THE END OF SPREADSHEET CITY

The Essential Buyer's Guide When Looking For Account Reconciliation Software

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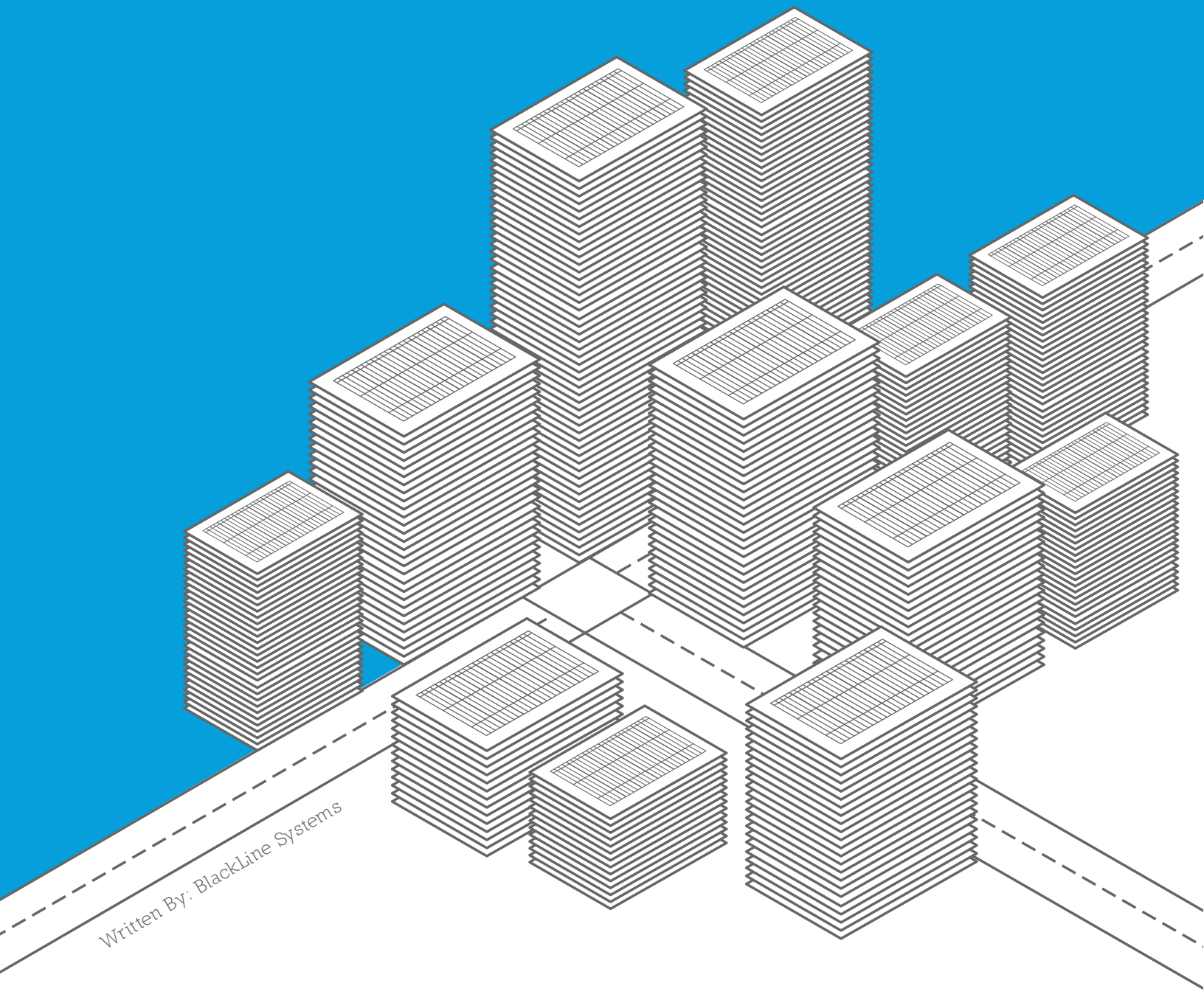


Written By: BlackLine Systems

Dedicated to Accountants with



50 60 70 HOUR WEEKS

(and mountains of spreadsheets)

Over the past decade, the importance of account reconciliation accuracy has been elevated by increasing rules and regulations including the enactment of Sarbanes Oxley (SOX), Euro-SOX (8th EU Directive), FINREP, COREP, J-SOX, and other compliance-oriented regulations. However, many companies still rely on manual, error-prone, spreadsheet-based reconciliations. An account reconciliation tool can add control and visibility to the entire financial close process. By linking to your ERP, preparers and approvers don't have to spend time pulling and validating balances. These account reconciliation solutions allow your preparers to focus their time on identifying errors, while giving approvers more time to properly review and analyze the account.

1 / Spreadsheets = Inefficiency

1.1 Inherent Problems with Current Spreadsheet Reconciliations 4
1.2 Benefits of an Account Reconciliation Tool 5
1.3 Trends in Account Reconciliation Software 5
1.4 Additional Features to Look For 6

