CABMA

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This CABMA Corner Article was written in a collaborative effort by several members of the Business Office/Financial Services athletics staff at UNLV.

Innovation, innovation, innovation. Athletics directors are calling for it. Campus leaders are hounding for it. However, what does it mean? To make a process faster, automate manual work? Athletics business officers have the unique advantage to see through a lens between campus policy and sport operations. We connect the needs of the campus with the ever-growing needs of coaches, auxiliary staff, and support units. At the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV), the business office embraced the opportunity to transform a broken invoicing system. We leveraged our existing in-house technology with our current ERP system to connect the needs of the campus and created a simplified invoice system for our users.

Understand the Real Problem
The first step in solving a problem is recognizing there is one. As technology continues to evolve, it's easy to jump to solutions when dealing with a process improvement. Technology can be useful for many problems, however without a precise project plan and implementation, your new process can become a tougher headache than before. We established our goals with technology prior to solving the issue, and identified key areas of the process where technology could be leveraged and what was necessary for our end users.

The Project
At UNLV, we have the rare opportunity to service not only athletics but our auxiliary event center. The business demands can be quite daunting as we constantly navigate between game contracts and team travel to promoter payments and event production. With the constant inflow and outflow of funds, we needed to improve our outdated invoicing system. We identified our current ERP system needs, our user preferences, and business office requirements, a three-part process that helped us achieve the much-needed efficiencies we were lacking with invoicing.

Leverage Your Existing Technology, then Elevate
As we connected with users and our developers, we discovered an existing payroll process that utilized many features we wanted to include in the new invoicing system. These features included: user requests, reviewing capabilities, and automated email functions. This enabled us to utilize current functionality, but additionally elevate in areas that resonated with our end users. Overall, the end process connected our internal web servers, SQL database, our ERP System (Workday®), Adobe, and email servers.

Keys to Success
Managing a project of this scope doesn't come without leadership buy-in. We met with leadership early to showcase the key highlights and advantages for the success of the project. Identify the right people for the project team. It may be uncomfortable leaving people out, but it can also delay and prolong a project when too many opinions or agendas are in the room. Recognize the key players and decision makers for the long-term success of the project.

Technology will only continue to advance in many business areas. The growing demand for artificial intelligence, robotic process automation, and optical character recognition will continue to make processes faster and more efficient. When you find a system is antiquated, do not hesitate to ask questions; such queries will help to transform your broken processes.

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