



Sturdy Memorial automates Accounts Payable and saves 65%

110 year old exemplary regional healthcare system switches to Workday Financial and automates their Accounts Payable operations at the same time. AP team is able to shift from manually entering and tracking invoices to focus on more critical work.



Meet the Customer:

Sturdy Memorial has been a vital part of the healthcare ecosystem in southern Massachusetts and Rhode Island for more than 110 years. They are an independent, community-driven fully integrated system with 26 locations and a staff of more than 2,000 physicians, clinicians and team members. In 2022, they served over 315,000 people across all locations, admitted over 7,500 patients to their 125 bed primary hospital, and treated more than 50,000 patients in their emergency department. Even as they have evolved from a 15-bed hospital founded in 1913 to the multi-location fully integrated system today, they remain rooted in serving their community and expanding their offerings to be an essential part of their region.



Challenges in Healthcare Finance and AP:

Healthcare financial operations are inherently complicated. They must meet strict regulatory guidelines, handle the layered complexities of medical insurance, all while ensuring that the clinical side of the health system is able to perform the vital work of saving lives and improving health conditions. For many financial departments, investing in innovation and resources for their Accounts Payable team is not a top priority and yet, they recognize that the function is mission critical because of the impact on financial transparency, cost visibility, and overall financial efficiency.

Improving AP Efficiency at Sturdy Memorial:

Before Sturdy Memorial converted to Workday Financial, their Accounts Payable department was like roughly 80% of AP departments around the world: reliant on manual efforts for every step of the process. From entering every invoice into their system, to matching it with a PO, to routing, tracking, paying, and reconciling the invoice, they found they were touching every invoice an average of 4 times. Each of these touches took time, introduced the potential for human error, and required additional manual work to fix any error.

Top Challenges:

- Expanding healthcare system
- Increasing financial complexity
- Workload expanding beyond size and scope
- Too many manual processes and errors



In addition, they had to deal with many little frustrations: retyping incorrect invoices, tracking down lost documents, and handling the pressure to reconcile accounts at the end of their reporting periods.

As Memorial's health system expanded from one hospital to 26 locations, financial operations became even more complex. They realized their AP workload was going to outgrow the size and scope of their team. They also saw that a rapidly growing workload with so many manual processes could lead to high rates of error and limit their ability to get the level of visibility, control, and efficiency they needed across their whole financial operation.

When Sturdy Memorial moved to Workday Financial, they knew it was the perfect time to also automate their Accounts Payable and streamline their workflows. Automation would enable the team to shift from spending so much time manually entering and tracking invoices to increasingly important tasks like reporting, analytics, and quality control.

Action:

As the organization went through the process of onboarding Workday Financial, they considered a range of Accounts Payable automation options, but believed that the ERP's native module lacked some of the robust offerings needed to meet their AP goals. They conducted a side-by-side evaluation of the partners certified by Workday. Ascend was the logical choice because of their comprehensive technology platform, seamless fit with Workday Financial, and the success they had seen in implementing straight through, or "touchless processing" for more than 60% of the invoice volume with other customers.

Ascend also stood out because of their team. They understood their software and Workday Financial, but their people were also deeply versed in the entire ecosystem of Accounts Payable. This expertise was apparent in both the Ascend AP platform and the service from Ascend. The Sturdy team was impressed by the fact that Ascend had more than two decades of experience and a commitment to evolving to meet and even anticipate their customers' needs.

Ascend Benefits



**Powerful
Recognition
System**



**Industry Leading
Touchless
Automation**



**Real Time
Workday
Integration**



**Deep
Expertise and
Partnership**

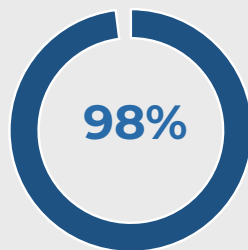


Results:

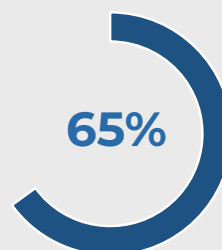
Minimizing manual work, streamlining process, and reducing errors were key elements of what Sturdy was seeking and they reached those goals with the Ascend implementation. One of the first elements of the Ascend platform Sturdy implemented was invoice scanning (or recognition) using Ascend's combination of automated invoice technologies. Very quickly, they were able to achieve 98% of their PO and non-PO invoices being scanned and auto populated into Workday, which immediately reduced manual work and error rates. From there, they worked with the Ascend team to simplify their process and they utilized other parts of the Ascend platform to for routing, tracking, approving, and ensuring payment of their invoices. Within weeks, they were able to achieve touchless processing for 65% of their invoices.

"It's much easier now and it saves us time to work on other things because Ascend auto populates everything so we don't have to waste time."

Genny Acosta, Lead Accounts Payable Analyst



**Automated
invoice entry**



**Touchless
processing**

All of these improvements enabled Sturdy to work more efficiently and free up their AP team to focus on a number of more critical issues like managing complex exceptions, reporting costs in real-time, and delivering analytics for the finance team.

Customer Success:

While they set about choosing a partner to automate their AP processes, Sturdy was thrilled to discover that the Ascend team brought an important human intelligence touch to the relationship. Ascend did not just set up the software, they worked closely with the Sturdy team to understand their entire AP process to identify ways to optimize it. Details like creating visual aids for document recognition are examples of how the Ascend team ensured success for the whole project.

Finally, Ascend trained the Sturdy team on the platform, on Workday, and on their improved processes. The Sturdy accounts payable department still meets with Ascend's customer success team monthly to continue optimizing the software and their processes. Knowing that they have a partner who is always available has enabled the Sturdy team continue to thrive.

Conclusion:

Shifting to Workday was a major event for all of Sturdy Memorial, including the Accounts Payable department. Integrating Ascend's AP automation platform into Workday and into their processes allowed Sturdy to streamline their processes, scope the work to match the size of the team, and reduce human error. With Ascend's platform, Sturdy reduced the manual effort of keying in every invoice by automatically importing 98% of their invoices into Workday and by converting 65% of their whole invoice volume to touchless processing. Beyond the automation, the human touch of Ascend's team ensured that the whole project was a success.



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