Lessons learned Automating Accounts Payable on Workday Financials

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Josh Kennedy and his team at Panera made the big decision to move from a manual process to a fully automated one with Ascend and Workday. Here are his top five tips to help you get there too:

1. **Involve a variety of people on your evaluation team**
   Include IT, management and invoice processors. You want a wide variety of perspectives. Especially those living in the day-to-day operation of the system. They often get left out of these types of evaluations and I have found that their input is often the most valuable.

2. **Don't skip the reference calls**
   Talk to customers that are currently using the product and push to talk to those that have a make-up that is similar to yours. Learn from them.

3. **Find a Partner, not just a vendor**
   We could have easily just purchased software, got it set up, configured to our process and moved on. But we found a partner that was willing to work with us on continually improving our processes and their offerings. We push each other to be better and I think we've all benefit from it.

4. **Stick to certified solutions**
   Find a partner that is going to stay up to date with your ERP and has deep experience with them.

5. **Prioritize (the right) experience**
   Make sure your partner has deep, relevant implementation experience on your ERP.

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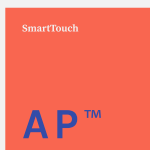
Panera uses SmartTouch AP™ from Ascend Software. SmartTouch uses Machine Learning and workflow automation to increase invoice processing capacity without increasing the size of the AP team.

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