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Expense Control - Get the Details Quick and Easy

Save analysis time, get the details behind the numbers the easy way

The value of every available resource we have is improved when mixed with time saving processes and procedures

Most will agree that our most valuable commodity is time. Our time is limited and without time everything else is useless. The thing is the value of every available resource we have is improved when mixed with time saving processes and procedures.

When it comes to tools used to mix time with other resources, making them more valuable we certainly live in a great age. We have the technology to get things done quicker and better.

For example, take a look at the life blood of business, the communication of information. Has it ever been easier to communicate? Cell phones are like belly buttons and almost any information is available on the internet as quick as it takes to fill a computer screen with data. "Having a meeting" with someone is as easy as pulling the phone out of your pocket and putting valuable data on a colleagues desktop is easy as pushing a button.

Saving a deal over the cell phone while having lunch is so common these days we have accepted it as normal and setting in my office looking at a client's spreadsheet only moments after he called for my analysis of his numbers is no big deal even though his dealership is two thousand miles away.

There is a downside of course. Many believe that cell phones and internet access are directly responsible for a decline in accepted standards for social behavior. I can't remember the last time I had a meeting with someone when we were not interrupted by the cell phone (mine or theirs) and some of the emails I get are, well, way past interesting. Anyway I believe that all social rules are arbitrary and I don't think people are being rude intentionally it is just that our relationship to information has changed. With the technology available to easily communicate on demand it is easy to be demanding.

What does this have to do with expense control?

I still encounter top level managers who are held hostage to the old low-tech method of getting answers to their exception analysis questions. That is they call their controller and say “why is my advertising expense so high?” This example is what I call a low quality question guaranteed to produce a low quality answer. Please don’t misunderstand. This method will, eventually get you the answer you want but it just takes too much time (both yours and your controller’s).

A better way is to punch the account number into your DMS’s online query feature and get the details that allow you to ask a more specific, high quality question. That is if after looking at the details you still have a question. So, instead of asking “why is my advertising expense so high” after looking at the results of your query you may ask “way do we have an expense for Makegood advertising company for a campaign that was two months ago?”

Most DMS’s provide for detail query of accounting records so if your DMS is not included in this article check with your accounting people for instructions on how to use this most valuable feature.

After all we will suffer the downside effects of our “information age” why not get on board and start saving the one resource that can not be replaced; time.

For ADAM System Users

From the ACCR menu bar select Inquires, Inquire posting by date. Enter the requested information, using your mouse or tab key to move between fields. Press the Inquire button to produce the screen listing the transactions related to your inquiry specifications. Select the print command button to print the information. *Submitted by Orlando Rodriguez of ADAM Systems*

For ADP Users

Use AGRI to access the Account Detail option to display account detail by journal and reference. Account Detail provides options that allow you to set the sorting order, to include or suppress detail, and to include or exclude GL work in process (GL-WIP). You can also use the Account Detail option, sorted by control. This is helpful when a control is posted to only one or two accounts. Use F9 to search the display for the control. From the Account Detail display, you can access the other AGRI entry screens such as Control Detail entry screen F7, Document Detail entry screen F8, Account Balances entry screen SF6, Ledger Balances entry screen SF7, History Balances entry screen SF8. *Submitted by Jim Skeans of Jim Skeans Consulting Group LLC*

For ARG Users

With Executive Assistant (EA) it is easy to write a simple query to detail expense accounts and export the information to an Excel spreadsheet. Note, if the account is not

schedule this must be performed before month end. To set up an account to be scheduled use GLM06, option 8. *Submitted by Jim Skeans of Jim Skeans Consulting Group LLC*

For Reynolds + Reynolds Users

Access the G/L Inquiry screen (0504), enter the Account Number on which you want to inquire, enter the current accounting Month and Year, if the message “No Activity Present” displays, the account has no journal transactions for the month you requested, enter Y at the Include Detail prompt. This allows you to view transaction or journal detail. Enter the Sort Sequence to determine the order that the information prints then enter P to print the information, then complete the printer command line or enter S to display the information on screen. If you display the information on screen, use the command line options to display additional information. *Submitted by Jim Skeans of Jim Skeans Consulting Group LLC*

Jim Skeans is the president of Jim Skeans Consulting Group LLC and has been in the automobile business for more than 35 years. Jim is a former senior consultant for an international automotive consulting group and has served in all of the traditional dealership management and staff positions as well as director position with a large national dealership group.

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