

TRANSFORMATION STORY

Heavy Equipment Distributor *Bulldozes Finance Burden* With RPA and Interim Support

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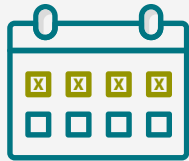
When explosive growth created financial chaos, Armanino stepped in with an interim controller, helped onboard new leadership and automated the monthly close to keep the company accelerating.

Reduction in manual labor time



REDUCING MANUAL LABOR

By 14 Hours per Month



MONTHLY CLOSE DECREASE

From 15 Days to 4 Days

The Customer

A leading heavy equipment distribution network in the United States, serving customers from locations coast-to-coast.

The Problem

Fast growth, multiple mergers, top leadership changes and dozens of separate bank accounts created chaos and made bank reconciliation and monthly closing slow and nerve-wracking for decision-makers.

The Solve

The company enlisted Armanino's finance experts to fill leadership gaps, support a new controller and deploy robotic process automation (RPA) to synthesize bank and check reconciliation.

The Outcome

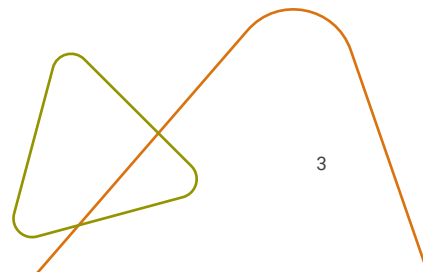
The new controller had a trusted ally as he steered the finance team, while RPA cut 14 hours of manual monthly labor, delivering reliable data to fuel timely business decisions and shortening the close by 11 days.

Sudden Growth Digs Up Dirt on Ugly Manual Processes

Rapid expansion creates disruption; with immediate revenue at stake, companies must adapt to change as quickly as they can. But doing so without support can be next to impossible.

This [distribution network](#) was born out of three companies that merged into one with the goal of becoming the largest heavy equipment distribution network in the United States. Merging three large distributors meant managing many locations, each with its own bank account, reporting and processes. It also created a leadership vacuum in the corporate finance group – the company needed a controller who would stay.

The distributors couldn't pause sales while they waited for all the corporate details to get ironed out. Meanwhile the construction industry was burgeoning, spiking demand for heavy equipment sales and service. Company leaders had a very narrow window to hire and onboard a controller and synthesize finance across the business before it suffered negative financial impacts. Having worked with Armanino before, they knew where to turn for support.



Missing Controller Jeopardizes Ability to Steer Forward

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Controller

The company had assigned a controller to support its CFO, but that person decided the role was not the right fit and took another position internally. The company then hired another controller, who backed out before starting. Unable to fill the role as fast as needed, the company leaders enlisted Armanino’s [CFO Consulting & Advisory](#) team — requesting an [interim controller](#) to fill the immediate leadership gap and keep them up and running. This gave the company time to conduct a more thorough search for a permanent hire.

The interim controller initially spent three weeks onsite with the team to evaluate the state of their finance function, provide guidance on team structure and ascertain how to streamline processes. Then, the company brought on a new permanent controller. The team was still short a person, so the new controller requested that Armanino’s interim controller remain on board while he got up to speed.

“Armanino was vital in helping us, particularly to me as they already had the relationship with the staff, knew what the issues were and could advise on how to address them,” says the controller.

Bank Accounts Too Gnarly to Excavate

One of the most glaring problems was bank reconciliation. The company's corporate entity had 17 different bank accounts, and each of the locations had accounts as well. The three merged businesses came with their own processes and reporting methods, and nothing had been integrated. The manual labor required to do bank reconciliation at the end of the month took up to 15 days — an intolerable number under the controller's standards.

"There were a lot of things recorded wrong, a lot in the wrong bank accounts," the controller explains. "It was absolute chaos. We were taking days to manually sort through thousands of transactions."

The long monthly close had detrimental effects on the business. "Because we took so long, dealers couldn't trust that they had the money in the accounts to make purchases," the controller says. "Everyone was waiting on the data, and if something didn't reconcile, we had to expense it out. There was a lot of apprehension around this. The company needed to know that when we said we were done, we were done, and the numbers were trustworthy."

With a stressed team and not enough time to streamline the close, the controller consulted with Armanino's interim controller, who asked her [Strategy and Transformation](#) colleagues to join the discussion to provide clarity and confidence. The consensus? Automate.