2 / Arriving At The Right Solution

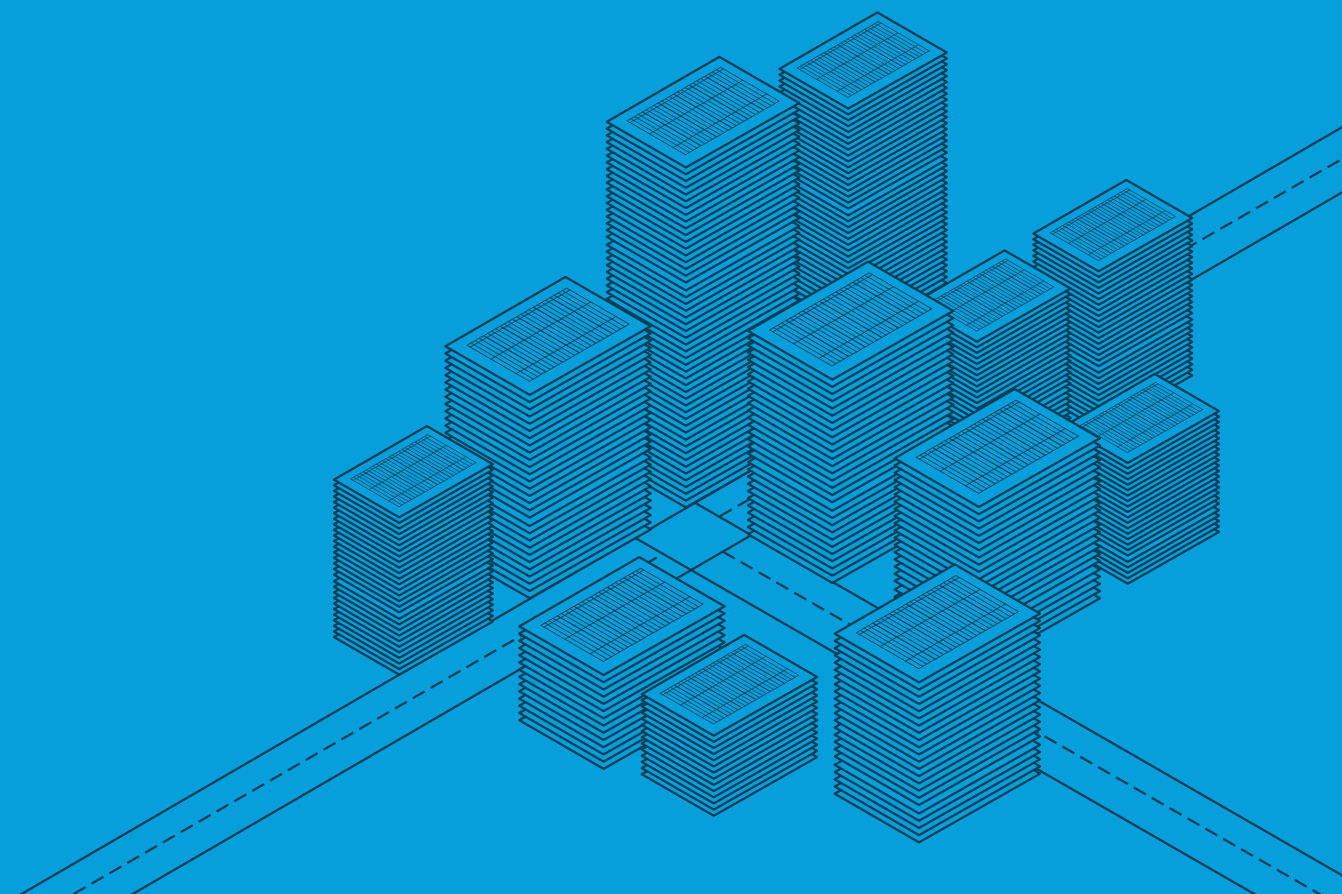
2.1 Business Justification (Return on Investment) 8
2.2 Questions to Consider 9
2.3 Vendor Evaluation Criteria 9

3 / Evaluating BlackLine Systems

3.1 Contact Us 11
3.2 Additional Resources 11
3.3 Sample Vendor Evaluation Scorecard 11
3.4 Sample Vendor Evaluation Criteria 12

1 Spreadsheets = Inefficiency

Weaknesses and inefficiencies in the reconciliation process often lead to mistakes on the balance sheet and overall inaccuracies in the financial close. These types of problems can lead to misstatements in financials, penalties and fines, devaluation of stock price, damaged public image, and bankruptcy.



1.1 Inherent Problems with Current Spreadsheet Reconciliations

Obstructs Visibility

- Inability to easily and consistently report on exceptions
- Unclear ownership of accounts
- Often requires the use of additional spreadsheets to track the completion of all accounts

Error Prone

- Formula errors which cause reconciliations to be incorrect
- Copy and paste errors
- Broken cell references
- Lost work due to failure to save file

Storage of Multiple Formats

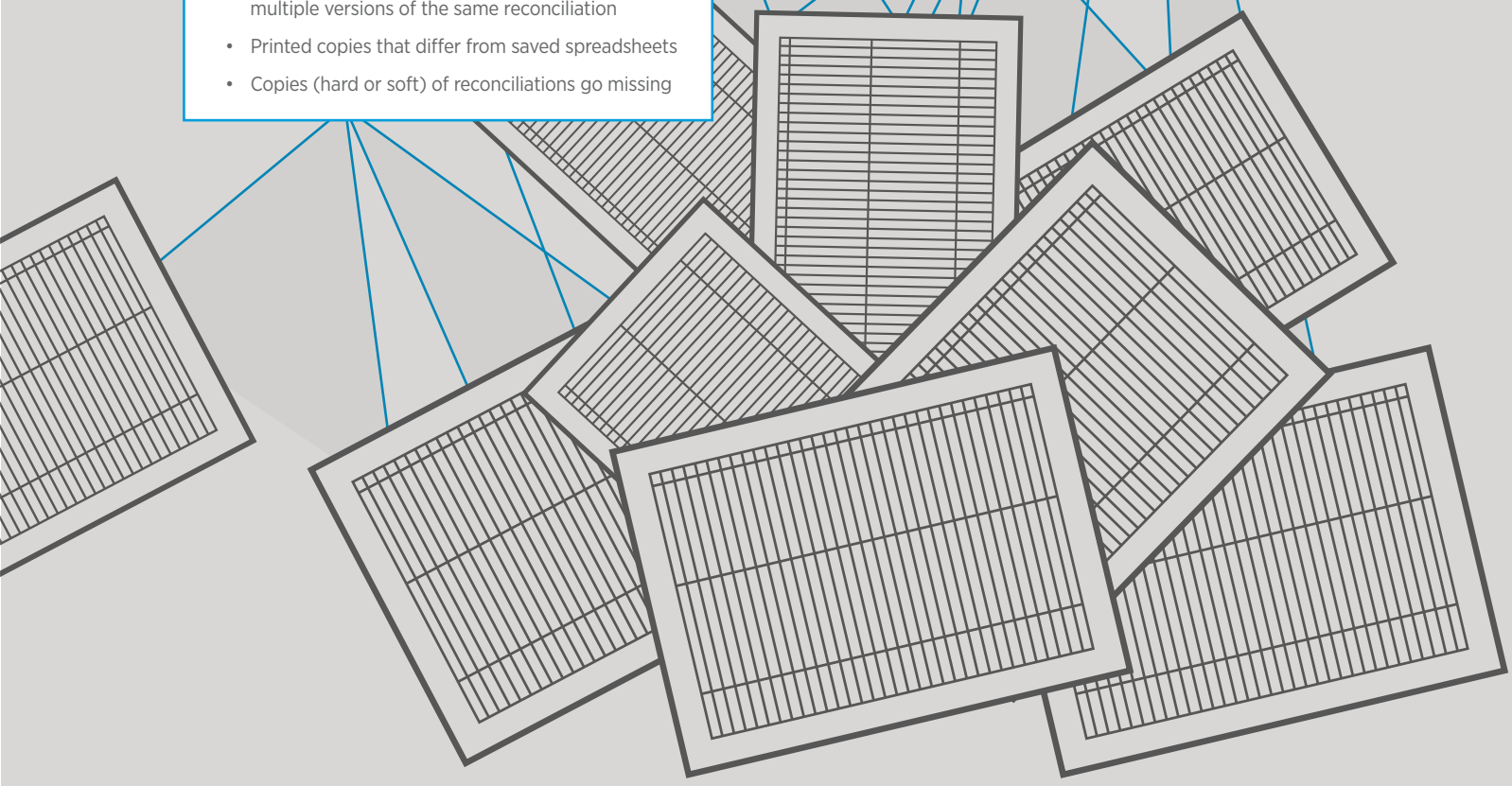
- Inability to electronically sign off within the spreadsheet drives the need for printing and retention of paper copies
- Regulations require the long-term retention of both the paper and electronic copies

