we decided to start with our record to report processes."

"Our processes were very manual, and we didn't have an official system or sufficient approval workflows. Despite being a global organization, we didn't have a templated format for our reconciliations or journal entries, so they were not standardized at all," continued DeVad. "Basing our processes in spreadsheets proved to be an issue, as every update from Microsoft would corrupt our workbooks. We were continuously having to implement custom coding just to maintain our templates, in addition to the everyday manual processes."

Additionally, working globally was becoming increasingly challenging: "Everything was decentralized, so employees were storing files—including Excel workbooks and supporting documentation—on their desktops rather than a shared location. There's delays and limits to what managers can see when working in Excel, so they were required to follow up via email or phone calls to find out the status of all our reconciliations and journal entries. On top of that, there's enforcing compliance controls and ensuring all of the data is complete and accurate. It was really a headache," commented DeVad.

Finding Cadency by Trintech

American Airlines started their digital transformation initiative by focusing on their account reconciliations, journal entries, and transaction matching processes. "We really needed a solution to help us automate the manual components of the close and serve as a one-stop-shop to consolidate everything into one place," shared Will Mohler, Manager of Accounting Automation at American Airlines. "We needed a solution that would evolve along with our needs, provide much-needed visibility, serve as a single source of truth, and help us improve our controls."

In Brief:

Challenges:
- Manual processes
- Lack of standardization
- Decentralized files
- Limited visibility

Objectives:
- Improve visibility
- Create centralized repository
- Increase efficiency
- Process automation
- Enhanced auditability

Return on Investment:
- Streamlined processes, including approval workflows and templates
- Fewer status update calls and emails
- Stronger security controls
- Large volume transaction matching
- Saved time

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Despite the tall order, Cadency by Trintech fit the bill. "Change management is at least half of the effort of any digital transformation project, and it's no different here at American Airlines," commented Mohler. "We spent a lot of time meeting with different teams, talking about how processes would change, and it led to a really great adoption of Cadency."

Solution in Action

Since implementing Cadency by Trintech, American Airlines has been able to bring several improvements and efficiencies to their financial close processes. "We've been able to achieve the large transaction volume matching that we really needed, and most importantly, it's accurate! It's saved us a lot of time, in addition to reducing our manual processes and minimizing error-prone practices. Rather than focusing on repetitive processes, people are able to focus on value-adding activities," continued Mohler. "We've been able to improve our productivity and accuracy while providing a better sense of security and confidence in our processes, particularly through dynamic approval workflows, templates, and having that centralized repository for a single source of truth. Everything is documented and able to be audited as needed."

Trintech's integration with American Airlines' ERP, SAP, turned out to be a huge plus, as well. Moller shared, "The consistency of movement between Cadency and SAP has made for a really smooth transition and has allowed for a smooth data flow between the two platforms."

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> *Manager of Accounting Automation*
> ***American Airlines***

From the executive team to end users, it seems that everyone has had something positive to say about Cadency. "The feedback we get from our users is that they don't have to do a lot of the copying and pasting that they did previously, and there are far fewer emails and phone calls to ask for updates," said Mohler. "The integrated reporting capabilities have really offered leaders improved visibility into what's going on in the financial close process, providing the ability to make better decisions, faster."

The partnership between American Airlines and Trintech seems to just be growing: "We make sure that we keep up with the new version upgrades of Cadency, because we really want to make sure that we're taking advantage of the latest features and capabilities and implementing those where appropriate," continued Mohler. "We're always looking for ways to improve and Trintech is a valued partner."

About American Airlines Group

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