CS Lucas launches new TMS service

CS Lucas has launched a new Treasury Management System designed to ensure the reliance upon spreadsheets in treasury is eliminated. We believe that treasurers should be working with the best tools available to them in order to perform to industry standard. That is why we have developed CS Lucas Essentials.

CS Lucas Essentials is our new, cost effective treasury management solution that will provide treasurers with quick access to an industry proven and matured system. We have created five Essential Editions, made to answer to the day-to-day needs of treasurers.

Essential: Built for small treasury teams who rely on spreadsheets to manually keep track of their treasury operations. Maximize your value add by using a treasury management system for free. With the Essential Edition, all your cash management needs are met, you'll have access to:

- 2 accounting centres
- 2 financial instruments
- 5 forecast lines
- 10 open transactions

Find out more

Professional: Built for treasury teams with power users that need a treasury management system to manage financial instruments, deliver cash visibility with ease and provide accounting integration. For a monthly fee of $50 per user, you'll have access to:

- 5 accounting centres
- 4 financial instruments
- 15 forecast lines
- 40 open transactions
- 1 systems integrations

Find out more

Business: Built for established treasury teams who want a scalable treasury management system to help collaborate in real-time across time zone and geography. The Business Edition's unlimited forecast lines, custom dashboards and team rooms help your treasury department work cohesively on one secure platform. For a monthly fee of $180 per user, you'll have access to:

- 20 accounting centres
- 5 financial instruments
- Unlimited forecast lines
- 100 open transactions
- 2 systems integrations
- Team rooms

Find out more

Enterprise: Built for enterprises with treasury departments who need a system that will work to meet the demands of their operations. The Enterprise Edition offers extensive integration to price feeds and trading portals, provides reports on demand and allows unlimited access to all necessary cash management tools. For a monthly fee of $350 per user, you'll have access to:

- Unlimited accounting centres
- All financial transactions
- Unlimited open transactions
- 5 systems integrations
- Team rooms
- Access to Bloomberg, ICD and ERP terminals

Find out more

Unlimited: A treasury system that is designed to meet bespoke enterprise-wide security, audit and service level compliance. This dedicated platform is fully scalable to unlimited users. Help take control of all treasury and payment operations around the globe 24/7. Call an advisor to discuss this option.

Contact us

Each of our Editions comes with email, telephone and chat support, as well as access to onsite user guides and training videos.

As a company, CS Lucas has been dedicated to providing award winning treasury solutions for the last 25 years. A treasury management system is necessary for treasury operations to run smoothly. Tracking cash forecasts, multiple transactions and ensuring compliance is met cannot be done through spreadsheets and should not be done over multiple platforms. A treasury management system, like CS Lucas ensures the secure hosting of your company's financial data in one place. A treasury management system like CS Lucas Essentials, ensures that your company's financial data is securely hosted, reliably – with no complexity and no cost.

It's time for treasurers to say goodbye to spreadsheets

The financial world is steadily moving towards total digitization. Digital landscapes make dealing with payments, across multiple currencies and banking relationships easier to visualize and quicker to execute. However, in order to fully utilise the speed digitization offers, we need to say goodbye to manual spreadsheets and move towards automated systems.

A treasury management system that is built with automation and cash visibility in mind, creates a comfortable and fast-paced environment for executing treasury transactions. An environment like this provides rapid access to all the necessary data for transactions with links to historic journals.

Traditional means of sharing spreadsheets do not have the structure nor the ability to support the activity and speed of such collaboration – particularly as we now see ourselves relying on shared documents more to meet the demands of remote working. Spreadsheets were originally designed as a personal productivity

tool and work best in that capacity – they cannot keep pace with applications that are predominantly designed to host large amounts of data, securely whilst hosting collaborative working capabilities.

The benefits of utilising a platform that hosts internal collaboration capabilities are:

– Secure sharing of funding and forecasting information

– Complete visibility of historical patterns of forecasting

– Real-time updates for changes in cash collections, plans and funding

– Archival access to unstructured documents that will help support decision making

Having a platform that allows you to easily share information, allows you more room for future-planning and scenario modelling. Start planning, periods of uncertainty and feel confident in your ability to rapidly respond to different outcomes based on accurate data sourced from your treasury system.

Tips on strengthening your security measures

After our #CSLucasWebinar on Keeping your Information Secure, we had some great questions regarding security protocols. Here are some key points from Don Escuro, Vice President of CS Lucas, that will help strengthen security measures.

Check that your suppliers are ISO 27001 certified

Having an ISO 27001 certification sends a strong message that a company is serious about protecting data. Companies who are certified, invest time and resources to understand how to strengthen and continuously improve their processes and teams' security awareness. You should always ask your suppliers what controls they have in place to protect your data.

There is no one-size-fits all approach to security

There is no one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to security. You and your IT teams understand your company best. The first step is usually to do a security risk assessment. This is done by the CISO or by the person who is assigned to perform this role. You should be able to identify risk mitigation steps and minimum standards to follow after the risk assessment. In the meantime, make sure that you are using the latest software versions and patches, updated antivirus are installed, backups are regular and tested, and a plan is in place for disaster recovery.

Is your data safer on-premise or on the cloud?

A decade ago, security and IT professionals would have said that data is more secure behind your company firewall and physically protected in a secure server room. Now, more believe that hosting on the cloud is also safe (if not safer). Saving data on the cloud guarantees access, it is ISO compliant, and cost effective.

The root of the question depends on your company's situation and what data you need to protect. In some countries and industries, there may be requirements on where and how you store your data. So it's best to understand these things. The first step is still to identify your risks and from there, evaluate options to help you be more confident. Personally, I lean more towards storing data on the cloud. Providers like AWS have teams of security professionals constantly working to make sure that the cloud infrastructure is safe – so you can focus on security of the software that you host in it.

Watch the rest of Keeping your Information Secure here.

Local Authorities: Is your tech up-

to-date?

Are you using hardware or software that is no longer compatible with the latest software updates? It may not seem like a big deal to have the latest anti-virus update on your office PC when it's running on an older operating system, like Windows 7, but it is. The latest anti-virus programmes work to detect malware and Trojans that are constantly evolving. At the end of 2019, some Local Authorities were still found to have been using Windows 7, and were prompted to make the move to Windows 10 before February 2020 as Windows has ceased to provide support to Windows 7 users. If you're running an old operating system that is incompatible with newer anti-virus programmes, you are opening your system up to these threats – which can cause devastating outcomes for departments running financial applications.

Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council dealt with a ransomware attack that cost them more than £10 million in damages. Most recently, Hackney Council suffered a cyber attack, the extent of the data breach is not yet clear. However, this is not a position you want to be in and it is avoidable when you ensure you have up-to-date security protocols in place.

As government organisations are now subject to compliance and fraud checks, any breach of regulations can lead to disciplinary actions including fines and dismissal of personnel. To pass a compliance check like ISO27001 you not only need to have updated software but updated hardware.

It may seem more cost-effective to continue running older operating systems for your organisation however, in the long run it will cause more harm than good. Keep on top of your software and hardware updates so that your citizens and suppliers can trust you with their information.