Barriers to Approval

- Lack of lockdown post approval
- Lack of versioning to track changes to the file
- Difficulty in comparing to previous periods
- Necessity to validate ending balance back to ERP
- Instead of a true analysis of the reconciliation, approval becomes a brief check of formulas and ending balance

Lack of Control

- Inconsistent reconciliation formats
- Using shared drives and local PC files, resulting in multiple versions of the same reconciliation
- Printed copies that differ from saved spreadsheets
- Copies (hard or soft) of reconciliations go missing



1.2 Benefits of an Account Reconciliation Tool

Efficiency & Automation

The close process is encumbered with manual, repetitive tasks. In addition to being a waste of time for highly qualified accountants, these manual tasks increase the likelihood of errors. Account reconciliation tools are designed to automate any manual, repeatable process. This includes auto-reconciliation, which system certifies low risk accounts when certain criteria are met; automatically populating reconciliation templates; automatically amortizing items; and matching millions of records per minute. This saves a considerable amount of time and frees up accountants to focus on more difficult tasks.

Control & Compliance

These tools go beyond account reconciliations and typically include additional financial close functionality. They also provide a reliable compliance framework for financial close activities including journal entries, balance sheet account reconciliations, variance analysis, and transaction level reviews. They are designed around controls, which ensure that key processes are secure, standardized, repeatable, and, where possible, automated. This dramatically reduces misstatement/control failure risk. From an audit perspective, these controls are documented to ensure segregation of duties is maintained.

Visibility & Transparency

When it comes to financial close processes, visibility is imperative. Paper, binders, storage rooms, shared drives, and spreadsheets strewn across many locations are inefficient and make the close process anything but transparent. Account reconciliation tools transform the close into a transparent, manageable process.

Information is disseminated through powerful dashboards and reports that are designed to precisely highlight reconciliation progress, risk associated with required adjustments, delinquencies, and incomplete processes. Managers can quickly identify potential issues and address them before they affect the business.

1.3 Trends in Account Reconciliation Software

Software-as-a-Service (SaaS)

Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) is a software distribution model in which applications are hosted by a vendor or service provider and made available to customers over a network, typically the Internet. Customers typically pay a subscription fee to access the software. The term "SaaS" is analogous to OnDemand and cloud computing. This is a major trend as customers can reduce their IT costs, avoiding large capital expenditures and reducing implementation risks. Software-as-a-Service is appealing to many companies because of its low-cost, low-risk approach.

Benefits of SaaS:

- No hardware or software to purchase/maintain and no ongoing IT support required.
- Accessible anywhere with Internet access.
- Rapid deployment and seamless integration.
- Painless upgrades. Users enjoy the latest version of the software because updates and enhancements are automatically made by vendor.
- Eliminates shelfware and users typically only pay for what they use.
- Vendor responsible for back-up, disaster recovery and support services.
- Lower total cost of ownership.

Single Log-in with Integrated Modules

Companies already have enough systems and passwords to remember. From the preparer to the CFO, one system and one user ID with integrated modules is the preferred method. Integration between the account reconciliation module, matching module, task tracking, variance, journal entry, and consolidation validation module is essential to provide a seamless solution.

Speedy Implementations

Companies are pushing for quick implementations as they want to recognize the benefits as soon as possible. Configurable solutions are preferred. Custom set-ups can take months and in some cases years to implement. Users want to maximize their ROI and shorten their payback period, and they demand speedy implementations.

Service After the Sale

Why should the service stop after the implementation? Beyond ongoing technical support, companies want to ensure they are taking full advantage of the software. Some providers are dedicating teams of accounting experts to ensure clients are optimizing the tool at no additional charge.

Training

Some providers have integrated learning management systems into their application. This allows users to watch online training videos, ensuring that all users receive the same message whether they were there on day 1 or hired today. Administrators can then track the status of their users to ensure the training courses were completed.

1.4 Additional Features to Look For

Most companies start their search just looking to address account reconciliation issues, but some current solutions offer more extensive functionality. These additional modules can be bundled with the account reconciliation solutions to drive more efficiency and increase the added value.

Task/Checklist Management
This functionality helps clients manage their close process from end-to-end. Product offerings include the ability to create checklists, attach supporting documentation, manage dependencies, and have visibility into the approval workflow. Companies utilize these offerings for management of close calendars, reccurring entry checklists, PBC Listings, and compliance controls.

Robust Matching for Transactions
Rules-based matching allows for preparers to focus on the exceptions instead of the tedious task of matching debits and credits. Matching modules can provide robust matching rules allowing for the matching of one-to-one, one-to-many, and many-to-many items based upon configurable rules. Matching can enhance time savings for high-volume accounts such as intercompany and bank accounts.

Journal Entries
Create, validate, support, and approve all of your manual journal entries before posting from one central, web-based platform. Once approved, entries can then be loaded directly into your ERP/GL system.

