

SUCCESS STORY AUTODESK

Customer:

- Autodesk, Inc.

Industry:

- Software

Challenge:

- Need to centralize journal entries using parking feature
- Pre-validation prior to posting

Solution:

- GLSU from Z Option

Results:

- New functionality at less cost
- Improved data integrity
- Easy to customize

Benefits:

- More time for business analytics in accounting
- Better allocation of IT resources

From Posting Shop to Business Analytics with GLSU

Customer Profile

Autodesk, Inc. is a world leader in 2D and 3D design, engineering and entertainment software. Since its introduction of AutoCAD software in 1982, Autodesk continues to help customers experience their ideas digitally before they are built. The last 14 Academy Award winners for Best Visual Effects – and 100 percent of Fortune 100 companies -- use Autodesk software tools to design, visualize and simulate their ideas. A global company with divisions all over the world, Autodesk employs approximately 7,800 people and the company posted \$2.3 billion in revenue in 2009.

Challenges

All journal entries from Autodesk's finance business partners were sent to one person in corporate accounting, who spent days centralizing journal entries, finding errors and making corrections. Autodesk wanted to find a fast and accurate way to get journal entries into the SAP system. Unfortunately, Autodesk's existing in-house tool was inflexible, lacked some validation features, and did not allow them to park the journal entries.

"The accounting manager saw all the time spent going back and forth trying to complete our month-end close," reports Cindy Stockton, FI Project Manager. "If we could park the entries for one person to post, then we could have assurance validations were complete before we finished uploading the journals."

"The parking was essential for us," Stockton adds. "The corporate accounting person needed to be the last person to post from a park position. We also wanted more flexibility and more end user controls to adjust fields used."

"GLSU has solved the parking problem. Our users can add new fields to their spreadsheets on their own instead of involving IT."

- Cindy Stockton, FI Project Manager, Autodesk, Inc.



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Solution

Autodesk had two options. They could continue to add new spreadsheet functionality to their in-house tool but the associated development and maintenance costs were prohibitive. The second alternative was to purchase GLSU from Z Option. "Once Z Option was identified, no other options were investigated," Stockton says.

Although pricing helped propel the final decision, the main driver was GLSU's parking functionality which enables process changes with SAP Workflow.

correct. Autodesk uses GLSU to highlight out-of-date COPA settings and other functionality within SAP that was not current.

Easy to Customize: "It is absolutely a simple process to customize GLSU," says Stockton. "If a vendor needs a particular format for submitting their invoices, we can now accommodate them with greater flexibility." Autodesk payroll areas in EMEA have used Excel-based functionality including macros to make custom changes to the GLSU templates.

"With GLSU, we save time and money. Whether they are fields or characteristics on the COPA side, adapting to changes in SAP are a minor item, rather than a larger issue"

-Cindy Stockton, FI Project Manager, Autodesk, Inc.



Z Option offers software solutions (GLSU, BudgetLoader and LIVExpress) that enable organizations to streamline SAP financial data entry and reporting, with Microsoft Excel. By leveraging existing Excel expertise, users can calculate financial transactions and post them directly to SAP. Z Option, an SAP partner, was established in 1999 and has hundreds of customer companies, with thousands of users, worldwide.

Other purchasing factors included the validation feature and built-in flexibility. GLSU is now used by more than 100 active posting users, including a functional business analyst in the IT group. Autodesk uses GLSU for all journal entries, plus batch posting of all AR and AP files.

"Once we began using GLSU, we realized even more flexibility," Stockton says. "GLSU allows non-core accounting end-users to enter journal entries into the system and have it validated, giving corporate accounting more of an overseeing role."

Results

New Functionality at Less Cost: "GLSU has solved the parking problem," Stockton notes. "Our users can add new fields to their spreadsheets on their own instead of involving IT. Before, every time we added a field or new functionality to the spreadsheet, it cost us thousands to do all the programming in-house."

Improved Data Integrity: GLSU has an automated process that identifies the majority of errors in a pop-up box before posting, making line items easy to

Business Benefits

Autodesk's corporate accounting area is making good use of all the time saved. What previously took a month to upload can now take three to four days. "Now, instead of being an upload posting shop, our accounting area can do business analysis," Stockton says.

Since GLSU follows the rules set up in SAP, internal training sessions were conducted to help users troubleshoot errors that appeared in the pre-validations on the SAP side. Outstanding support from Z Option has helped smooth the transition from an in-house tool to a third party solution. "We love the support that Z Option provides," Stockton enthuses.

GLSU has boosted productivity and saved money by allowing Autodesk to better allocate IT resources. "Instead of having IT people spend time retooling the in-house software, they can now work on bigger and better projects," Stockton says. "Regular in-house maintenance that taxed IT resources is no longer needed. The GLSU templates are re-worked once a year, and it is fast and easy!"



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