CS Lucas passes ISO 27001 certification second year running

CS Lucas has passed it's yearly ISO 27001 audit for the second year running with comments by the certification auditor, GIC, that our processes have greatly improved. Maintaining our ISO 27001 certification is of great importance to us. We offered a transparent look into the working processes of our Security Management Systems, so as to provide accurate evidence that we are in conformance with the requirements of ISO/IEC 27001:2013 standards. The team at CS Lucas works hard to ensure we are following the international security standards that our customers and partners expect from our Treasury Management System.

At CS Lucas, we take the risk of cyber security threats and the need to ensure business continuity is maintained, seriously. Thanks to processes already in place – we were able to respond to new working arrangements put in place across the world during COVID-19 quickly. We provide our customers with state of the art, reliable technology – technology that is hinged on our built-in security features such as:

– Data encryption

– Network security and server hardening

– System monitoring

– Logging and alerting

These features are stringently tested and continually enhanced in response to ever-evolving threats in cyber security – this is particularly important given the rise of cybercrimes and databreaches seen during COVID 19.

Our Vice President, Don Escuro says that "With the increase of email malware campaigns that have been reported to hit those working in treasury and payments – it's becoming clear that all businesses are susceptible to fraud."

We noted that with the growing need for remote working, security gaps within these environments were likely to increase due to lapses in internal education and

compromises in ‘typical’ office-based security protocols would become common practice. Therefore, it became a priority to ensure that our systems were audited during this time. ISO 27001 is the only auditable international standard that defines the requirements of an information security management system (ISMS). An ISMS is a set of policies, procedures, processes and systems that manage information risks, such as cyber attacks, hacks, data leaks or theft. By gaining this certification, users on our end can be confident that their data is protected

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Looking at a future with SONIA

There has been a lot of noise surrounding the SONIA/LIBOR transition, what it will look like and how we can best move from relying on LIBOR’s forward-looking rates. Loan markets are in need of the forward-looking term rate that SONIA sets; it’s easier to track and manage interest payments using SONIA because it is based on actual overnight rates collated by the Bank of England. This makes SONIA more objective compared to LIBOR.

According to the Bank of England’s roadmap, funders are to stop writing LIBOR-linked loans by the end of Q3 2020. Concerns over the practicalities of getting this transition ready during a pandemic, pushed the deadline back to Q1 2021. The Working Group on Sterling Risk-Free Rates noted that the planned Q3 2020 target was no longer feasible as it was necessary to continue use of new LIBOR linked loans into Q4 2020 in order to regulate flow of credit to the real economy in light of the pandemic. Lenders are now in a position where they must find the best transitionary solution for them.

Lenders who are already moving away from LIBOR, may be using a compound SONIA and lag period/ observation shift to track rates. We know that the assumed SONIA rate is set by the preceding banking date – which can cause discrepancies when asking for rate quotes. The Bank of England announced in their roadmap that from August 2020, the index of compounded overnight SONIA rates will be published. As it will date back from 23 April, the published index will make it

easier for you to track the effect of compounding SONIA rates across London's business days. By making the index public, this will cut down on the amount of calculations you will have to make. However, it does not prevent banks from quoting different rates. Keep in mind that the Bank of England's index uses the observational shift method which is not as popular as the lag method – therefore, allowing for rate variations.

At CS Lucas, we are integrating a SONIA Rate Engine to help our consumers track and verify the rates quoted to them by banks. It will be hosted on a public web portal so that users can double check their rates against The Bank of England's figures. We, ourselves use the SONIA Rate Engine to work out payments and account for transactions. You can see how it works and find out how exactly you can utilise it for your needs during our webinar – hosted by the lead technician who built it, Ivan Parayno. Join us September 9, at 2PM BST and again at 2PM SGT.

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25 Years of Excellence in Corporate Treasury System

Charting CS Lucas history over 25 years. Enhancing functionality with every wave of technology innovation

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New Appointments and Staff Relocation

CS Lucas is growing its global presence by new appointments and relocation of staff. The company is strengthening its resources to support further rollouts in

Europe, North America and across the Asia Pacific.

CS Lucas is pleased to announce the following appointments:

· Henrik Schroter as non-executive board director
· Min Chian Lok as Senior Vice President
· Veena Kunummal as Technical Support Manager (North America)

Henrik Schroter is an experienced software architect with a business acumen spanning almost 40 years. He is well-versed in all aspects of treasury systems, risk and fund management, having been involved in software design and development, pre-sales and implementation. He has been involved in corporate transformation, mergers and acquisitions and is able to lead large enterprise projects across different countries. At CS Lucas, he will provide leadership and cross-border expertise as the company expands across Europe, UK, and the Americas. Henrik is based in London.

Min Chian Lok brings product and people into a partnership. A qualified accountant by training, he has over 30 years of experience supporting cross-border ERP systems for major international clients. As an entrepreneur, he will create business value for CS Lucas through people and partners located around the world. At CS Lucas, he will lead in building an agile operation to support our customers and partners. Min Chian is based in Singapore.

Veena Kunummal was one of the pioneers having been with CS Lucas for over 10 years. She has in-depth experience in system design, development, integration, pre-sales and customer support. She has relocated to Canada to provide lead support for our customers and partners in North America and Europe.

Excellence in Treasury

Management Transformation

CS Lucas was awarded Excellence in Treasury Management Transformation at the 6th Annual CFO Innovation Awards on the implementation project with SMRT Corporation Ltd. I like to share the following email extract from CIO Innovation for their reasons behind the award.

Supported by the Group CFO of SMRT Corporation, the treasury team pushed for migration to the cloud, but faced skepticism from both IT and users alike. Multiple meetings were held with CS Lucas to ensure that the cloud Treasury Management System (TMS) product complied with the company's stringent internal security requirements.

CFO Innovation Editors were impressed by the partnership between SMRT and CS Lucas in engaging users. Training sessions and user acceptance tests were held, and a gradual pace of deployment brought more confidence to the project. The initial wariness vanished after successive stages of implementation. The new TMS is delivering timely and accurate cash visibility and reporting with ERP integration and an auditable trail.

My heartfelt thanks to the supporting teams at SMRT, SWIFT and my own in-house specialists for making this project a success. Vindicates all our hard work!

Thinking About Building Your Own TMS In-House? Read This First

> *"Outlining your requirements at the start is vital. For example, can your monthly management reporting information be generated by the TMS with minimal editing required? Ensure that the potential TMS suppliers provide hard examples during the selection process. A TMS should be flexible, so bear in mind what you might need in the future. Is the customer support service*

> *robust? Try calling their support to see if a person answers or if you are diverted to voicemail. How often are updates released? Visit existing users to find out what the TMS are like in reality. And finally, assess if the cost of owning and maintaining your own IT hardware is worthwhile."*
>
> *Keith Shapley, Treasury Manager Projects and Compliance, Group Treasury, BAE Systems (GT News TMS Buyers' Guide)*

Let me guess: you've been trawling through the many TMS and ERP products on the market, comparing every tiny detail of each one. You have a carefully thought through list of features you need, plus a few nice-to-haves thrown in – but after extensive research, you're still struggling to figure out exactly what the difference is between the options, or whether they will quite do what you need to them to do.