Flux Analysis
Accounts with fluctuations outside of configurable thresholds automatically trigger the need for variance explanations. This could be used for period over period or budget to actual comparisons and can be used for both P&L and balance sheet accounts.

Consolidations Management
Automated approach to validate manual tie-out processes for GL consolidations, which can quickly identify discrepancies and ensure top-side entries are properly identified and addressed.

INTEGRATION

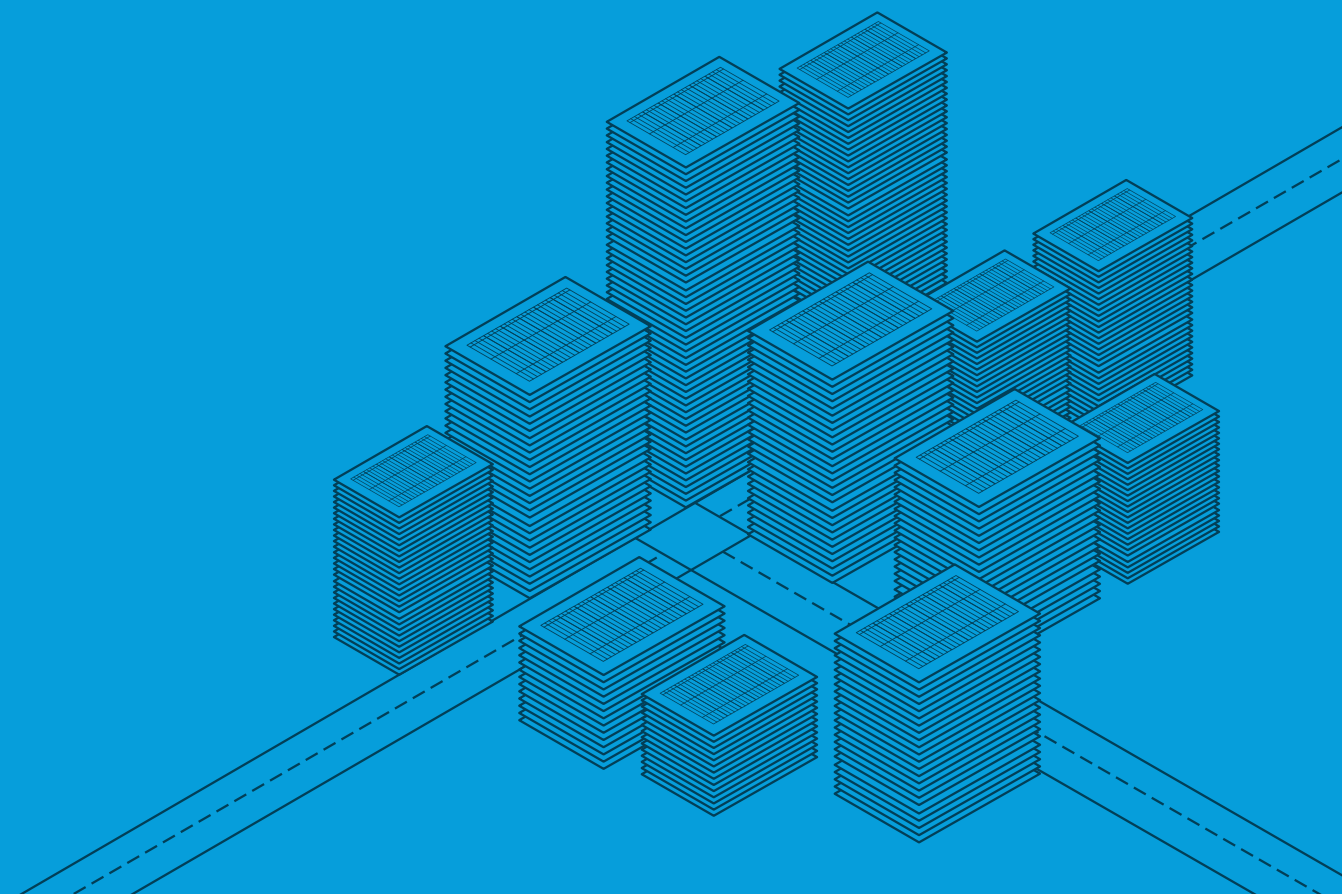
Additional features are great, but to reap the full benefits they must be integrated. Users should be able to flip between features or modules quickly and easily. The functionality between modules should "talk to each other" and connect forward and backward.

Spend some time examining your own process & department.

- ☐ What is the number and magnitude of aged reconciling items over 180 days old?
- ☐ Based upon previous audits, what recurring issues do you have?
- ☐ What are the top 10 most time-consuming reconciliations?
- ☐ How much time do your accountants spend on monotonous matching of debits and credits?
- ☐ How well do you manage your close process?
- ☐ What are the drivers of overtime?
- ☐ What do you spend each month for off-site storage?

2 Arriving At The Right Solution For Your Company

Knowing that account reconciliation tools are out there is half the battle. The next step is determining which one is right for your organization. Let's continue by walking through the steps to help find the solution which best aligns to your needs.



2.1 Business Justification (Return on Investment)

Producing the proper justification is critical when you are facing an uphill battle to get IT dollars for non-customer facing applications. Software purchases need to have some justification other than simple efficiency and compliance benefits.

Ensure Compliance & Reduce Risk

Added Visibility & Focus
Enhanced visibility allows management to identify and focus on troubled areas.

More Efficient Processes
Companies obtain increased efficiency via process standardization, auto-certification, and matching functionality.

Improved Integration/Consolidations
An account reconciliation tool makes it easier when integrating accounting operations due to consolidations or acquisitions.

Enhanced Reporting & Accountability
Enables organizational reporting which can minimize financial risk and increase accountability.

Reducing the Cost of Compliance

An account reconciliation tool can combat the rising cost of compliance. Through automation and standardization, time savings can be seen at all levels in the process.

Reconciling Accounts
Account reconciliation tools act as a consolidation point for general ledger data, sub-ledger systems, reporting systems, HR systems, and other financial applications. When using spreadsheets, preparers previously had to manually gather source data from internal systems at a point in time. This process is not only inefficient, it allows for compliance issues and risk of balance changes that are not picked up in your reconciliation process. These solutions ensure linkage and instant notifications of balance changes, which lays the foundation for balance sheet integrity.

