M Corp

Month-End Close Training and Advisory Services

The Month End Close (MEC) process is a challenging and daunting task for many departments using FI$Cal, for the first few months. New users are just learning how to complete tasks in FI$Cal and are not yet familiar with the MEC process and expectations for reconciliations. In addition, most departments accustomed to CalSTARS' automated MEC process will be unfamiliar with the manual reconciliation requirements in FI$Cal. Furthermore, finding and understanding data sources are some of the toughest hurdles and roadblocks for new users implementing FI$Cal. M Corp can provide the following services:

- Work with departmental staff to review and understand MEC requirements

- Train and advise and guide on MEC and reconciliation processes and tasks

- Teach techniques to track down reconciliation problems

- Review allocation configurations and advise on corrections

- Help identify reconciliation problems related to conversions and offer guidance on resolutions

- Help identify reconciliation problems related to business processes, and offer re-engineering solutions

- Help create customized reports, and request FI$Cal to create customized queries if current queries do not meet business needs

- Make other recommendations for smoother MEC

Post-Deployment

During the first weeks after go-live, there are a number of important activities which must take place in order to finalize the go-live process and begin using FI$Cal for regular business.

Using the same methods as in the test conversions, converted data in the production environment should be validated before transactions are executed.

It is easier to correct any issues before they are propagated through the system. In our work at The Department of Pesticide Regulation, we also found that there can be some data which is easier to enter into the system directly, rather than attempting to place it into the conversion workbooks. This should also be completed before normal business use of the system begins.

Interfaces to and from FI$Cal will need to be validated for connectivity and correctness in the production environments of all affected systems.

Configurations must also be validated. For some, this can be completed by viewing screens or reports, while others will require the entry or execution of new transactions.

Additionally, there are a number of items which cannot be completed until your department is live in FI$Cal. These include the establishment of the Office Revolving Fund, budget entry, entry of transactions completed after the extracts for data conversion, and Month End and Year End Closing activities.

A Post-Deployment Plan should be created to track the items which need to be completed after go-live. It will include an initial schedule, however, we have found that due to FI$Cal staff availability, execution of some tasks may not be possible on your department's schedule. Remaining flexible, while tracking the processes will get you through the initial post-deployment time.

The list of post-deployment activities can include:

- Support and Assistance with Department Configuration Setup, Operating Budgets, and Chart of Accounts (as required) in the areas of:

  - General Ledger Assistance
  - Accounts Payable Assistance
  - Procurement Assistance
  - Accounts Receivable and Billing Assistance
  - Costing, Contracts, and Grants Assistance
  - Asset Management Assistance
  - Transaction Entry Assistance

- Support Month End Closing (MEC) - Processing Assistance to be provided:

  - Closing July of the current year in the FI$Cal System

Ongoing Support

M Corp can be available to manage and participate in post go-live support activities including roaming support where needed, as well as continued issue escalation and resolution. M Corp will work with your department to identify continued knowledge transfer and end-user training needs after go-live and will develop appropriate opportunities for staff to continue to learn and evolve with the new system.

M Corp recommends relying on a defect management tool such as the one included in Hewlett Packard's Application Lifecycle Management System (ALM), Jira, or even an open source system such as BugZilla.

Tracking, prioritizing, and reporting on the status of system defects will be important to users and executive staff, and will require an organized process or system to do this effectively. This will allow tracking of defects which are reported to the FI$Cal Service Center, or which remain in-house for interfaces or documentation updates.

As issues are discovered and defects are logged, system resolutions may be in the form of updated To-Be processes and workarounds. As these are discovered, M Corp recommends updating the To-Be documentation with updated processes and procedures and conducting regular workshops to socialize changes.

> Adjusting to the Month-End Close (MEC) process in FI$Cal takes time and understanding.

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