By now, you're well and truly tired of the exercise. You've reached the point where you want to throw your hands up and say: What the hell – let's just make our own!

On the face of it, it's not a bad idea. After all, you can customise it exactly as you want it, building it around your team's skill levels and existing workflows. You need only worry about the features you actually want, and you don't have to compromise on your ideal setup in order to find an existing system that works "well enough". Maybe you even have a decent team of software developers that can save you some cash by doing everything in-house.

All sounds great…. In theory.

In reality, building your own TMS from scratch is a serious undertaking. Before you make a decision either way, it's important to be clear on what you're really getting yourself into – and whether it will reap the benefits you're looking for.

Do You Have the Right Type of Expertise?

You might have a clear idea of what you need your bespoke TMS to do, but do your developers get it, too? Your IT team aren't treasurers, after all, and your treasurers aren't IT experts. Keeping them on the same page is a challenge that will take serious project management.

In fact, one of the biggest issues facing any large scale tech project is shared

vision. The way an IT professional visualises and executes a solution is often very different to how someone from another department, with a completely different set of expectations, perspectives and requirements, might do so.

Learning to translate treasury needs into a workable, streamlined, intuitive-to-use product that also makes the most of the available IT systems and architectures is a skill that TMS vendors perfect over decades. Are you confident that you'll be able to jump straight to the finish line?

How Will You Future-Proof Your Creation?

Okay, let's presume that you're able to bring your team together and build something that perfectly serves your needs. How will you make sure that it continues to serve your needs as these evolve in the years ahead?

A decent TMS is not a static creation. As you know, the role of the treasurer is changing all the time and your technology will need to be poised to accommodate this. Will you be able to add in new functions, or update the system to support new plugins, formulas, algorithms, codes and transaction types? Stay compliant with changing accounting standards and other regulations?

Bear in mind that when you buy a TMS from a respected vendor, they take responsibility for keeping you on the cutting edge. When you build your own, it's all down to you.

What Happens if You Have Problems?

Updates and overhauls are one thing, but daily upkeep is quite another. Do you have a plan in place for managing technical support? How will you schedule and handle downtime for maintenance? Will you need to take on additional IT personnel to provide round-the-clock support?

Will It Genuinely Save You Time?

You might feel that jumping straight in and creating your perfect TMS will save you months of research, negotiation and relaying your requirements to vendors. The likelihood is, though, that you'll simply shift these efforts and activities to an internal team, who may not have dealt with something like this before and will need to invest significant time getting to grips with the subject matter before they can even start on the project.

Also, don't forget that rolling out a new TMS and training your team to use it involves a serious time commitment in itself, even without building your own system from scratch. As CLS Holdings' Group Treasurer Alain Millet warns:

> *"Do not underestimate the work involved during implementation. I strongly believe that getting involved in all the aspects of setting up the system will benefit us and will make us 'better' users of the system. This approach will inevitably increase the workload of the department and also result in delays in the implementation plan. It is important to manage the expectations of senior management in that respect."*
>
> *Alain Millet, Group Treasurer, CLS Holdings (GT News TMS Buyers' Guide)*

Given the timelines involved in any TMS implementation, you need to think very carefully about whether you want to multiply the scale of the project by building your own system, too.

Will It Genuinely Save You Money?

High quality TMSs have become dramatically more affordable in recent years, especially given the potential of cloud-hosted solutions to bring down cost of ownership.

Bespoke solutions are typically far more expensive to produce – even when you're covering the costs in-house. Once you've factored in all the direct and opportunity costs of setting your IT team the task of creating, maintaining and supporting a unique TMS, you may find you struggle to save money in the long run.

Can You Afford to Experiment?

Here's the crux of the matter: if you build something yourself, it will take time to get it right. And, of course, while you're perfecting the system, your team is dealing with the fallout.

What will it cost them – whether in time, money, reputation or simply stress – to encounter hiccups in their cashflow for the next 3, 6, 12 or more months? To wait out any system crashes or periods of unplanned downtime? To put off upgrades that make the system compatible with their banking systems, transaction types, or industry regulations? To re-train if you decide to take things in a different

direction?

Of course, you may decide that the payoff is worth the hassle – that total ownership of a bespoke solution is worth sticking out the teething problems. But be aware that there is no way of doing this that won't (at least temporarily) impact on your productivity, and potentially your profitability. If you go down this route, go into it with your eyes open – make sure this is a risk that you, and your management team, are willing to take.

For more great advice on navigating TMS options, click here to download your FREE eBook, How to Choose a TMS that Will Supercharge Your Growth.

How to Iron Out Inconsistencies within Your Treasury Department

Want to know the number one threat to the health of your organisation?

Human errors.

Yes, that's right. When it comes to all kinds of potential threats, from online security to compliance, it's less the hackers, thieves or cheats you have to worry about than the little accidents and mistakes that we all make from time to time.

Nowhere is this more the case than in treasury. Here, you're dealing with enormous volumes of data, numbers and calculations every day, and that multiplies the potential for small errors no end.

Especially, of course, when you're working with complex financial instruments, investment models and the movement of cash between different departments and subsidiaries. When you have a ton of moving parts that all rely on each other, a tiny slip up in a calculation can end up causing chaos all along the chain.

While you'd never dream of automating decision-making duties, if you really want

to wipe out these kind of mistakes, it makes sense to automate the parts of your job that are strictly mathematical.

… In other words, the kind of tasks a computer can do.

The thing is, though, it's not even the tricky formulas that actually invite the most mistakes. Those kind of calculations take concentration and skill, so you have to be focused on what you're doing. The areas that tend to see the most problems are the ones where you switch off half way through and go into autopilot mode. Things like basic data entry, or having to copy across information into different systems.

And then there is the huge problem of duplicated effort and conflicting versions of documents.

These aren't the result of errors as such, because the individuals entering the data, working out the figures and updating their documents are doing so correctly based on the numbers they've been given. The problem is, the information they're working with isn't entirely up-to-date.

This might mean that two people in different departments or even the same team end up doing the same work twice. Or that you have to waste time reconciling conflicting versions of documents saved in different locations, figuring out which one contains the most recent edits and figures. Things that kill your productivity or frustrate your team, but aren't a disaster.

But it could be so much worse than this.

It could mean finding out that swathes of work, including detailed cash flow forecasts, are completely wrong and have to be thrown out and started all over again. It could mean that you give financial advice to your CEO or CFO based on numbers or projections that turn out to be out of date – or you're caught out in a meeting with your boss or an investment analyst when you can't whip out reliable figures on the spot.

It could mean finding out at the very last moment that you're about to breach a loan covenant, triggering a cross default, or at risk of missing a payment that could incur significant fines. It could mean finding out you're non-compliant with key legislation and just don't have time to fix it.

These aren’t issues that reflect on the abilities of you or your colleagues and treasury. They are simply problems that arise when you have a large organisation using a number of overlapping systems and processes that lack cohesion.