The ability to carry prior month open items and supporting documents forward to subsequent reconciliations allows your preparers to focus on resolving items rather than managing spreadsheets. Additionally, preparers can query transaction-level details and import line items directly into an account reconciliation tool.

These tools provide an Auto-Certification process which follows strict rules that allow accounts meeting predetermined criteria to be "auto-certified." This means time is focused on accounts that need attention rather than accounts where GL and Subledger balances are in sync or accounts that are amortizing according to defined schedules.

Approving/Reviewing Accounts
With an account reconciliation solution, the days of tracking down individual spreadsheets or folders are over. Approvers and reviewers save time by logging into a single application to view all of their assigned reconciliations. Standardized reconciliation formats make reconciliations easier to read, compare, and navigate to supporting documentation. This benefits approvers and reviewers. They know exactly where to find each piece of information, and sign-off or rejection is completed electronically. Emails can also easily be sent from most systems, and comments become part of the reconciliation record.

Process Administration
With a manual process, someone is responsible for generating GL lists of accounts, sending out emails, following up on delinquent reconciliations, and making sure that new accounts get assigned. While process administration tasks are not eliminated, data consolidation and automated features cut time out of this process. Automated alerts can be configured to proactively follow up with users of the system, both before and after due dates. Alerts notify managers when individuals or entire workgroups are falling behind. Additionally, systematic interfaces collect balances and other financial information into a centralized repository that allows for companywide reports to be generated with a couple of clicks.

Direct Cost Savings

Reduction in Audit Costs
The added visibility of an account reconciliation tool allows for auditors to review and perform evaluations remotely. This eliminates the need for costly on-site visits from both Internal and External Auditors.

Reduction in Storage Costs
In order to be compliant, clients need to keep their reconciliation records for 7-10 years. Physical storage costs for this can certainly grow while electronic storage remains cheap, reliable, and accessible.

Reduction In Paper And Printing Costs
The cost of paper, toner, maintenance, and the need for additional printers can really add up. With a web-based solution, there is no longer a need to print your reconciliations each month.

CASE STUDIES

Case studies can be a great way to benchmark your business justification with others. They will help you see how other companies have benefited from the solution. Many will be able to provide ROI case studies, which show the exact areas of savings and payback period.

2.2 Questions to Consider

Most Controllers and Accounting Managers know exactly where problems lie within their processes. The issue is that they are not aware of alternative software solutions that go beyond the typical spreadsheet. With the reconciliation tool, they can answer questions that they were not able to answer in the past, such as:

- How many reconciliations does the organization have? Are they all completed?
- When the reconciling items are corrected, what will be the impact to the P&L?
- What is the oldest item on the balance sheet?
- Are the quality of reconciliations in the US the same as those in international locations?
- For the entire organization, what is the most common reason for rejected reconciliations?
- Are reconciliations being updated for late entries or prior period adjustments?
- Are all of the month-end closing tasks completed for today?
- Are account reconciliations prioritized based upon risk?
- Are updated policies and procedures incorporated in this month's reconcilations?

2.3 Vendor Evaluation Criteria

Once the business justification and areas of need have been determined, the next step is to develop a Request for Information (RFI) or a Request for Proposal (RFP) to gather information from vendors. This will help to identify the existing functionality and how the vendor's software will meet your needs.

- Determine the key factors which will influence your selection of a vendor. (We recommend keeping the key determining factors under 10.)
- Based upon your particular needs, assign weight to the factors.
- After reviewing the RFI/RFP responses and viewing a demo of the product, give the vendors a score based upon each of your key determining factors.
- Compare your scores for each vendor and select accordingly.

For your reference, a sample vendor evaluation scorecard and sample evaluation criteria is included in 3.3 and 3.4.

