



Accounting

Process approvals for large transactions



INTRODUCTION

Enterprise line-of-business systems often do not provide a ready interface when a business process requires human intervention—their tightly-knit volume efficiency, the characteristic from which they derive their value, is itself a barrier to this kind of activity. One client turned to Sedona Technologies to furnish a Knowledge Management tool that would solve this problem while avoiding a protracted, failure-prone and expensive coding effort.

CHALLENGE

The accounting department for the North American distribution channel of a large manufacturer was dependent upon a difficult manual process to identify and process approvals for large transactions. Operations in the U.S. and Canada operate different business systems and are subject to different accounting regulations.

In order to handle the special approvals required for transactions above a certain dollar threshold, corporate accountants used a cumbersome process involving manual reporting, Lotus Notes, and Excel spreadsheets. Approvers had to be constantly on-guard against countless points of failure. The effort required to correct this problem through direct manipulation of the business systems themselves would have been inordinately expensive, if feasible at all.

SOLUTION

This was, at its root, a problem of Knowledge Management, and so the client turned to the Sedona Technologies KM solution delivery operation for an alternative. Sedona KM analysts designed and implemented a web-based shared access solution on SharePoint architecture capable of handling multiple workflows with restricted access by role. Reporting and printing were enabled through dashboard views by task, status or individual.

The tool allows users to identify all transactions above the dollar threshold, process on-the-fly approvals, and perform monthly financial close tasks, including account reconciliations and material returns. There is a discrete archive function with its own role-based views. The solution is hooked directly into the enterprise transactional systems using existing services and required no coding.

RESULTS

The Knowledge Management solution delivered by Sedona Technologies completely replaced the high-risk, error-prone manual accounting process, and the client was able to end its dependency on manual reports, Lotus Notes, and Excel spreadsheets.

By established methods of planning and estimation, solving this problem through a traditional transactional system enhancement effort would have required the client to endure the cost of thousands of programming man-hours, new major releases with new user interfaces, a start-to-finish timeline of a year or more, and a significant possibility of outright project failure. Instead, Sedona Technologies conceived, executed and deployed an easy-to-use Knowledge Management tool addressing the client's need in the span of a single quarterly budget cycle.

LEVEL OF EFFORT

280 Project Hours

Opening up transactional systems

- Accounting users needed visibility into special transaction activity and a way to issue on-the-fly approvals
- The right Knowledge Management tool is an effective human interface layer for information otherwise buried and obscured in monolithic business systems
- The combination of high usability, speedy delivery and sound KM principles lends reliability to what was previously a high-risk accounting activity
- Provide and govern access to knowledge previously unavailable to the users



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