But picking through endless paperwork or spreadsheets isn’t the best use of your time. To be as valuable as you can be to your company, you need to focus on solving deep-level, strategy-based problems that require insight and analysis. Not painstakingly copying and pasting information from one place to another, manually checking for treasury inconsistencies.

No doubt you’re spotting a pattern by now.

Technological problems need technological solutions, and the inconsistencies that form in treasury are absolutely technological in nature.

The key is to find a universal solution for your organisation that will streamline your operations, highlighting any discrepancies along the way. You need a system that runs many of your computations for you, flagging up potential problems.

Crucially, you need a system that is designed to minimise the potential for human error while helping you to identify the kind of bigger, overarching issues and operational weaknesses that only someone with your skill set will be able to solve.

It is, as Dimos Dimitriadis eloquently explains, a case of turning a ‘practice’ into an ‘art’:

> *“The age-old ‘practice’ of data keying, manual processing, printing, checking and re-keying has the potential to be elevated to the ‘art’ of automating processes, monitoring interfaces, and engaging in value added activities only by implementing and using smart systems.”*
>
> *Dimos Dimitriadis, Founder, Treasury Technology Associates*

Technologically speaking, this is where a top-end TMS comes in.

Technological solutions like these automatically reconcile the varying processes and financial records used by different teams, ensuring that you are always able to view the latest information. This vastly improves visibility over your cash flow, ironing out inconsistencies, reducing the chance of going overdrawn or running

into technical defaults, and generally eliminating any nasty surprises on the horizon.

The great thing about a TMS is that you have a “single version of truth” that puts your mind at rest.

Everyone who needs access to the most up-to-date information can have it, uninterrupted, at any time, via any device.

And let’s be honest, in any company, people are concerned about putting themselves in the firing line. They’re worried they’ll have to take the heat for problems that weren’t their fault, and frightened of taking risks/trying out new systems which mean they’ll make mistakes that come back to bite them.

The beauty of using a TMS is not only that the risk of errors, conflicts or inconsistencies is greatly reduced, it also means you can “pass the buck” to the technology if you have to. If you explain to your team that this will shift responsibility away from them for the kind of mistakes no one wants to be responsible for, it will make it much easier to get people to adopt the new tech faster, and means you all spend more time and energy on doing a great job and less on covering your backs.

What’s more, because it’s easier to communicate between teams and departments, you can begin to collaborate far more efficiently and effectively on cross-organisational projects, boosting productivity and making it easier to roll out new ideas and strategies across the board. It also makes it much easier to train up new recruits, helping you to grow your team faster without worrying that they’ll mess up and drop you in hot water by making errors as they learn.

Meanwhile, you can stop sweating the small stuff that, frankly, is below your pay grade.

Instead, you can really hone in on what your organisation needs from treasury and how you can contribute to growth. You don’t have to get bogged down in detail: you can start thinking big.

Want to learn more about sharpening up your treasury operations with a top TMS? Click here to download your FREE eBook, How to Choose a TMS that Will Supercharge Your Growth.

How to Choose a Treasury Management Course to Land the Best Corporate Treasury Jobs

In any profession, keeping on top of the latest technologies, tools, skills and ideas is crucial for anyone looking to climb the ladder and scoop the best roles. But with corporate treasury job descriptions changing all the time, this is more important than ever.

> *"The role of the treasurer has shifted from being primarily the bill payer, the banker, the financier to being a really integral part of decision-making at the company, a real value contributor. And that value comes in a lot of shapes and a lot of forms. It could be that a treasurer is walking down the hall to procurement, bringing treasury skills to decisions around the supply chain and commodity exposures and those kinds of risks…Some treasurers are getting involved in pricing and showing the business units how to decide whether to sell in the local currency. If you're up against local competition and you're from another country and another cost base, you can't sell in dollars when everybody else is selling in the local currency. The business unit needs to be able to look at the supply chain and how it feeds pricing and how it feeds risk—and treasury is in the perfect position to help with that."*
>
> *Bob Baldoni, Ernst & Young*

That's a pretty wide remit, right?

If you're looking to upgrade your skills and take your treasury career to the next level, choosing the right kind of formal training can make all the difference. But how do you know what course is best for you?

First, of course, you'll want to know that the course provider is worth listening to. What are their credentials? Who will actually be training you? Do they have

extensive, preferably current and ongoing, experience in a high functioning, international treasury?

Do they understand the changing role and potential of treasury technology as well as traditional approaches and strategies?

Among the best respected options are the Association of Corporate Treasurers (ACT) in London, global corporate finance organisation Euromoney, London Corporate Training, the International Faculty of Finance and SINGFIN in Singapore.

And then, of course, you need to ask yourself what kind of training you need – which skills you need to work on.

Of course, this depends on what stage you're at in your career. Are you an experienced treasurer or corporate finance professional looking to improve, or someone who is bringing experience from another area across to treasury?

But ultimately, the training you choose comes down to a combination of a) the specialisms that your company and industry demand, b) your company's broader goals for the coming years and c) the kind of role you envision having in your organisation.

Do you want to play a greater role in shaping commercial strategy, for example, in the spread of investments your company is making and their long term plans for growth? Or to take a more analytical approach to hedging and risk management? Perhaps you have specific skill gaps you're looking to address relating to foreign exchange exposure or interest rate risk? Are you trying to get your head around changes or maybe you're just looking for smart new ways to manage your company's portfolio and could do with fresh ideas to help boost performance?

If it's a particular niche you're concerned with, there are dozens of intensive courses to choose between, ranging from a day or two to a couple of weeks in length. However, bear in mind that you will get far more out of the training if you can demonstrate to your boss in broader terms how these skills are going to make and/or save them money. Understanding and explaining how this will fit into the bigger picture and drive forward your CEO's corporate objectives is essential.

For instance, ACT offers two-day classroom-based courses in areas including Advanced Cash Management.

The first of these covers practical, targeted training in things like treasury centralisation, dealing with multi-currency environments and targeted training in liquidity management techniques such as notional pooling, as well as in-depth explanations of how changes to the industry, particularly SEPA and ISP2022, and new regulations like the Payment Services Directive II will change the way you do business.

Crucially, it also covers more general strategic skills like improving efficiency in your account structures, while introducing you to up-and-coming developments in the FinTech industry. These help you to deliver measurable value in your organisation and keep your finger on the pulse when it comes to selecting new systems and technologies to streamline your treasury.

Insights like these could prove priceless as you look to safeguard your value in an ever-evolving professional landscape.

Alternatively, you could opt for a course that is structured around applying theoretical ideas in real world contexts. ACT's 2-day course in Auditing the Treasury Function is a great example of this, teaching you how to plan risk-based treasury audits effectively to improve financial performances, spot warning signs and implement best practices. It also analyses the disaster management strategies used by Barings, Societe Generale and UBS to highlight recurring problems.

And it breaks down the features and tools offered by treasury management systems in order to streamline the audit process and manage the audit trail. This includes a discussion of security violations and cyber fraud, disaster recovery and business continuity, and an explanation of key interfaces, capacity and capability.

