

How Unum Modernized AP Operations Through Crisis and Innovation

The challenge

For a company dedicated to protecting others, Unum's own AP operations faced a critical vulnerability. Walter Leinberger, Director of Procure-to-Pay Operations, recognized that his team needed a partner who could ensure business continuity no matter what challenges arose. That partnership with OneSource Virtual (OSV), which began nearly a decade ago, would prove essential when a crisis struck.



A perfect storm: losing 75% of the AP team

"Earlier this year, I had essentially two accounts payable folks retire in a span of a month," Walter recalls. "The third AP analyst that we had got injured...and so we had a brand-new accounts payable person that had come in, knew nothing about the company, and knew nothing about our culture and nothing about the suppliers and how we pay them."

Suddenly, Unum's entire AP operation rested on one brand-new employee with less than a week of tenure. The situation was challenging, Walter admits, "I actually would thank the new person every day for not quitting, because of the volumes she had to manage."



Antiquated systems exacerbating the problem

The challenge extended beyond staffing. As a conservative insurance company, Unum had been slow to modernize their payment infrastructure. Their outdated ACH transmission file couldn't provide full remittance information to suppliers — essential data that vendors increasingly needed to reconcile payments. This limitation forced Unum to cut far too many checks. "Cutting checks, I mean that's like 40 years old, right?" Walter jokes. "That goes along with the fax machine."

Overview



Unum helps employers take better care of their workforce and stand out to top talent, offering benefits coverage including disability, accident, dental, vision, and pet insurance, all designed to help workers protect their families and livelihood.



Headquarters
Chattanooga, TN



Industry
Employee benefits



Employees
10,000+



OSV customer since
2015

Flexible capacity in crisis

Fortunately, Unum had already been working with OSV for nearly a decade on invoice processing. When the staffing crisis hit, this existing relationship served as a lifeline: "Having OSV there for us to be able to essentially dial up the volume that we sent to them was a godsend," Walter explains.

The flexibility proved invaluable, allowing his single new employee to focus on learning the essentials while OSV handled the transaction processing volume. "Having OSV there to take that overflow was really, really good for us to be able to continue our operations," he says.



Modernized payment infrastructure

When OSV approached Walter about AP pay, it offered the perfect solution to modernize Unum's payment processes. The service enabled a transition from checks and antiquated ACH to electronic payments with full remittance information — exactly what suppliers needed to efficiently reconcile payments in their own systems.

"As we have more of a remote environment, especially after COVID, we didn't have a lot of suppliers [who] didn't have an AR department that was in-house to obtain those checks and take it to the bank," Walter explains. "So, moving to this product allows us to get away from our antiquated ACH product and printing checks."

The modernization delivered exactly what vendors needed: clarity on payment amounts, faster processing times, and detailed remittance information showing where to apply payments. The cost savings proved substantial, with ACH payments costing "a fraction of what a check would cost."

In-tenant efficiency and accuracy

Because OSV works directly within Unum's Workday tenant, the team experienced significant time savings and improved accuracy. "Because we are Workday clients and OSV is in our tenant, it also just speeds up the process," notes Walter. "I don't have to wait for an overnight transmission file to happen. It's instant once it's processed through OSV; it's put right into our tenant. It's so instant."

The speed is also matched by reliability. "Is it accurate? Yeah, it is accurate," Walter confirms. "And when things can't be matched up, we get back right into our tenant saying, 'hey, we couldn't match this and take action on it. So again, it's about efficiency. It's about effectiveness. And that's what you look for when you're running an operation.'"

This efficiency allowed Walter's AP team to refocus strategically. "Part of the reason why we have OSV is to make sure that my AP folks are focusing on more important transactions than require them to really focus on what it is that they're doing," he says. "I don't have to worry about the things that we send to OSV because it's very transactional."

A true partnership approach

When Unum began seeing an increase in invoices being returned as unmatched, OSV didn't just process what they received — they proactively engaged to solve the root cause. "We were starting to see a lot of invoices being sent back into draft where OSV couldn't match them. And so, we had a conversation," Walter recalls. "We brought in all our procurement specialists and brought in all accounts payable folks. And then we had all the folks at OSV, and we just tried to brainstorm, like 'what is going on? Why can't you match this?'"

The collaborative approach paid off. "We want to be good partners, and [figure] out how to make [the] relationship better so that we don't have these sorts of exceptions that keep coming out," Walter explains. "And it's worked out perfectly. I mean, we've been able to identify that we fixed a lot of purchase orders. We had a lot of conversations with suppliers. And, we're in a much better space now than we have in the past."

This partnership mentality extends to Unum's future planning. Walter notes that the relationship with OSV allows his team to explore automation through AI and bots to handle routine inquiries about invoice status and payment processes from both suppliers and internal business partners. As Walter emphasizes, the key lesson learned was to seek out additional resources that enable AP teams to focus on the most important work — something that proved critical during a crisis but remains valuable every day.

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For Walter, the relationship goes beyond vendor and customer. "I always like to call certain suppliers partners. OSV's a partner for me," he says. "It's knowing that I have someone there to support me in some tough situations. It's saved us in some tough times."

The impact on business continuity is clear. "OSV is an integral partner for my operations," Walter concludes. "It's important for me to make sure that my lights stay on at Unum [and] that payments to our software providers allow us to keep our licenses. Having OSV to help me make payments in an effective and efficient manner is crucial for our operations."