Finance Expertise Accelerates RPA Success

“Sometimes, you think implementation folks aren’t truly financial people, but Armanino understands finance. They took the time to grasp the nuances of our business and figured out what works best for us.”

Controller

Armanino’s Strategy and Transformation experts help define success criteria that matters to companies. This includes identifying where automation can improve productivity, increase efficiency and alleviate rote, manual labor – freeing employees to focus on higher-value work.

Robotic process automation (RPA) involves using artificial intelligence and machine learning to perform tasks faster and with greater accuracy than humans. Bank reconciliation is a perfect example of an area where RPA can drive significant impact.

“Armanino suggested RPA, and I had experience with it at another job. It wasn’t at all scary to me. I remembered the time it saved and gave Armanino the green light,” says the controller.

RPA requires setting up rules that guide the automation in its performance. Companies typically find that having an experienced team to support their RPA implementation really pays off.

“You can purchase RPA, but the differentiating factor is the implementation. That’s where Armanino really shined,” says the controller. “Sometimes, you think implementation folks aren’t truly financial people, but Armanino understands finance. They took the time to grasp the nuances of our business and figured out what works best for us.”

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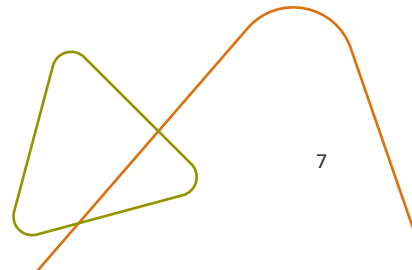
Controller

RPA follows rules with 100% accuracy, meaning the rules need to be right to generate intended outcomes. Understanding the nuances ensures that every rule required gets included in the setup process. This may involve adding rules for unique situations, such as codes to identify where certain machine sales come from across the network.

Part of the company’s RPA implementation was taking a complex reconciliation nesting structure from multiple distributor accounts and making sure the expenses were allocated properly

for each location. Armanino RPA experts spent significant time observing and learning about the company’s manual processes. There were nuances with each bank and its corresponding data outputs. The team quickly identified the best way to configure the RPA process.

“It was a relief to listen to Armanino’s questions because I knew that they truly understood what we were dealing with,” says the controller. “It meant I could communicate to management that this was going to really make a difference, deliver time savings and allow us to close faster with real-time information.”

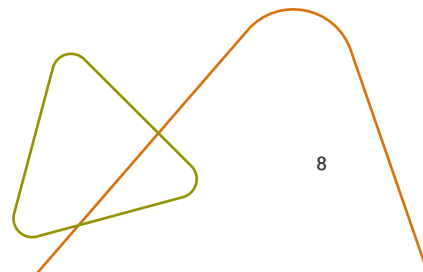


Transformation No Longer a Heavy Load

The company recently decided to change its primary corporate bank, which will require changing the rules in the RPA process. The controller reached out to Armanino, and they immediately jumped on a discovery call for this new corporate bank account. It requires new accounts, checks, logins, vendor autopay and bank reconciliation, but the controller can breathe easy.

“Armanino assured me they could make the RPA changes with very little downtime,” says the controller. “It was a relief to know I didn’t have to worry about it. Armanino feels like an extension of my team.”

The monthly close has plummeted from 15 days down to four days. The company estimates it has saved an average of 14 hours of manual labor per month by using RPA. Offloading manual work from the finance team has improved the employee experience, and Armanino ensures they get their data in the same report format they used previously, so management does not need to adopt new reporting formats.



“As a leader, Armanino gives you the confidence to step out and say, ‘I want to do this,’ and you have someone else to say if it will work or what’s possible. That’s invaluable to me.”

Controller

The company also automated its check reconciliation process and plans to implement RPA in other areas of finance. The controller knows he can count on Armanino for this and other guidance to help accelerate the company’s success.

“After you finish an engagement with Armanino, your relationship isn’t over. They follow up and collaborate. It’s an ongoing, supportive relationship and the team is open and warm, which helps us feel comfortable asking questions,” says the controller. “As a leader, Armanino gives you the confidence to step out and say, ‘I want to do this,’ and you have someone else to say if it will work or what’s possible. That’s invaluable to me.”

Ready to Reimagine Your Business Outcomes?

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