Or you could look at Euromoney's global range of courses, which cover aspects like Liquidity Risk Management, Global Treasury Treasury Management; Controlling Cash and Risk, and FX & Money Markets. The latter covers the key activities, instruments and fundamental mechanics of international FX and money markets and aims to help you navigate an increasingly complex and fast changing market, manage diversity liquidity sources and explore strategies for investment, trading and funding.

Euromoney also offers a very interesting four-day Treasury Products Workshop, which gives you an excellent overview of what's available and how this can benefit your company. It also helps you navigate market jargon and terminology, product price points and marketing strategies.

Alternatively, if you're shifting to treasury from another field, something along the lines of the New York Institute of Finance's (NYIF) more generalised, 44-hour online Certificate in Corporate Treasury Management can provide a very useful introduction, especially if you're focussing on the US corporate accounting world.

It covers essential treasury analytics and the essentials of treasury management, including yield curve analysis, Base Point Value, convexity and risk management, as well as long term and short term financing, money and capital markets, interest rate futures and FX exposure. But it also places these issues in a real world context, looking at the activities in the corporate treasuries of organisations like Sumitomo, Proctor & Gamble, Lufthansa and Allied Irish Banks.

However, for something far more in-depth, take a look at ACT's Certificate in Treasury and Diploma in Treasury Management. You need to complete the certificate before you can start the diploma, which covers corporate finance for treasury, risk management, the role of the treasury manager, working capital and trade finance, and financial reporting, tax and regulation for treasury.

Similar options to this include London Corporate Training's week long Treasury Management course, which focuses on measuring and managing fraud reduction, and reporting on this externally and internally. It also means you'll be fully compliance with Basel 2 and IFRS legislation.

Euromoney also offers an excellent Treasury Management Academy, which is aimed at professionals that already work in treasury or corporate finance and want to upgrade their skills, rather than those who are moving into the sector from a related field.

This focuses on treasury strategy, drawing together a number of different elements, tools and considerations to help you harness the untapped potential of treasury in your organisation and support your CEO and CFO's longer term ambitions.

It gives a deep level view of how financial systems and products operate and the

kinds of strategies that corporate finance professionals can use to make the most of these as well as to manage risk. In particular, it looks at some of the more complicated derivative products available, how these work, their implications on your balance sheet and for your regulatory obligations, and how you can maximise returns within a given timeframe.

These are just some of the options out there – you'll need to do your research to find the perfect solution. But just make sure you keep in mind that this isn't about learning something treasury-related just because you think you should. It's about figuring out what your organisation is trying to achieve and how you want to help them achieve it, then finding the best set of tools to make that a reality.

Want to learn more about how the right combination of skills and treasury software can fuel your career? Click here to download your FREE eBook!

The Future of Treasury Management Technology and How to Stay Ahead of the Game

On 21st July 2016, CS Lucas was invited by Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) to share its views on the treasury technology today and trends. The audience comprised of selected clients of PWC. This blog post summarises what was shared.

Treasury management technology has been exponentially advancing for decades. Your top priority now may be obsolete in the near future. Moving forward, the treasury field has prompted plenty of discussions about future trends. To stay competitive, treasurers need to comprehend the importance of these digital trends and learn to embrace innovation.

Do you feel up-to-speed with the industry's rapidly advancing technologies?

Read on and you'll discover the future of treasury management, as I see it.

Treasury Technology Today

The treasury management system is no longer just a tool that provides automation, audit, and visibility. The industry continues to upgrade itself and uncover alternative solutions for different barriers. As such, the technology today empowers treasury teams with the following capabilities:

- Straight-Through Processing
- Account System Integration
- Real-Time Connectivity
- E-Banking Platform Integration
- Online Collaboration
- High Availability
- Auditable Trail
- Institutional Grade Security
- Scalability

Going Forward

Being up-to-date is good, but certainly not enough. Having a vision of future trends and thoroughly understanding them is just as important. A progressive mindset is paramount in ensuring a company's future success.

Treasury going social, having an App Store, and tapping on machine learning are the key trends that we believe will transform the current treasury technology.

Treasury Goes Social

There's an increasing convergence of what is used at work and what is used day-to-day and it's getting more pronounced. For example, almost everyone uses WhatsApp to organize business matters, LinkedIn to get an overview of a certain individual you might be meeting and Google Calendar to get more visibility of your work schedules.

What does this mean in the treasury space?

Since treasury is something that can be central in the treasury operations, the social element will be more noticeable in these systems. This could mean having

virtual team-rooms, instant messaging capabilities, and files that are archived and searchable.

File sharing is becoming very common. One can easily start sharing certain files and transactions. They can tag excel files as notes to certain transactions in the system for easy referencing.

Treasury will become more integrated with mobile devices. Easily make decisions, communicate with team members, and approve decisions through mobile devices.

App Store for Treasury

We foresee the concept of app stores in treasury technology becoming more prominent. Conceptually, applications change the DNA of a phone. It has the ability to transform your smartphone into a photo editor, navigator, financial planner, step tracker and much more.

The same idea can be applied to treasury systems today. Using a single application, treasurers are able to provide specific and niche reports with a single touch. Additionally, it is also meaningful for users on older versions as they might not require a complete overhaul of their current system. Instead, they can choose specific features to implement at a minimal cost.

Naturally, this trend will encourage a very strong developer ecosystem. End users of the treasury technology will ultimately benefit.

Treasury Gets Predictive

Treasury technology now taps into machine learning to gain powerful insights. Machine learning is a type of Artificial Intelligence (AI) that learns without being programmed to learn. What this means is that these systems analyze activity patterns and actions taken by the user. After which, through their very own algorithms, they study historical data to effectively predict potential moves the user will make. With the insight gained, the system proactively interacts with the user by prompting them with actions that they are highly likely to execute.

To illustrate, imagine this:

Traditionally, whenever your cash position approaches $10 million, you place out $9 million in the money market. The system then remembers this pattern based

on huge chunks of historical data. Let's say today, your cash position is approaching 10 million. In this situation, what the system does is that it alerts you and suggests a list of banks for you to place the $9 million money market transactions in. It also shows you rates of your recent transactions for comparison purposes.

Ultimately, you no longer tell the system what to do; the system will tell you what you can do. Interactions then become smart and more meaningful.

Future Consideration

Cyber security is highly critical and moving forward towards a digital age. We've seen blue chip firms involved in high profile cases triggered by cyber crimes.

Treasury is a very sensitive area; plenty of confidential information is involved. In this regard, cyber security is crucial to treasury technology.This threat is not something that the IT team can deal with in isolation. It requires the cooperation of the whole company and even clients. Everyone is a potential access point to enter your systems.

Some ways to mitigate risks of cyber crimes are:

- **2 Factors of Authentication (2FA)** – Set this process as a default when dealing with sensitive systems and information. The core idea of 2FA is to have a separate authentication device or means with you. An example would be a bank token which is needed for mobile banking.
- **Passwords** – Create strong and unique passwords. Ensure that they are not found in the dictionary. Never send an email or any other resources where the username and password are together, always send them through separate means.
- **IP based login** – Only devices with approved IP addresses should be able to connect to your company's local area network.
- **Penetration Testing** – Do frequent penetration testing. Hire ethical hackers to identify potential cybersecurity flaws in your systems.
- **External connection** – It is highly important to pay special attention to it and guarantee the security of connections to external systems, especially since treasury systems are usually connected to external payment systems.

