



Ascend Life Time Case Study

By the numbers

4000: Number of hours saved from manual tasks per year

Average of \$2: saved per invoice

How touchless processing saves Life Time time and money

Life Time has come a long way since the company's first athletic club opened in 1992. What started out as a single, 27,000-square-foot facility in Brooklyn Park, Minnesota has now grown into an extensive network of more than 160 athletic clubs in the United States and Canada.

While Life Time may be more well known for its fitness facilities, training programs, and events, the company's vision to create places that foster healthy ways of living has grown to include co-working spaces, country clubs, and resort-style Life Time Living communities. Despite this gradual growth in size and scope over the years, Life Time previously relied on manual data entry and paper invoices to pay suppliers. To do this, work was divided alphanumerically by vendor among vendor relations representatives and AP specialists, who manually typed information into Life Time's enterprise resource planning system.

"As clubs continued to grow and the volume of our invoices grew, we knew that some automation was needed." - Chris Stedman, Senior Accounts Payable Manager at Life Time

Pain Points (Before Ascend)

Life Time initially outsourced their paper invoice processing and manual data entry tasks before switching over to another one that could accept digital invoices by email and manually entered that information into Life Time's ERP system.

The problem, however, was that Life Time didn't have ongoing support for issues that popped up, much less a dedicated team who could work with them on a solution. Though Life Time employees used a support ticket system to report issues, many of the fixes were piecemeal solutions that didn't address broader problems.

There was also a relatively narrow window of time in which Life Time employees could report issues and share specific examples, since data was only archived for two weeks. Ultimately, this meant that many issues were never resolved.

"You can fix one problem, but it was just a repetitive and very costly vicious cycle for us." - Chris Stedman, Senior Accounts Payable Manager at Life Time, Inc.

Outsourcing accounts payable tasks also became quite expensive over time. One BPO company, for instance, charged Life Time for every purchase order line that was matched in an invoice.

This issue became more problematic as Life Time expanded and the volume of invoices increased. In fact, Life Time received more than 200,000 invoices from suppliers in 2020 alone.



ASCEND

“If you could imagine having a spa invoice with 100 lines that have all of the different hair products, nail polishes, and so forth that was ordered, processing all of that could be very, very costly.” - Chris Stedman, Senior Accounts Payable Manager at Life Time, Inc.



Solution

After attending Workday Rising in late 2018, Life Time began to evaluate Ascend as a potential AP automation solution in early 2019.

In the end, Ascend was selected as the best AP automation solution for the job, based on the highly adaptable functionality of Ascend's products and features. The fact that Ascend is a Workday-certified partner made the decision even easier.

Ascend was also able to implement a number of customized solutions to meet most of Life Time's unique needs.

“They listened to our pain points; It was nice to work through specific issues. They got to hear what was not working and see real time examples.” - Chris Stedman, Senior Accounts Payable Manager at Life Time, Inc.

When the time came to implement solutions, Ascend conducted step-by-step training for Life Time employees by showing them how the new system worked and how it was going to be different from what they were using.

“Having that real-time response has been incredible.” - DeAnna Onken, Accounts Payable Supervisor at Life Time, Inc.



ASCEND

Benefits

Apart from processing invoice data and entering it into Workday in real time, Ascend's integration with Workday Financial Management has eliminated other unnecessary and time-consuming tasks that were built into Life Time's AP workflows.

Before switching over to Ascend, digital invoices rejected by Workday's system were placed into a specific file by Life Time's AP team throughout any given day. Toward the end of the day, the AP team collectively revisited the file to manually review the rejected invoices, correct information, and enter everything into Workday.

Life Time's AP team now receives real-time error notifications from Ascend that specify what information must be corrected in an invoice before data can be automatically transferred into Workday.

This new workflow has also reduced the number of draft approvals that would oftentimes build up in Workday, since the team no longer needs to manually review every invoice and determine what went wrong.

"With Ascend and Workday working so closely together, updates are done automatically so it doesn't cause delays or backups." - Chris Stedman, Senior Accounts Payable Manager at Life Time, Inc.



ASCEND

Life Time also leverages worktags to automatically categorize invoices and enforce a policy that requires every supplier to include a purchase order number on an invoice. Once invoices are categorized, Life Time can export the data and contact suppliers who submitted invoices without a purchase order number.

“As our company continues to grow, our invoice volume is constantly increasing, so AP automation helps us to cut a lot of unnecessary costs and manual work.” - Chris Stedman, Senior Accounts Payable Manager at Life Time, Inc.

Conclusion

With Ascend’s help, Life Time now has a reliable, effective, and cost-efficient AP automation solution in place that seamlessly integrates with Workday Financial Management.

Ascend’s designation as a Workday-certified partner enables information to be processed, transferred, and updated in real time. As a result, Ascend was able to help Life Time — and its AP team — save approximately \$2 per invoice and 4,000 hours of manual work in the first 2 years.

The best part is that resolving issues no longer takes days or weeks. With a dedicated team at Ascend that’s ready to help at a moment’s notice, Life Time’s AP team no longer needs to worry about getting the help they need in time.