

Accounts Payable Automation Case Study Wente Family Estates

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Founded more than 125 years ago, Wente Family Estates is the country's oldest, continuously operated family-owned winery. Today, the winery maintains its leadership role in California winegrowing under ownership and management by the fourth and fifth generations of the Wente family. Located just east of San Francisco in the historic Livermore Valley, Wente Family Estates is recognized as one of California's premier wine country destinations, featuring wine tasting, fine dining, concerts and championship golf.

The popularity of Wente wines are at an all-time high, driving 30% plus annual growth. As distribution of Wente wines continues to expand nationwide, the company wanted to keep costs under control while growing top line revenue. To expand volume without adding staff, Wente turned to DataServ's comprehensive SaaS Purchase to Pay (P2P) Solution including AutoVouch™ and Management Reporting options.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

To handle the increased volume of work due to expansion, Finance executives at Wente knew they needed to improve existing processes, and wanted to focus specifically on Accounts Payable. Decentralized, manual AP processing needed to be optimized. As a family-run company with a long history of adapting to change, the company saw the value of a structured change management system.

The initialization of DataServ's SaaS P2P Solution created one central repository, a uniform workflow process, document capture and retention policy providing a standardized platform for consolidating the Wente AP process. Goals of this project were to:

- Lower processing costs
- Reduce processing errors
- Increase visibility into the payables process
- Improve financial controls
- Eliminate lower value processes like manual keying of data

HOW DATASERV HELPED

To achieve Wente's vision, DataServ's P2P Solution provided Wente with the following capabilities for AP processing:

- SaaS OCR data capture from AP invoices
- Automated workflow processing
- Rapid Adoption Kit
- AutoVouch automated 2 and 3-way matching
- Management Reporting
- Management of retention and storage of AP documents

As Wente Family Estates continues to expand our wines nationally, we wanted to improve AP processing for all our North American operations while minimizing the need for IT resources and leveraging the capabilities of our AMS inventory system. DataServ's P2P solution allows us to do this quickly.

— Art Jeannet
CFO
Wente Family Estates

The process begins with AP invoices that are sent to DataServ through mail, email, or fax and then scanned, imported, and hosted online. The Digital Mailroom captures various data fields utilizing DataServ's powerful SaaS OCR Invoice Processing Machine, allowing Wente processors early visibility and tracking of invoices and liabilities. After the initial data capture is complete, documents with a purchase order assigned to them run through AutoVouch. Those that successfully vouch send data directly to Wente's financial system, AMS, for import. Those that do not vouch are presented to the AP department in queues for correction. Documents which require resolution of a problem/issue are assigned an exception status and may be routed anywhere Wente operates for approval and/or coding.

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All non-PO invoices are routed to buyers for coding automatically through the Wente approval matrix, via DataServ, utilizing existing email functionality. Query and audit trail functionality provide instant visibility to supervisors and management of all outstanding invoices at any stage of the process.

Working with Wente, DataServ tailored a detailed test plan and executed this plan as part of the project rollout.

DataServ also provided comprehensive training on all P2P capabilities to support this program. DataServ sent Client Support Reps to Wente's sites in Livermore, California to conduct hands-on training sessions. Additionally, DataServ provided full documentation to the users.

A LASTING SOLUTION

The central accounting unit is fully functional at Wente and the consolidation of redundant business operations has yielded a much improved workflow of documents and lower document processing costs, yielding positive impact on required staffing levels.

Accounts payable documents will be available in the DataServ system for the entire life cycle, per the Wente retention policy. Users are able to retrieve them by various criteria greatly improving audits, vendor support and budgeting. Once the documents are retrieved, users have the ability to annotate, print, export, or add pages to the document. Another benefit is realized at the end of each accounting period...no surprises! With DataServ, invoices are set up for payment in a much more timely fashion.

The environment benefits from this SaaS P2P solution also, thanks to the intense focus on recycling. Last year alone DataServ recycled over 176,000 pounds of paper, keeping all of those documents out of landfills, and Wente's documents are now included in this 'earth-wise' practice.

DataServ has many 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.