Want to dig deeper into this topic?

We conduct monthly webinars and will be inviting a top experts to speak on topics relevant to corporate treasury. Subscribe to our email updates on the rolodex to your right to receive our invitations.

And don’t forget to share this post with all your fellow treasurers!

Presentation Looming? Make Sure You Know Your Treasury Operations Inside Out

Presenting to the boss can be daunting for the rest of us, but for treasurers there’s that extra pressure to show you’ve dotted every i and crossed every t without boring the board to tears with an overload of technical details. What’s more, you have to be ready to field questions on everything from compliance to cash flow to laying the groundwork for major strategic developments in your organisation, all at the drop of a hat.

So how to make sure you’re ready to give a slick and compelling account of treasury’s activities that inspires your CEO’s confidence – and ambitions for the company’s growth?

The key is to ensure you have a firm grip on your C-Suite’s priorities, a clear strategy to bring them to fruition and the tightly run ship you need to make it happen.

Let’s start at the beginning. You want your colleagues to leave the meeting with a clear snapshot of your operations and activities, and this means message discipline. Keep it simple, streamlined and clear.

Remember that you’re not here to talk about treasury in depth, you’re here to show how you’re furthering the goals of the organisation and ironing out the

wrinkles along the way.

If your CFO and CEO are keen to free up funds for new investments or M&A activities, for example, make your efforts to facilitate this the focal point of your presentation.

How are your forward projections when it comes to cash and liquidity, funding, financial covenants? Is your trading on track? Are there any compliance, late payment risk or cash flow issues on the horizon that might complicate plans further along the line? What are you doing to improve cash visibility? How are you centralising and consolidating your treasury operations? What are you doing to cut costs and waste, and to make your operations and processes more efficient and responsive?

The Board don't want to hear about the complex technical processes you have to employ to keep everything ticking over. They want to know what you're aiming for, how close you are and whether they need to brace themselves for any setbacks. Your presentation should reflect your treasury setup: sleek, focused and fuss-free, highlighting the most salient issues with clear, engaging visuals, uncluttered slides and the hard numbers the team needs to plan ahead. If you're providing supporting reports, these should be tailored to your audience, goal-orientated and 100% treasury-jargon free.

Most importantly of all you need to be able to improvise – and that means having the most important numbers and insights at your fingertips, and making sure they're precise and up to date. Floundering for an answer when you're put on the spot about the financial health of any part of the business is not a good look for a treasurer. You need to have it all in hand, ready to handle any off-the-cuff questions about FX or interest-rate risk, or how you might manage debt and equity funding to facilitate company growth.

This also means that your treasury operations should be supported by a top-notch tech solution that facilitates accurate reporting and allows you to retrieve, calibrate and analyse vital data fast. You'll benefit enormously from having clear systems and processes in place that maximise the efficiency and productivity of your department, avoiding duplicated work and minimising the risk of error. The better oiled the machine, the more the board will trust and rely on you to be the engine that drives their aims forward.

This isn't about justifying your activities, it's a chance to raise the profile of treasury and strengthen your ties throughout the organisation.

Want to learn more about transforming treasury into a strategic powerhouse in your company? Click here to download your FREE eBook, How to Choose a TMS that Will Supercharge Your Growth.

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5 Top Cash Management Tools

Knowing how much cash is in the organisation, where it is and how it needs to be managed to cover upcoming payments and upcoming financial and funding requirements is absolutely fundamental to any business.

Doing this effectively within one company takes skill, but when you start to incorporate multiple subsidiaries into the mix – especially subsidiaries that are scattered across the world, using different currencies – it can become a delicate art indeed.

Getting the right models and system in place for your organisation is essential, as is making sure that they work in harmony with the technology you have in place. Here are five TMS-friendly tools of the trade that every treasurer should know their way around.

1. Zero Balancing

This is what David Blair describes as being like "a standing order with a variable amount" – whatever amount brings your account down to zero at the end of each day. Often automated by your TMS or ERP, it essentially asks the bank to sweep all the money in the subsidiary account into a single, designated account (usually belonging to treasury or head office) at the end of each day.

It's a simple and effective way to keep tabs on how much money is flowing through the organisation at any one time, but it does render organisations fully responsible for their own tax, interest and other accounting issues, as the bank will not take responsibility for these.

2. Netting

When you're a multinational that's trying to streamline your operations and stop wasting money, intercompany invoices can present a challenge. Or, at least, they do if you opt to settle them one by one, in which case you're running up a ton of payment fees and potentially opening yourself up to FX and operational risks.

Many companies get around this by having treasury set up a "netting centre", which looks to consolidate each subsidiary's payments into a single invoice. During the month, each subsidiary continues to report all of the payments it should be making and receiving within the organization, but instead of moving money back and forth all the time, the netting centre adds (and subtracts) it all up as they go, figures out where money is owed and then turns this into a single figure, which subsidiaries then invoice on "netting day".

3. "On Behalf Of" (OBO)

This is an even more efficient way of handling payments made by subsidiaries in the organization – because, well, they don't actually make any.

In this model, subsidiaries scrap their own bank accounts and, instead, head office handles all payments on their behalf. OBO has proved to be a big success because it saves the usual hassle of having to manage the flow of money throughout a complex structure, creating mountains of admin and pushing payments back until the last possible moment, when they attract the most bank fees.

Because the payments are aggregated, transaction volumes and their associated costs stay low, and companies get to cut out many of the FX costs that stack up when you move money between different entities of the same company that are scattered all over the world.

4. Payments Factory

This is similar to the OBO model – subsidiaries centralise their payments as above, although they typically focus on financial and commercial transactions. That said, this model goes a step further by creating a dedicated unit, or "factory" to handle invoices and payments.

This payments factory tends to be heavily integrated with the tech used by each

subsidiary, allowing invoices to be uploaded via their TMS or ERP. Essentially, they outsource the handling of their intercompany invoices to the payments factory, which in turn finds ways to save money in transaction, banking and FX costs by aggregating payments and arranging payments at optimal times.

5. In-House Banks (IHB)

These take the whole idea of payments factories and make them even more sophisticated. Organisations scrap their subsidiaries' external bank accounts completely and instead recreate the traditional banking role in-house, using an intercompany current account.

This account can handle several currencies at once and is typically integrated with the TMS or ERP, automating much of the processing and reducing the risk of error. Third party payments are managed as per the "OBO" model, and the AP ledger is automatically updated to show that the payment has been made. Money received is managed with virtual technology and, too, automatically brings the AR ledger up to date.

Want to learn more about streamlining your treasury and stripping out unnecessary costs? Click here to download your FREE eBook.

Why The World's Favourite Asian Treasury Centre is About to Get Even Better

Today's treasurers have to keep up with seemingly endless change. 2015 alone saw 50,000 amends to regulations around the globe. Combine this with constantly evolving ways of doing business, the impact of growth and mergers, the need to integrate your activities across the organisation as well as with external obligations and partners and you have a seriously complicated job on your hands.

