



Boosting Productivity at GraybaR[®]

Replacing cumbersome in-house system with GLSU

HOW GLSU IMPROVES OVERALL PRODUCTIVITY

CUSTOMER PROFILE

Graybar, a Fortune 500 company, specializes in supply chain management services, and is a leading North American distributor of high quality components, equipment, and materials. They serve the construction market, the commercial, institutional, and government (CIG) market, and the industrial and utility markets. Graybar products and services support new construction, infrastructure updates, building renovation, facility maintenance, repair and operations, and original equipment manufacturing.

CHALLENGES

Since SAP was implemented, Graybar faced challenges in loading large amounts of financial data into the system. They found a need to input more than 1000 line items to pay invoices electronically. Although an SAP transaction code was being used, they needed a specific format for the text files which required creation of additional tools but the process was slow and difficult to format. Validations were not possible and there was a line item limitation.

“Our in-house solution was cumbersome”, says Kent Sorenson, Manager – Accounting, at Graybar. “If something went wrong, finding the problem meant using another transaction code. It was not user-friendly. It only identified one error at a time, and we’d have to post again. Our productivity was slowed down.”

SOLUTION

Graybar purchased GLSU from Z Option after conducting a cost/savings analysis of manual data entry vs. GLSU licensing and maintenance. GLSU provided a flexible and intuitive spreadsheet interface for collecting and posting transactions to SAP, without leaving Excel. Various spreadsheet templates were created, stored on the SAP server, and distributed quickly.

Today, Graybar uses GLSU for payment of AP invoices, monthly journal entries, and third party outsourcing payables (from text files). While all entries are posted by the licensed GLSU users, other employees send in data to the centralized unit by filling out a template for posting, spreading the benefit to a wider audience.

Graybar’s expected return on investment was five years but instead, the payback took just two years, according to Sorenson. Best of all, GLSU enhances Graybar’s decision-making power and lets them react faster to changes in tough economic times.



“In today’s economy, you must have correct information in order to make a fast decision. You can’t doubt your information, and you can’t take two weeks to send it back for verification before you decide to open or close a branch, open a new line of business or enter a new market. GLSU gives us the information we need.”

- Kent Sorenson, Manager – Accounting
Graybar

RESULTS

Increased Speed: GLSU allows users to do more data entry in less time. What took up to an hour now takes minutes to post. The time saved is now spent on analyzing and making decisions about the data. Before, users would take shortcuts such as posting summary level detail and eliminating fields to save time. Graybar posts 400 to 800 lines regularly, often numbering the thousands. This is most common at year-end, with up to 9,000 lines posted for single journal entries.

Ease of use: Knowledge of Excel ensures rapid familiarity with the full range of functionality in GLSU. Master templates are set up and stored in SAP, while others are customized, as needed, in just minutes. Adding, changing or deleting fields takes seconds.

Validation: GLSU promotes data integrity through a pre-validation process that identifies the majority of errors in a pop-up box before posting, making line items easy to delete or correct.

Improved Audit Trail: GLSU gives Graybar an electronic audit trail of all text items, including associated support documentation.

BUSINESS BENEFITS

According to Sorenson, GLSU has improved overall productivity thanks to improved speed and accuracy of data entry. As a result, GLSU has enhanced the company’s ability to perform business analytics.

“GLSU has increased our data integrity on all levels, from finance to marketing,” Sorenson says. “Users have commented on the quality, volume and accuracy of the data. Business analysts within IT are advocates of GLSU because the reporting is so thorough. GLSU gives better analytics and allows our business units to focus on improving the bottom line.”

Graybar is confident that, by utilizing GLSU and enabling their centralized accounting processes, they will continue to meet their future goals.

“GLSU allows people to do more in less time. With 15 minutes of input, you have 45 minutes of analysis.”

- Kent Sorenson, Manager – Accounting
Graybar



Z Option is a leading global provider of Excel-based software for SAP finance users. Our solutions empower users to automate everyday business processes and improve productivity while eliminating the need for IT assistance.

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