Purchase to Pay Automation Case Study
Wente Family Estates

WHY DATASERV

When Wente Family Estates, the oldest, continuously operated family-owned winery in the United States, started utilizing DataServ's Purchase to Pay (P2P) solution to automate their accounts payable (AP) process in 2009, their ERP at the time didn't have the ability to match purchase orders (POs) to invoices so, consequently, they used very few POs. Wente turned to DataServ so that they could have control of their invoices and to easily get them routed and approved. "In the beginning, DataServ essentially served as our filing cabinet and approval source," says Sebby Hansen, Wente's Accounting Manager. However, her vision for what DataServ could do for her AP department was much grander than that.

Hansen wanted to take advantage of POs in Wente's AP process in order to better track orders, control spending, monitor profits, and manage cash flow. In September 2012, Wente switched ERP's and began using the popular JD Edwards system. JD Edwards' more robust interface integrated with DataServ's AutoVouch™, a pre ERP three-way match capability that uses optical character recognition (OCR) technology to automate the manual matching or "vouching" work in an organization's AP department. With AutoVouch™, all transactions that match automatically flow into an organization's ERP system for three-way match, and they are then scheduled to be paid. This was a perfect fit for Wente.

BENEFITS ACHIEVED

With DataServ's P2P solution in place, Wente no longer has to worry about invoices being lost on desks. Their AP processor now has greater visibility, which helps them with account accruals.

Wente has also improved its relationship with its various suppliers as a result of the enhanced visibility that DataServ has provided their AP staff. "Invoices are being paid more on time because they are not being lost on someone's desk," Hansen explains. "They are either emailing or faxing them and they are going right into DataServ, and it's not like 'Oh, I forgot I had one in my email – I forgot to print it out for you.' Invoices are paid on time more frequently, and they aren't getting lost."

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— Sebby Hansen
Accounting Manager
Wente Family Estates

Of course, an enormous benefit to greater visibility into payables obligations is a greater ability to track vendors that offer early payment discounts, and DataServ has made it much easier for Wente to ensure they take advantage of these discounts. "Because of the increased visibility DataServ provides and because invoices get into DataServ right away, we can pull the invoices out sooner," says Regina Jaderstrom, Wente's Corporate Controller. "We process checks once a week. Our main supplier offers a 10-day discount. We know if we see [an invoice] in there and our next check run is not for another seven days then we can easily manually vouch it so we don't lose the discount by waiting until the following check run."

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When it comes to month-end closing, Wente's AP department now has a significantly improved process to utilize, and Hansen gets excited when explaining how it all works.

"Danica [Bannister, Wente's AP administrator] literally reaches out to DataServ daily," she says. "DataServ provides us with two processing files a day in the three days prior to month's end and the three days after. Danica can easily provide invoices for accrual after AP closes. During the beginning and end of the month, DataServ indexes invoices quicker for us than the normal 48-hour timeframe."

In addition to the benefits of enhanced visibility, DataServ has allowed Wente to scale their business without increasing the size of their back office. "We haven't increased our back office head count at all," Hansen says. "Our AP manager has also taken on other responsibilities, such as P-Card [purchase card] management."

Wente used to face the cumbersome task of storing seven years' worth of paper invoices, but now that DataServ delivers 100 percent of their invoice data digitally, they don't have to pay for that storage space any longer. "We used to have a part-time file person that we don't have any more," Hansen quipped.

TRAINING AND SUPPORT

DataServ prides itself on providing the best training and support in the industry. This stands in stark contrast to on-premises AP automation providers, which place the burden on their client's IT staff for installation, configuration, support, and management of the software. DataServ, on the other hand, handles the initialization and offers real-time support and automatic upgrades, and we also train our clients' users on how to use the platform.

"Training has gone very well," Hansen says. "We had some training done in person and then some training done via a webinar, and it went over very well with the users."

She adds: "When it comes to support, DataServ is really responsive to our questions."

FINAL THOUGHTS

Wente has grown significantly since they aligned with DataServ in 2009, and DataServ has been able to support the Livermore, California-based winery's growing demands. Today, Wente processes a greater volume of invoices with the same number of people, and DataServ's P2P solution with AutoVouch™ has been the driving force behind their streamlined AP department.

"We don't hear any complaints about DataServ from our users – they like the ability to be able to go out and search and find things," Hansen says. "I think our team definitely has experienced significant time savings as a result of DataServ."

DataServ has numerous other client success stories in the form of additional case studies and testimonials. A short phone call or quick email is all it takes to find out more. Call us today at 877-700-DATA (3282), email us at info@DataServ.com or visit us at www.DataServ.com to get started.