

CASE STUDY: **CREATIVE ASSOCIATES INTERNATIONAL**

CREATIVE ASSOCIATES INTEGRATES TIME TRACKING, EXPENSE REPORTING & MICROSOFT DYNAMICS TO STREAMLINE COMPLIANCE COMPLEXITIES



THE CHALLENGE

Managing compliance complexities can be burdensome for organizations like Creative Associates International, which has undertaken projects in more than 85 countries and has a professional staff of over 1,000 people around the world.

To finance its vital work providing on-the-ground development services and forging partnerships to deliver sustainable solutions to global challenges, Creative Associates works with funding partners like USAID, an international development agency of the U.S. government, which has strict guidelines for reporting time and expenses. As a result, Creative Associates is regularly audited, which requires the organization to provide detailed time and expense records by project and be able to correlate these records with project funding sources.



HIGHLIGHTS

1,000+
Employees worldwide

85
countries with projects

CHALLENGES

Strict reporting
guidelines from funders

Regularly audited

Need for automation



THE SOLUTION: COMBINING TIME TRACKING & EXPENSE REPORTING

To get a grip on compliance issues and improve its accounting process, Creative Associates International relies on DATABASICS time tracking and expense reporting applications, which have streamlined critical workflows and enabled the organization to focus more on its international development projects and less on administrative tasks.

Gail Jones-Nemeth, Financial Systems Analyst with Creative Associates, says the organization evaluated several solutions but felt they were either too difficult to use, or didn't integrate well with Microsoft Dynamics SL, its accounting software. "DATABASICS won hands-down. The key thing that the DATABASICS timesheet and expense applications provide us is a workflow. We wanted to be able to capture, store and retrieve documentation electronically, so when we get audited, all of that documentation is immediately accessible. Having time and expenses together has been a really big success for us."

“With DATABASICS, it's really easy to understand what's going on with the integration and how it works.”

GAIL JONES-NEMETH | FINANCIAL SYSTEMS ANALYST AT CREATIVE ASSOCIATES



THE IMPLEMENTATION & INTEGRATION

DATABASICS' flexibility allows Creative Associates to configure the application for internal processes. "We wanted it to run in a more automated way, so we worked with DATABASICS to setup a process to push everything automatically," says Jones-Nemeth. "For the most part, I don't even think about what things are pushing up to DATABASICS because it's all automated." While DATABASICS allows for custom reporting, it is so intuitive that the organization assembles reports using the application's menus.

DATABASICS was easy to implement because the integrations Creative Associates set up worked for time and expense reporting, so the organization didn't need to configure two different systems. On the expense side, DATABASICS integrates with Dynamics SL to enable direct deposit payments for expenses. For timesheets, DATABASICS integrates with UKG Pro Employee Pay for payroll processing.

DATABASICS' delivery model is another attractive feature for Creative Associates. "Because it's a cloud-based application, I don't have to do any of the maintenance of the databases," says Jones-Nemeth. "I delegate the small amount of administration to super users." With database administration handled behind the scenes with DATABASICS, she says, "Minimal support is ever needed for the application."

TO SIMPLIFY ITS TIME AND EXPENSE SYSTEMS, CREATIVE ASSOCIATES INTERNATIONAL WAS LOOKING FOR:

A comprehensive time, expense, and leave management solution that integrates with Dynamics SL & UKG Pro

A configurable back-end that doesn't require custom development

A provided currency feed and government per-diem setup

Simplicity for the user

Integration capability with existing company credit card provider



THE RESULTS

One of the biggest benefits of DATABASICS is enabling streamlined compliance with requirements from funding partners. "What DATABASICS brings to the party is its ability to provide breakdowns by project, by task and other time sheet components, which are absolutely required in order to meet requirements for USAID projects for government contracts. Without that, I think we would be hard pressed to be able to provide good reporting. It's been an extremely important thing for us to have," says Jones-Nemeth.

During the pandemic, Creative Associates has focused on launching timesheet tracking in their field offices. This capability now operates in three new countries so far and has been well received. There are project plans to continue implementing it other countries.

“DATABASICS is stellar to work with. They know what they're doing. They're very competent and very patient with me—very capable of handling whatever I throw at them. When we ask them to do things, they do it. When we call them with a problem, they fix it. It's been a very pleasant relationship. I can't say enough about how much I respect their support.”

GAIL JONES-NEMETH | FINANCIAL SYSTEMS ANALYST AT CREATIVE ASSOCIATES

THE ONGOING SUPPORT

Adopting a new application isn't always easy, especially if it's mission-critical. But DATABASICS smoothed the way for Creative Associates with attentive support.

Through the years, Creative Associates has continued to add functionality to their DATABASICS implementation as their business requirements change or special situations arise. "We've always been able to rely on innovative thinking from our DATABASICS consultant to allow us to properly add additional features," says Jones-Nemeth.

Jones-Nemeth also offers sage advice to organizations considering DATABASICS. "Fully understand DATABASICS' capabilities, get the data migration right and be absolutely sure before you turn it on that the integrations are working perfectly." **Because when you get it right, she says, "It just works."**





ABOUT CREATIVE ASSOCIATES INTERNATIONAL

Since its founding in 1977 by four enterprising women, Creative Associates International has been a results-driven organization. Creative Associates provides outstanding, on-the-ground development services and forges partnerships to deliver sustainable solutions to global challenges. Its experts focus on building inclusive educational systems, transitioning communities from conflict to peace, developing sustainable economic growth, engaging youth, promoting transparent elections and more. Creative Associates is recognized for its ability to quickly adapt and excel in conflict and post-conflict environments.

CREATIVEASSOCIATESINTERNATIONAL.COM

ABOUT DATABASICS

DATABASICS is driven to meet the most demanding time and expense management challenges for organizations throughout the world with a combination of deep expertise, next-gen technology, and a focus on the unique needs of each customer. Powered by decades of experience, DATABASICS is in the business of solving time and expense problems with solutions that are the right choice for today and easily adapt to the uncertainties of tomorrow. Time and expense are better together, which is why DATABASICS addresses these two critical business processes with absolute ease in one solution.

DATA-BASICS.COM