United Real Estate Group

Closing the Books Faster With Automation

Case Study Snapshot

United Real Estate Group introduced automation to streamline accounting processes. Now they're gaining back about 10 days per month for higher-value activities.

The Situation

United Real Estate Group's growth has been exponential—growing from approximately 150 agents to 22,000 over the last 12 years. Their accounting processes weren't keeping up with their expansion. Spending less time in spreadsheets was a top priority.

The Solution

United Real Estate Group's leadership selected Forvis Mazars professionals to assist with building a custom automation solution to streamline data management and financial reporting. Using a set of automation tools, new workflows are drastically reducing manual effort and enhancing data integrity.

The Benefits

Since introducing automated workflows, office accounting teams are expediting their monthly close processes, redirecting their efforts toward value-added tasks, and helping to improve overall productivity.

"Working with Forvis Mazars, United Real Estate has fully integrated our Bullseye™ Agent Productivity Platform with our transaction processing systems and back-office ERP solution. This integration has increased United's ability to forecast, predict, and manage our businesses for both the benefit of the home office and our brokers and field management."

– **David Dickey**, United Chief Technology Officer

The Full Story

[United Real Estate Group](#) introduced automation to streamline accounting processes. Now they're gaining back about 10 days per month for higher-value activities. Explore how they achieved this accomplishment with assistance from the Insights & Automation team at Forvis Mazars.

Closing the books, or preparing monthly and annual financial statements, often is a labor-intensive activity for many organizations. Being in the real estate industry, United Real Estate Group felt the resource crunch when it came to reporting monthly real estate transactions, including agent net revenue statistics.

United Real Estate and its sister company, United Country Real Estate, are leading sellers of residential properties, land, and country and lifestyle properties throughout the United States as well as Canada, Panama, Costa Rica, Colombia, Mexico, and Australia. Headquartered in Dallas and Kansas City, Mo., the organizations operate over 630 offices.

Yet only 10 years ago, their operations looked much different. The organization's growth has been outstanding.

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"In roughly 12 years' time, United has grown from having about 150 agents to now approximately 22,000 agents," said Robyn Lehmann, data and systems analyst at United. "Our accounting processes weren't keeping up with our growth. There was just too much inefficient spreadsheet activity. We needed more integration, accuracy, and efficiency."

History & Business Need

United uses a system called Paperless Pipeline, a real estate transaction management software, at many of its offices. Agents enter their transaction information, from listing agreements all the way through closing, in this system.

Then at the end of each month, United Real Estate's accounting professionals would manually export transaction data from Paperless Pipeline, scrub and reformat the data in Excel, and then import the Excel data into Sage Intacct, their ERP system.

As an example of how laborious this process could be, their home office was completing this process manually for approximately 5,000 transactions per month. The amount of transaction data was becoming too large to manage in spreadsheets.

In addition, often only total amounts, not individual transaction amounts, were reported because the spreadsheet data could be prone to errors. Accurate and timely data management is crucial in the industry for financial reporting and adherence to revenue recognition standards.

Implementation & Integration

United's leadership sought out a better way to connect transaction data from Paperless Pipeline to Sage Intacct.

The Full Story, continued

They chose Forvis Mazars to help build an integration solution between Paperless Pipeline and Sage Intacct using Zapier, a tool that can integrate web applications and automate workflows.

Forvis Mazars professionals used Microsoft Azure Logic Apps enterprise integration capabilities to automatically trigger and create complex and detailed financial transactions in Sage Intacct. Other automated workflows built for this project include email alerts for transactions that fail to be created in the ERP system and automatic invoice processing—logic was applied to automatically invoice all transactions closed in the previous month.

The full automation project features:

Webhook Integration: Azure Logic Apps utilizes webhooks to establish a connection with Zapier and Paperless Pipeline. The webhooks trigger the automated extraction of transaction data at defined intervals, assisting with accurate and consistent data capture.

Automated Data Mapping: Extracted data is mapped to align with the ERP system's structure.

Azure Key Vault Integration: Azure Key Vault is used for secure storage and management of sensitive information and connection strings, fortifying data security.

Drill-Through Capability: With the improved data transfer, reports in Sage Intacct offer drill-through capability—down to individual transaction information.

The Results

"As our CEO has mentioned, the automation has been 'outstanding'," said Lehmann. "We're the kind of company that continually tries to make things better, and Ryan Kauzlick and the team at Forvis Mazars have helped us considerably. So far, everything we've asked about, they've been able to deliver upon and do more than expected. It's been great working with Forvis Mazars."

Since implementation, United is beginning to see substantial benefits, including:

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The Full Story, continued

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– **Robyn Lehmann**, United Data and Systems Analyst

Faster Close Times: Using this custom automation solution, their home office is expediting monthly close processes with a goal of reducing data delivery from 10 days to five days.

Revitalized Resource Allocation: By significantly reducing manual data entry, employees are redirecting their efforts toward value-added tasks and helping to improve overall productivity.

Enhanced Data Quality: Automation is helping reduce errors associated with manual data entry and strengthening data integrity and audit readiness. ERP drill-through capability is empowering users to delve into individual transaction specifics and gain data-driven insights.

Scalability & Flexibility: The custom automation solution is designed to accommodate the company's growth trajectory and adapt to changing transaction volumes and evolving business demands.

In conclusion, United Real Estate Group is significantly reducing the time required to close the books each month. This innovative approach using automation not only amplifies operational efficiency, but also helps position the organization for sustainable growth within the dynamic real estate industry.

Business Technology Services at Forvis Mazars can help support digital transformation across your organization with enterprise resource planning (ERP) and customer relationship management (CRM) platform analysis, design, implementation, upgrade, training, and support services. In addition, our Insights & Automation services include business intelligence (BI) and robotic process automation (RPA) assessments, implementations, and training.

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