

Analyze Case Study:

Resolving expense claim process issues



Executive summary

A client within the Professional Services industry approached Analyze Consulting to assist them in resolving their expense claim process issues. Analyze Consulting successfully assisted the client by identifying the expense claim process gaps, performing business analysis activities, and assisting with the implementation of a new expense claim system to help alleviate some of the identified gaps.

Background

The client had developed an expense claim system in 2014 as an interim solution to manage expense claims. However, the temporary solution soon turned into a permanent solution and was proving to be more of a problem than a solution. As we investigated, we became aware of several issues. The business requirements for the system were not taken into consideration, nor formally documented. The workflow within the system was not working. The client could not trace expense claims through the system without manual intervention from IT Support. Lastly, the system did not provide reports to manage expense claims.

Key business problems



Poor data visibility and accuracy



Expense claim reimbursement delays



No exception reporting



Lack of expense claim traceability



No integration with the existing Finance system

These issues led to delayed expense payments and reduced customer satisfaction. As a result, we identified an opportunity to streamline the expense claim process and introduce a system that would address some of the underlying issues. We applied our expertise in business analysis and process analysis to formalise the business and process requirements. We defined the necessary actions to be taken and guided the implementation of the expense claim system to reduce inefficiencies and improve the turnaround time of the expense claim payments.

Key challenges

The expense claim process and system had several issues such as:

1. **Poor data visibility and accuracy**

Using the existing system to record, track and predict travel costs and expenses, left the Finance department struggling to ensure data accuracy and to provide senior management with accurate and up-to-date reports. Reporting and insights are essential for understanding how the firm's expense budget is being spent and accounted for. Yet with their existing process and system, such transparency was simply unavailable.

2. **Expense claim reimbursement delays**

Receipts that were meant to be processed months ago suddenly surfaced, and it was often a hassle for the Finance department to deal with, especially after year-end. These often had to be billed back to a client. This led to increased employee dissatisfaction as late expense claim submissions led to delays in employee reimbursement, so everyone was left out of pocket.

3. **No exception reporting**

The Finance department often had to go through a stringent manual process to identify anomalies within the expense claim data because there was no way to track whether abnormalities were atypical to their regular pattern.

4. **Lack of expense claim traceability**

The submitted expense claims were often lost and could not be traced without manual intervention from the IT Support team.

5. **No integration with the existing Finance system**

The existing expense claim system was not integrated with the current finance system. Hence, the data from the expense claim system had to be manually captured into the finance system. This led to a delay in the expense claim payments.

Our approach

Analyze Consulting developed a business analysis (BA) approach that focused on attaining the necessary expense claim solution requirements. This process included:

- Business analysis planning and monitoring
- Business process analysis and improvement
- Requirements elicitation and collaboration
- Requirements lifecycle management
- Requirements analysis and design
- Test management

Furthermore, Analyze assisted with other critical tasks, which included:

- Solution system design
- Training and operationalisation

These activities led to the successful implementation of the expense claim system.



Project outcome

Analyze Consulting successfully helped the organisation by:

- Assessing the root cause of the expense claim system discrepancies
- Documenting the current state (as-is) and future state (to-be) processes
- Assisting the Procurement Manager with the introduction of an RFP process within the firm
- Gathering expense claim requirements that complied with industry best practices
- Assisting with the testing and implementation of the expense claim system
- Introducing and creating formal reports and dashboards for better management reporting (which were not available before)
- Facilitating training and creating quick reference guides and user manuals to encourage product adoption
- Providing recommendations



Next steps

After handover, we ensured that the client would be able to:

- Implement the recommendations given, resulting in a more efficient process
- Provide more accurate reports and information to senior management and auditors
- Reimburse employees in a shorter space of time due to the introduction of the payment voucher process and payment reports
- Follow up on discrepancies due to the introduction of an exception report and audit report
- Track the status of all expense claims (which was unavailable before the introduction of the new expense claim solution)
- Reduce the cost of expense claim processing as some inefficiencies within the expense claim process were eliminated

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