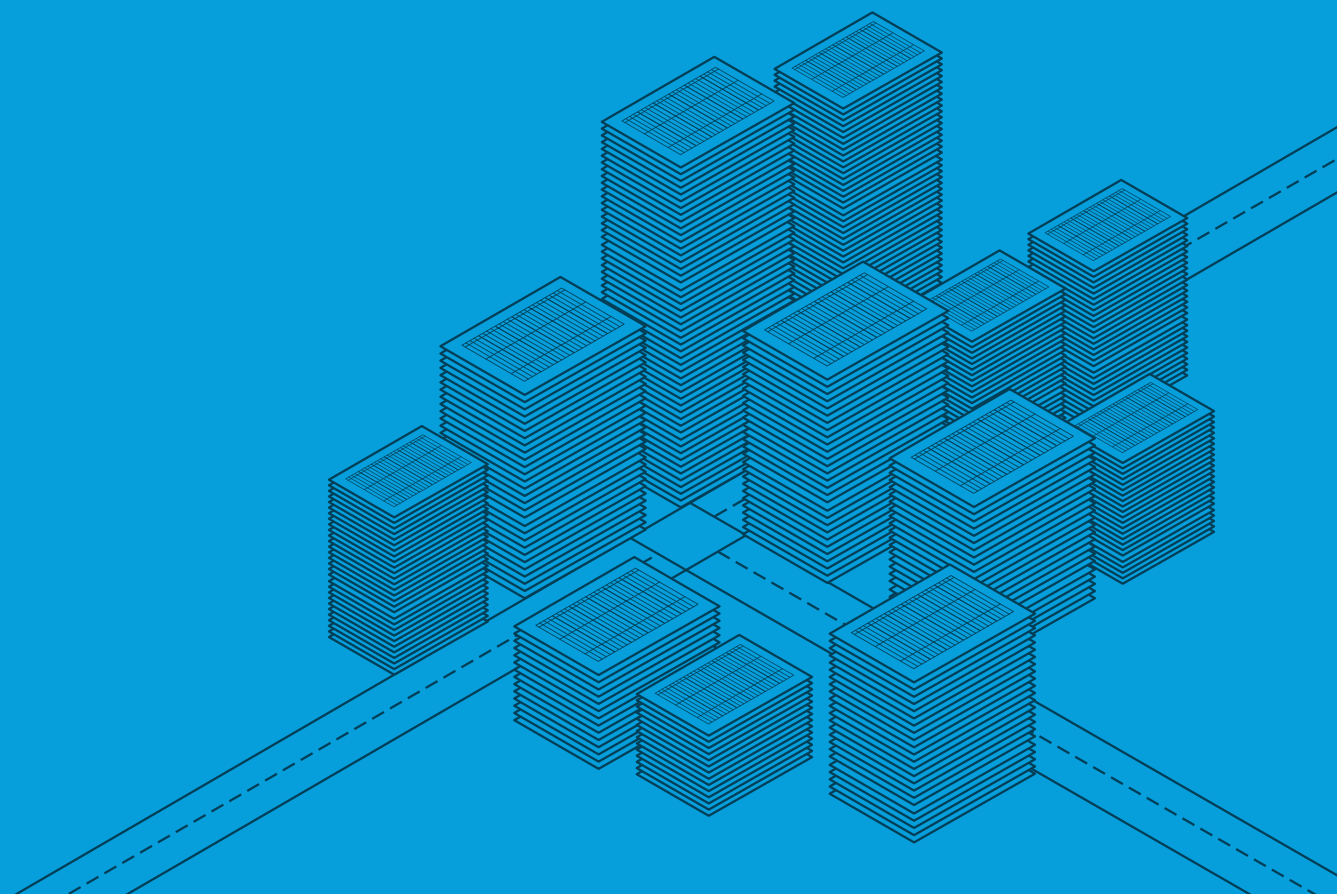
BENEFITS / VENDOR EVALUATION CRITERIA

Full Evaluation

Evaluation is more than just looking at functionality. Items like Ease of Use, Data Security, Ongoing Training, Configuration/Flexibility, and Support need to be part of your analysis. See sections 3.3 and 3.4 for assistance on evaluating these additional areas.

3 Evaluating BlackLine

BlackLine provides accounting and finance teams with better visibility and control over the entire financial close. Our Financial Close Suite replaces manual, error-prone, spreadsheet-based processes with automation, control and visibility. We help satisfy regulatory and compliance requirements. Our SaaS application is affordable, easy to implement and accessible anytime, anywhere. We change the way you close.



3.1 Contact Us

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A Solutions Consultant can provide information to assist with your evaluation, including:

- A requirements discussion with one of our Solutions Consultants
- A personalized product demo highlighting functionality to address your needs
- Responses to your RFI or RFP
- Customer references upon request

3.2 Additional Resources

THE BLACKLINE DIFFERENCE →



SAMPLE ROI CALCULATION →



3.3 Sample Vendor Evaluation Scorecard

#	Key Determining Factor	Weight	Score (scale: 1-5)	Total (weight x score)
1	Functionality	30%	4.5	1.35
2	Ease of Use	15%	4	.6
3	Ability to Handle Multi Currency	10%	5	.5
4	Pricing	10%	4	.4
5	Configuration/Flexibility	5%	3.5	.175
6	Data Security	5%	4	.2
7	Training	10%	3.5	.35
8	Vendor Qualifications	5%	4	.2
9	Time to Implement	10%	5	.5
Final vendor score (out of 5)				4.275
Final vendor score (out of 100)				86%

3.4 Sample Vendor Evaluation Criteria

1 - Functionality			
Item #	**Evaluation Criteria**	**Score (1-5)**	**Notes**
1.1	Functionality		
1.2	Out-of-the-box Reconciliation templates		
1.3	Creation of additional reconciliation templates		
1.4	Standardization via classification of reconciling items		
1.5	Aging of open items		
1.6	Reconciling items carry forward into subsequent period		
1.7	Ability to include supporting documents		
1.8	Contains necessary policies and procedures fields		
1.9	Includes all necessary auto-certification rules		
1.10	Configurable certification language		
1.11	Supports dual-certification		
1.12	User can import line items from document (excel file)		
1.13	Admin can import line items for reconciliations systematically		
1.14	Configurable deadlines		
1.15	Grouping - Includes the ability to group multiple underlying accounts into a single reconciliation		
1.16	Allows for dynamic risk rating (based upon GL account and ending balances)		
1.17	Time tracking capabilities		
1.18	Integrated checklists		
1.19	Built-in email alerts		
1.20	Integrated matching module - exception items can be carried over to recon easily		
1.21	Robust matching module - ability to handle one-to-one, one-to-many, and many-to-many matching		
1.22	Ad Hoc reporting capabilities		
1.23	Proper administration roles with segregation of functionality		
1.24	Approver/Review comments		
1.25	Rejection notifications		
1.26	Rejection reason-codes		
1.27	Changes prevented post-approval/certification		

1.28	Segregation of duties (Preparer, Approver, Reviewer)		
1.29	Built-in audit trail		
1.30	Decertification process		
1.31	Imported GL balance changes triggers decertification and notifies the preparer		
1.32	Task/Checklist Functionality - includes functionality to create checklists, supporting documentation, dependencies, and workflow approval for varying uses (Close calendar, Reccurring Entry checklist, PBC Listing and Tracking, Compliance Controls, etc.)		
1.33	Journal Entry Functionality - includes journal validations, supporting documentation and approval workflow for journal entries		
1.34	Variance Fluctuation Analysis - includes a configurable rules-based trigger for accounts which require explanation. This could be used for period over period or budget to actual comparisons		
1.35	Consolidations tie-outs - automated approach to validate manual tie-out process for GL consolidations which can quickly identify discrepancies and ensure top-side entries are properly identified and addressed.		
Total Functionality Score			**Section Weighted for Final Score**

2 - Ease of Use			
Item #	**Evaluation Criteria**	**Score (1-5)**	**Notes**
2.1	Ability to filter screens		
2.2	Ability to save filters/views		
2.3	Ability to quickly view all open items		
2.4	Real-time dashboards		
2.5	Dashboard drill-down functionality		
2.6	Ease of switching roles		
2.7	Ease of switching GL periods		
2.8	Evaluate the intuitiveness of the software		
2.9	Ease of opening supporting documentation		
2.10	Ability to compare previous period to current period reconciliation		
2.11	Graphical view of balances for trend analysis during approval		

2.12	Multi language functionality (application translated to local language)		
2.13	Administration - configurable options adjustable by client		
2.14	Administration - Intuitiveness of configurable options		
2.15	Administration - Ability to automate assignments based upon client defined rules		
Total Ease of Use Score			**Section Weighted for Final Score**

