

Case Study

Model N Controls Project Management with OpenAir

Model N

Private Firm

Employees: 300

OpenAir users: 300

Expenses

Invoices

Opportunities

Projects

Resources

Timesheets

Integrations:

Great Plains

With multiple internal and external projects simultaneously active, flawless project management skills are essential to success. However, as organizations scale and expand, human collateral is not enough to guarantee on-time, profitable projects. The current services trend demonstrates that automation tools are a necessary investment to provide a significant platform for efficient project management.

Model N, a revenue management software firm, learned this first hand. Founded in 1999 and headquartered in Redwood Shores, CA, Model N has rapidly grown into the leader in Revenue Management. The organization offers a unique approach, optimized for life sciences and high tech companies, that combines industry specific solutions and best practices expertise to enable their customers to better plan and control the processes that drive the entire revenue process for their business. Starting with a focus on Life Science organizations, the company has attracted many of the top pharmaceutical, medical device, and biotech industry leaders as customers. In 2006, Model N completed its strategic acquisition of global pricing solutions experts Azerity. The combination of Azerity's price management expertise and Model N's revenue management leadership allows customers to have better visibility into and control over the revenue management life cycle ...

Optimizing Usage

Four years ago, Model N was rapidly scaling and did not have the internal infrastructure necessary to support such growth. The organization had no finite invoicing system and their time and expense tracking was manual and imprecise. With an increasing number of projects running simultaneously, the need for an automation tool was quickly growing. Enter OpenAir. Brought in to streamline Model N's business processes, OpenAir has provided the organization with the necessary insight and control to effectively manage their projects. "When I first joined the organization, OpenAir was providing us with a fail-proof collection point for all our essential project data," said Scott Verschoor, Managing Director at Model N. However, it was clear to Verschoor that more could be done with the system. "At first, we were not using consistent approval processes for our time and expense submission." Now Model N has detailed approval routes for both billable and non-billable time and expense. This guarantees that each entry is cross checked against multiple levels of approval to ensure accuracy, especially around customer billing activities.

An added benefit that OpenAir has provided to Model N is in regard to how the organization handles contractor services. "At any time we have 20-40 contractors and partner working for us in a variety of capacities," said Verschoor. "Prior to OpenAir, it had been a real challenge to collect their time and expense figures and then pay them for their services. Now we simply provide each contractor with an OpenAir login and they enter their information directly into the system. OpenAir's powerful filtering and role based permissions provide organizations with the necessary capabilities to limit the scope of each user. "We find the filter set functionality especially useful. Every employee at Model N uses OpenAir to enter timesheets, PTO requests, and incurred expenses. We need to be sure that entry level users do not have access to sensitive company information. OpenAir provides us with that peace of mind."

The finance team at Model N raves about OpenAir due to improvements in agreement management. "Our agreement management used to be project centric and very cumbersome to control." Often agreements would come through that would encompass work across multiple projects. OpenAir now provides the necessary functionality to handle these unique business situations.

Connecting with Great Plains

With a streamlined and automated process to track critical business metrics and manage projects, Model N quickly desired to extend these benefits into other areas of their organization. Specifically, the ability to translate OpenAir data into their Great Plains financial package was a high priority. “While we leverage OpenAir to gain control of our services business, we utilize Great Plains to manage our financial tracking and reporting,” said Verschoor. “It has been a great benefit to have our OpenAir data feed directly into our general ledger as it cuts down on errors and manpower.” OpenAir time and expense entries, project billings, and revenue recognition transactions are mapped to the appropriate general ledger accounts in Great Plains to record the appropriate credits and debits, and ensure a balanced ledger. Furthermore, customers can use this integration to process reimbursable expenses by establishing OpenAir users as vendors in their ledger. Expense line items are then fed into Great Plains and reimbursements are processed for the appropriate employees.

Finely tuned business practices have opened doors for Model N in regard to reporting and forecasting. This has provided project managers with unprecedented visibility. “We have created approximately twelve standard reports that are housed on each manager’s dashboard,” said Verschoor. “As soon as they login to the system they have one-click access to robust reports that illustrate project margins, utilization, loaded costs, and outstanding timesheets.” With this level of on-demand information, managers can instantly view the factors that will ultimately affect the performance of their projects.

Due greatly to Model N’s integration with Great Plains and the benefits it provides, the organization is actively pursuing similar options to further enhance their entire business lifecycle. “The last missing piece to having a completely integrated and streamlined business architecture is integration with salesforce.com,” said Verschoor. “Once we add that component to our infrastructure, we will have a fully automated flow from initial sales lead to final bookkeeping of services rendered.” Through OpenAir’s bidirectional integration with salesforce.com, Model N will have unprecedented control over every aspect of their business.