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MDI's BPO solution drives productivity, reduces risk for Fortune 500 firm

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– Tammie Coley, Director of Accounting, Cox Communications

The Client

Cox Communications (Cox), a Fortune 500 company, is a multi-service broadband communications and entertainment company with more than six million total customers and 20,000 employees. The third-largest cable provider in the nation, Cox offers an array of advanced digital video, high-speed Internet and telephony services over its own nationwide IP network.

The Challenge

As its client base and product offerings increased, so did the need for Cox to streamline and automate fixed asset management processes to drive business efficiencies, maintain regulatory compliance and control costs. Among the communications leader's challenges:

- Manual account reconciliation, data processing and analytical procedures required substantial staff hours and had the potential for increased error rates.
- Issues related to capital lease reconciliations, construction-in-process reconciliations, capital overhead rates, asset capitalization, asset disposal and inventory allocations needed to be addressed and resolved.

With internal staff working at full capacity, Cox lacked the resources needed to analyze existing operations and develop a detailed roadmap for optimizing and automating them. However, procuring consultants with the right combination of accounting and financial system application expertise was proving to be difficult.

The Solution

MDI Finance & Accounting (MDI), a professional services firm providing senior-level talent and project-oriented solutions,

met with Cox and proposed a solution that included experienced accounting professionals with strong database knowledge. Tammie Coley, director of accounting at Cox, was immediately impressed. "They knew how important it is for accounting professionals today to have a hybrid of accounting and technical skills," Coley said. "I was having a difficult time finding people with both skill sets."

Soon after delivering one consultant with the precise blend of skills Cox sought, MDI provided the company with five additional accounting, technical and cross-functional consultants to support its process optimization and account reconciliation initiatives. Working collaboratively with the client's internal team, MDI's experts helped to analyze Cox's existing processes and applications and rectify procedural gaps, streamline processes and automate labor-intensive operations. In three short months, the team implemented solutions that:

- Automated manual reconciliation activities by generating invoice, general ledger (GL) asset, and GL liability comparisons by system and company
- Automated data entry for capital lease additions and disposals by establishing an Access database and interfacing it with Oracle
- Increased the frequency of reconciliations from quarterly to monthly and reduced processing time
- Reduced cycle time and increased accuracy by automating translation and minimizing manual spreadsheet population

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The Results

Today, Cox Communications' asset management operations are more efficient, reliable and scalable than ever, allowing the company to respond faster to changes in the dynamic marketplace. According to Cox's estimates, the automated workflows, streamlined reconciliation processes and e-reporting capabilities will save approximately 200 staff days annually and considerably reduce the risk of data inaccuracy. These efficiency improvements have also helped maximize the contributions of internal resources now able to focus on more value-added functions such as analytical review and analysis.

Based on MDI's proven abilities and dedicated oversight, Cox again turned to MDI for assistance on a major software implementation project involving the integration and automation of 44 accounts that were each being manually reconciled at 18 locations. "I specifically called MDI on this project because of the quality of their consultants and the fact that they manage their own contractors. They get to know our needs and stay on top of their consultants, making sure they are on track and doing what they were engaged to do," concluded Coley. "MDI consistently delivers quality resources."



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