3- Ability to Handle Multi Currency			
Item #	**Evaluation Criteria**	**Score (1-5)**	**Notes**
3.1	Ability to load foreign exchange rates		
3.2	All ISO currencies supported		
3.3	Automated currency conversions based upon month-end rates		
3.4	All required levels of currency supported (Transactional, Account, Functional, Reported, etc.)		
3.5	Entity level reporting in Account/Functional currencies		
3.6	Consolidated reporting in common (Reported) currency		
Total Ability to Handle Multi Currency Score			**Section Weighted for Final Score**

4 - Pricing			
Item #	**Evaluation Criteria**	**Score (1-5)**	**Notes**
4.1	Pricing for X number of users		
4.2	Evaluate any set-up charges or implementation fees		
4.3	Ongoing Fees - Is the application configurable by the client or a customized effort requiring vendor resources (and fees)?		
4.4	Training tools included in pricing		
Total Pricing Score			**Section Weighted for Final Score**

5 - Configuration/Flexibility			
Item #	**Evaluation Criteria**	**Score (1-5)**	**Notes**
5.1	Proper number of available fields for your unique GL string		
5.2	Ability to create client defined fields and selection options		

5.3	Ability to create reports and publish to entire user base		
5.4	Allows for configurable entity hierarchy which allows rolling-up of GL entities into segments, divisions, regions, up to the entire organization		
5.5	Allows for reporting at configurable entity hierarchy levels		
5.6	Ability to create workgroup structure which can be used for reporting, visibility, and segregation of recons/tasks		
Total Configuration / Flexibility Score			**Section Weighted for Final Score**

6 - Data Security			
Item #	**Evaluation Criteria**	**Score (1-5)**	**Notes**
6.1	Evaluate certifications held by vendor		
6.2	Evaluate certifications held by hosting service (if applicable)		
6.3	ISO 27001 certification		
6.4	Review the SSAE 16 audit reports (SOC 1, 2, 3 - Type II)		
6.5	Up-time guarantee		
6.6	Data encryption - in transit		
6.7	Data encryption - at rest		
6.8	Regular penetration testing		
6.9	Evaluate encryption key management process		
6.10	Review Disaster Recovery (DR) plan		
6.11	Recovery Point Objective (RPO) - maximum timeframe for lost data following a disaster recovery incident		
6.12	Recovery Time Objective (RTO) - maximum recovery timeframe for restoring service following disaster recover incident		
Total Data Security Score			**Section Weighted for Final Score**

7 - Training / Support			
Item #	**Evaluation Criteria**	**Score (1-5)**	**Notes**
7.1	Is web-based training included?		
7.2	On-site training offered - Support train-the-trainer		
7.3	Live online training offered (additional cost)		
7.4	Availability of self-service help tools within the application		
7.5	Up-time guarantee		

7.6	Data encryption - in transit		
7.7	Data encryption - at rest		
7.8	Regular penetration testing		
7.9	Evaluate encryption key management process		
7.10	Review Disaster Recovery (DR) plan		
7.11	Recovery Point Objective (RPO) - maximum timeframe for lost data following a disaster recovery incident		
7.12	Recovery Time Objective (RTO) - maximum recovery timeframe for restoring service following disaster recover incident		
Total Training / Support Score			**Section Weighted for Final Score**

8 - Vendor Qualifications			
Item #	**Evaluation Criteria**	**Score (1-5)**	**Notes**
8.1	Management team		
8.2	Number of years in business		
8.3	Existing client base		
8.4	Financial stability		
8.5	Overall Vendor Responsiveness		
8.6	International presence		
8.7	Evaluate the vendor's core competencies		
8.8	Client references		
Total Vendor Qualifications Score			**Section Weighted for Final Score**

9 - Time to Implement			
Item #	**Evaluation Criteria**	**Score (1-5)**	**Notes**
9.1	Implementation team experience		
9.2	Partnerships with ERP providers		
9.3	Partnerships with consultants		
9.4	Out-of-the-box GL connectors		
9.5	Sample queries to extract GL data		
9.6	Implementation references		
Total Time to Implement Score			**Section Weighted for Final Score**

THE BLACKLINE DIFFERENCE

BlackLine was the first company to develop and market an enterprise-level account reconciliation and financial close software.

Our commitment to high quality software and customer service has led us to the forefront of our industry, helped us assemble a large and enthusiastic client base, and won us numerous accolades. We also have a commitment to organizational integrity that extends from our development process through the sales cycle and beyond.

With this in mind, the BlackLine approach is to focus on our areas of excellence, rather than our competition. All too often, the competitive sales cycle can turn into a mud-slinging contest. This win-at-all-costs mentality ignores what is best for the customer and does nothing to ensure that the product that gets delivered is the one that is the best fit.

So, instead of making a case against each of our competitors in detail, this document tries to answer the questions,

"Why would a company go with BlackLine over another company?"
"What makes BlackLine the best?"

SOFTWARE

Industry leading software built by accountants, for accountants

In 2005, BlackLine became the first company to successfully commercialize an end-to-end account reconciliation and financial close management tool. Since then, we've been the source of virtually every major innovation in our niche and, to put it simply, our software is the best tool out there.

- Ease of Use – BlackLine was built by accountants, for accountants. Any number of clients have cited our application's intuitive design as crucial to their decision making process.
- Auto-certification – BlackLine's application has 10 auto-certification rules, which allow most of our clients to automatically reconcile somewhere between 40-60% of their accounts.
- Configure vs. Customize – The Financial Close Suite is entirely configurable, meaning it can be installed and used without any custom programming.
- Bulk Journal Entry – BlackLine's newest tool allows clients to automatically generate journal entries from individual pieces of data, stored logic, allocation tables, or user-defined formulas.
- Lower total cost of ownership with no large capital outlay.

SERVICES

There with you, every step of the way

Here at BlackLine, we take customer service very seriously. We believe that you shouldn't have to pay for support, and that software vendors should be available at whatever hour you're working. We believe that customer service is not something that companies do, but a commitment that they make.

- 24/7/365 support provided by BlackLine employees in English, Spanish, French, Cantonese, Mandarin, Thai, and Tagalog.
- +80% NetPromoter score on support cases.
- A churn rate of <3% at BlackLine indicates our clients are overwhelmingly likely to remain with BlackLine for a long time, which we consider the strongest endorsement of our services.
- Complimentary "White Glove" consulting and optimization service.
- Access to the BlackLine community, where 90,000+ accounting professionals discuss best practices, offer tips, and vote on enhancements for the BlackLine tool.
- Lower total cost of ownership with no large capital outlay.