With so much on their plates, it's no wonder that Singapore's latest financial budget, released in March, came as such a breath of fresh air to treasurers and CFOs operating across the region.

Why? Because Finance Minister, Heng Swee Keat's, new budget provides a whole range of new perks and tax breaks for companies looking to set up a Regional Treasury Centre (RTC) to run their treasury activities out of Singapore.

Heng has done this in three ways.

First, there's the National Trade Platform. Until now, corporates in Singapore, including exporters, importers and logistics specialists, have had to run their trading activities through the TradeNet and TradeXchange, subscribing to a number of different systems in the process. These aren't integrated, and they demand a ton of data-entry steps that have to be repeated over and over again, duplicating effort and diminishing productivity. Plus, error rates tend to be high.

The great news is that this is now being replaced with a single, $100 million, one-stop trade information system, run on an open platform. It's designed to clean up and speed up treasury functions, facilitating investment and innovation along the way.

Secondly, there are new savings for RTCs. The concessionary tax rate for qualifying RTCs is dropping from 10% to a highly competitive 8% – outdoing even Hong Kong's recent moves to make the island the most attractive centre for RTCs in the region.

And thirdly, there is a huge and targeted drive towards making Singapore the next great FinTech capital of the world. A swathe of new approaches are being rolled out to encourage and facilitate innovation and development in the FinTech sector, meaning there will should soon be more great tools and tech to improve treasury functions than ever before.

This matters because, no matter how great the financial conditions of the country you're operating in, modern treasuries just cannot compete and flourish without the right technology to support them. By making such an overt link between traditional carrots like tax breaks and easily navigable regulatory systems and the need for high-performing tech that works in tandem with these changes, Singapore is showing once again why it's the best placed country in Asia to set up

an RTC.

This is all the more important at a time when many corporate finance professionals are just starting to recognise the role that top technology and integrated financial systems play in driving forward productivity and growth. As Lenovo Treasurer Damian Glendinning points out, this has been a weak area for treasurers in the past, and any country that wants to take the mantle of global RTC hub needs to be prepared to take a leadership role in shaping the industry.

> *"In many respects, the financial community in general, and corporate treasuries in particular, have been slow to adopt modern technologies, with the result that today a lot of repetitive and unnecessary work continues to be carried out, when all the information is available in electronic systems – but systems which all too often do not talk to each other. Trade financing is an excellent example of this kind of problem: it is refreshing and encouraging to see a country which is tackling the problem head on, and pushing the market players to join forces in a way they apparently have not be able to do under their own impetus."*
>
> *Damian Glendinning, Lenovo*

Not that Singapore's leadership on this front was ever really in doubt. International corporations have long recognised Singapore as one of the best places to run treasury in Asia. Leading conglomerates that have adopted this approach, like Johnson & Johnson, Lenovo and Thomson Reuters, talk about the "well-developed infrastructure", "deep talent pool" and easy access both to experts across the entire finance spectrum and to a wealth of service providers and technology specialists who know treasury inside out (read more).

Plus, of course, it's a mature and eminently stable economy that's nestled conveniently between economic giants like China and Japan, on the doorstep of emerging Southeast Asian markets, and with strong historical and cultural links with the UK and India. Regional FinTech companies are better placed to understand the specific challenges, risks and opportunities that come with operating across Asia, but which are unfamiliar to their competitors in places like Europe or North America. This includes, for example, the need for adequate insurance against earthquakes within the "ring of fire", and the need for comprehensive, flexible and responsive tools for handling FX risk and managing funds in RMB and INR currencies.

Or, as Glendinning sums it up:

> *"The authorities in Singapore have consistently demonstrated a willingness to understand what all players in the financial community need to be able to work efficiently, and a desire to be at the forefront of progress. The country's small size and close knit financial community greatly facilitate this process, and contribute to creating an environment it is difficult to match."*

But while Singapore continues to lead the way, other hubs with similar capabilities, including Hong Kong and Shanghai, have been hot on its heels. The country's been looking for compelling ways to secure its position at the head of the pack – and with these new measures, it looks like it's found them.

Want to learn more about how the right treasury technology can help you take advantage of these new changes and opportunities? Give us a call today!

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3 Reasons You Need a Free Trial for Your TMS

By the time you hand over the subscription fee for your TMS, you have to be sure it's the right solution for you.

That you can find your way around. That it works as promised. That you could genuinely roll it out company-wide in the timeframes you've agreed with your CFO.

Choosing the right system can feel like a leap of faith, especially when you're dealing with vendors that demand huge upfront costs or minimum commitments of 3-5 years. Get it wrong and you're locked into a contract that drains your budget and potentially wrecks your reputation, without providing the hoped-for ROI.

Luckily, the best TMS vendors on the market provide a simple solution: try before you buy.

Here are 3 of the biggest benefits of opting for a free trial.

1. It Helps You Focus Your Priorities

The sheer range of tools and features offered by a powerful TMS can feel bewildering. Knowing whether each individual element lives up to its boast, and can genuinely advance the goals of your organisation, is tough.

But the TMS procurement process can be an excellent opportunity to refocus as a team, lay out your goals for the future, and test out how you can use technology to further them.

In particular, it's a great opportunity to meet with your CFO/CEO to establish their primary aims for the years ahead.

Perhaps they are interested in new M&A opportunities, or in exploring refinancing options that will allow them to grow the business or reduce the cost of funding? In consolidating treasury, or making it more autonomous? Improving cash visibility? Strengthening banking relationships? Changing their debt mix?

Once you have a better understanding of what they want to achieve, you can seek out a TMS that's geared to support these activities.

But with a free trial, you can go a step further. You can explore the features on offer, figuring out which ones genuinely make it easier for you to make those goals a reality.

By the time you sign on the dotted line, you're perfectly positioned to pull together a strategy to drive forward the organisation's goals and vision.

2. You Can Sound Out the Support on Offer

One of the most important factors when choosing a TMS is finding a vendor that provides high level, ongoing support, well beyond the initial sales process. An on-hand expert while you implement your TMS, design your training programme and tackle teething problems in the early stages.

In the long term, you'll need this provider to discuss enhancements and upgrades,

to train or retrain staff as required and to offer strategic insights that will help you get the most out of your investment.

Any technology provider can make these promises when they're vying for your business. But when you sign up for a free trial, you see what it's really like to work with them.

How quickly do they get back to you? How do they handle your queries? How deep is their technical knowledge? How do they respond if you have mismatched expectations of a feature?

Do you trust them to handle your business well into the future?

3. You Can Source Feedback from Your Team

Overcoming resistance from your team can be a major stumbling block.

Sometimes, people fear change for its own sake; they lack confidence in their skills to adapt, or worry that their workload will increase in the short term. At other times, they're worried their role will be replaced or reduced by automation.

A free trial is an ideal opportunity to introduce colleagues to the technology. You can explain what you're trying to achieve: how you want to join up the dots across the organisation, strip out unnecessary admin and the potential for error and help them to do their jobs better.