BLACKLINE SYSTEMS

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IMPLEMENTATION

Fast, responsive support for any deployment strategy

A fast, effective software implementation begins with the application itself. BlackLine's software is configurable, and can be quickly deployed by any organization.

- Configuration versus customization. Customizing software is expensive and time-consuming. It can cause a software implementation to become a major headache.
- Free training and free access to our Learning Management System. All users can access BlackLine's LMS, which contains recorded training, coursework, and other resources designed to get users up and running as quickly as possible.
- Live, weekly webinars in multiple time zones. Clients can hear directly from BlackLine's experts, ask questions, and even gain CPE credits.
- Fast implementations – We typically see major clients implemented in 4-8 weeks.
- Minimal IT involvement.

TECHNOLOGY

Leading the movement to SaaS accounting tools

As the first organization to offer a Software-as-a-Service tool for account reconciliations, BlackLine has the industry's most innovative delivery platform. Clients can access the tool from anywhere. Some differentiators include:

- No hardware or software to purchase/maintain and no ongoing IT support required.
- Accessible anywhere in the world with guaranteed uptime.
- Top-tier security practices, encryption of all data (both in transit and at rest), and the first company to receive a spotless SSAE16 SOC2 Type II audit certification. BlackLine is the first in its space to receive the highly regarded ISO/IEC 27001 certification. This certification confirms that BlackLine meets or exceeds the latest information security industry standards and also maintains and enforces robust and effective policies and procedures to ensure data security.
- Industry leading disaster recovery plan with a 1 hour RPO and a 2 hour RTO. You can't afford to be down for days at a time.
- Lower total cost of ownership with no large capital outlay.

CLIENTS & PARTNERS

90,000+ accountants, 800+ clients, 100+ countries

The most important endorsements we can receive, though, are from the organizations that work with BlackLine day-in and day-out. As mentioned previously, BlackLine clients have a very high retention rate, and tend to be our strongest advocates. In addition, we've developed and cultivated a number of close relationships with major consulting and technology firms, all of whom have introduced BlackLine to their own clients.

- 800+ clients have deployed the BlackLine tool in 100+ countries.
- We have the largest stable of big-name clients in the industry.
- 30+ alliance partnerships, including the Big 4, Resources Global, and UHY.
- SAP Partnership – The BlackLine Financial Close Suite for SAP® Solutions is an SAP-endorsed business solution, joining the ranks of fewer than 40 other software offerings globally. BlackLine is the only financial close solution to achieve this elite recognition. Solutions endorsed by SAP are complementary to SAP software offerings, have been specifically integrated with SAP solutions and tested by SAP. BlackLine's SAP Connector seamlessly integrates BlackLine to SAP Financials. BlackLine also is an SAP Gold Partner.
- NetSuite Partnership – BlackLine has partnered with NetSuite and has built a connector for the NetSuite cloud ERP system.
- Oracle Partnership - BlackLine is a certified Gold member of the Oracle Partner Network. Many of our existing clients use different Oracle products, including Oracle Financials, PeopleSoft, JD Edwards, Hyperion and others, to interface into BlackLine.

BLACKLINE SYSTEMS

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BlackLine Return On Investment Analysis

4,000 ACCOUNTS, **48,000** RECONCILIATIONS/YEAR
80 PREPARERS RESPONSIBLE FOR **50** ACCOUNTS EACH
20 APPROVERS AND **10-20** ADDITIONAL REVIEWERS/MANAGERS

Reconciling Accounts*	$144,000
Approval/Review Roles	$32,000
Process Administration	$2,400
Audit Costs	$12,000
Storage Costs	$18,000
Paper Costs	$24,000
Total Annual ROI	$232,400



*If 5-10 minutes is saved for each reconciliation (that amount of time can be spent simply looking for last month's spreadsheet), then the time savings for reconciling the accounts is substantial.

Time Saving Scenarios

RECONCILING ACCOUNTS
50 accounts x 6 minutes = 300 minutes per month = 5 hours per preparer per month
12 months x 5 hours = 60 hours per preparer per year
80 preparers x 60 hours per preparer per year = 4800 hours saved per year
4800 hours saved per year x $30.00 per hour = $144,000

APPROVAL/REVIEW ROLES
100 accounts x 1 minute = 100 minutes per month per approver/reviewer
12 months x 100 minutes = 1200 minutes = 20 hours per year
40 approvers/reviewers x 20 hours per year = 800 hours saved per year
800 hours saved per year x $40.00 per hour = $32,000

PROCESS ADMINISTRATION
8 hours per admin per month
12 months x 8 hours = 96 hours per admin per year
96 hours saved per year x $25.00 per hour = $2,400

AUDIT COSTS
1 trip per auditor per month (time & travel) = $1,000 per month
12 months x $1,000 per month = $12,000 per year

STORAGE COSTS
48,000 reconciliations per year x 5 pages per reconciliation
= 240,000 sheets of paper
5,000 sheets per box of paper = 48 boxes per year
48 boxes per year x 10 years = 480 boxes of paper to store
approximate cost of $1,500 per month
$1,500 storage costs x 12 months = $18,000 per year
(not immediately applicable, have to build up number of boxes each year)

PAPER COSTS
20,000 pages x 10 cents per page = $2,000 per month
12 months x $2,000 printing savings per month = $24,000 per year

These ROI calculations are based upon a company with approximately 4,000 accounts that are reconciled on a monthly basis. The basis of time saved was conservatively estimated from feedback from actual clients. Your actual savings may be higher if you have remote locations in different time zones, multiple GL systems, more than five subledger systems, and/or multiple currencies. Additional ROI may be realized if a company utilizes the Period Close Task Management and Variance Analysis functionality that is also available within the BlackLine Financial Close Software Suite. Finally, it is difficult to put a price on having peace of mind. The BlackLine Financial Close Software Suite takes a process that is key to accurate financial reporting and brings compliance, standardization, and mitigation of risk to the Period Close Process.

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THE END OF SPREADSHEET CITY

The Essential Buyer's Guide When Looking For Account Reconciliation Software

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