You can recruit team members to test out the system and discuss which features have the most potential to ease their workload and improve communication, which would need tweaking and which don't work quite as well as they hoped.

Not only is this feedback invaluable in helping you assess the suitability of the TMS, it also helps your team feel personally invested in the process. Instead of being threatened by the change, they will be excited about its potential – and willing to help you make it a success.

For more great advice on selecting the best TMS for your organisation, download your FREE eBook, How to Choose a TMS that Will Supercharge Your Growth.

How to Get Your TMS Up and Running in Just Two Months

TMS Technology has come a long way.

Gone are the days when set-up costs ruled out all but the Fortune 500. When you had to splash out on pricey in-house infrastructure to make it work. When you'd be waiting around for years before you started to see results.

Today, a TMS can be implemented at incredible speed – and that's crucial. Because when you bring your plans to the table, the question you're guaranteed to hear is: how long will this take to get off the ground?

It's easy to see why.

We've all been there: someone has a bright idea to save you a ton of time and money. A new system to unify your processes, streamline your workload and fix inefficiency woes.

Everyone's excited.

But then you start rolling out the project – and things unravel.

There's a technical issue. Things get stalled. A meeting gets pushed back. A year goes by with minimal progress. By the time the new system is finally up and running, the sheen has worn off. No one's motivated to learn the ropes, so they stick to the clunky old system. The grand idea to revolutionise your workplace is now a great big white elephant.

Sound familiar?

The problem with systems that take an age to implement is that project fatigue sets in.

To get the most value out of your TMS – to start seeing ROI fast – you need to keep energy high. You need a watertight plan to get it up and running in a matter

of months.

This is totally feasible… if you have a roadmap for success.

If you laid the groundwork right during procurement, your CFO/CEO will already understand how the TMS aligns with their business goals, and your team will appreciate what you're trying to achieve and how it facilitates their day-to-day tasks.

The project will not come as a surprise to stakeholders, so you can jump straight in.

First, appoint a project leader who will be responsible for keeping everything on track.

This person should create a Project Gantt sheet that sets your target completion date, outlines each milestone along the way and assigns responsibility for tasks – on your side and the vendor's. They should schedule regular progress meetings, too.

Start training people to use the system.

Your TMS vendor should work with you to design an effective training programme, complete with comprehensive user guides. Ideally, these guides will be tailored to your unique needs, and can be adapted and added to, forming an ongoing learning resource for employees and new recruits.

Once this is ready, sit down with individuals or small teams and walk them through the elements of the TMS that are relevant to them. Run demos, take screenshots and record video demos using tools like Snagit so that they can refer to later on.

Next, migrate your data.

Your TMS is your "single version of truth". It needs to contain all the information and documentation you need to do your job, including financial and client information. Take the time to organise this properly, making it easy for your team to navigate.

Outline your usage scenario.

Write up a detailed account of how the TMS will be used by each department or for each task. Consider trialling the TMS with more tech-savvy teams first, collating their feedback and ironing out any niggles before you roll it out across the board.

Once you do go live, remind everyone that the faster things are up and running, the faster everyone will benefit. Make sure they know who to contact when they need support.

By now your TMS is fully operational – but your task isn't over.

Set up a clear review process, including a log for queries, issues or suggestions for improvement that colleagues encounter during the early stages.

This should form the basis of your post-implementation evaluations, helping you to highlight problem areas and optimise the way the TMS is used.

As your team gets to grips with the technology, it's important morale stays high.

Re-emphasise the need to put everything through the TMS and avoid slipping back into old habits. Keep thanking your team for their efforts, congratulating them on progress and highlighting benefits as soon as they materialise.

Lastly, remember that this is a long term investment that will evolve with the needs of your organisation. Your TMS provider is not just a vendor, they are a partner – don't be shy about discussing upgrades or seeking out ongoing training and support. You can get things off the ground in just two months, but you'll need to maintain momentum to keep things flying high.

Looking for more detailed advice and handy resources to plan your project rollout? Click here for your FREE eBook, How to Choose a TMS that Will Supercharge Your Growth.

The Number One Secret to Making Your New TMS a Success

Want to know the single most important factor in getting a new TMS off the ground without a hitch?

It's simple.

Get everyone on board.

Of course, defining your objectives, mapping out timelines, assigning responsibility, scheduling tests, analysing performance, troubleshooting teething problems… all of these things are essential.

But the fact remains: if you have strong resistance from your team or cynicism from the top, no amount of planning or logistical know-how will stop you hitting road bumps along the way.

So – how do you get everyone pulling in the same direction?

The key is to show each person what's in it for *them*.

Different stakeholders will have different priorities. While everyone is aiming (hopefully!) for better productivity, efficiency and profitability, the way this manifests will depend on their role, department and level of responsibility.

They will need reassurance that shifting to a TMS not only furthers the overarching goals of the company but will also, at a granular level, increase their value within the organisation, instead of diminishing it.

While to you, investing in a new TMS and the myriad benefits it brings might be a no-brainer, you have to be smart about how you sell the idea, and to whom.

Let's start at the top.

First, there's your CFO and/or CEO. As the ultimate decision makers, you need to make a solid business case to them as early on as you possibly can.

When it boils down to it, your CFO/CEO will want to know three things:

- How severe are the risks and costs incurred by your current system?
- Why would having a TMS will fix these issues?
- How quickly will they see results?

That means that you'll need to demonstrate how your current spreadsheet-based processes are costing them time and money, through inefficiencies, human errors, backlogs, duplications and inconsistencies.

How these problems restrict the performance and flexibility of treasury, increasing the risk of late payments, cashflow issues and compliance breaches.

How a sprawling system makes it hard to track where documents and data are stored and opens you up to the threat of data leaks, hacks and theft.

How streamlining these systems, increasing cash visibility and improving accuracy of reporting will help you help *them* turn their investment, funding and M&A ambitions into a reality, fuelling growth while reducing risk.

And that by working with an experienced TMS vendor with a proven track record and excellent post-sales support, you will start seeing ROI in as little as two or three months.

Once you've been given the go-ahead from the powers that hold the purse strings, it's time to turn your attention to the next all-important group: the team that use the tech.

There are certain words that, when uttered by the C-Suite, can strike terror in the hearts of employees. Words like "efficiency", "cost-saving", "restructuring" and "automation".

If your team suspects that the TMS is a stealth manoeuvre to replace jobs or reduce their role, they will *not* want it to work out. And that's a recipe for disaster.

Don't just impose a TMS and tell them to start using it. Make them stakeholders in its success.

Involve your team in the procurement process as much as you can. Ask them what their pain points and frustrations are. Which tasks take up the most time, where efforts are being duplicated, where errors are being made. How they think they

could be more productive.

Discuss the kind of strategic, revenue-generating, growth-enhancing projects they could be working on if they cut out time spent on admin and focused their efforts on analysis.

Then, as you approach vendors, look out for features that tackle these issues.

Relay the benefits back to your team, explaining how these perks will ease their workload and support them in the ways they've identified. How it will make it easier to train new recruits. How it will reduce the risk of error, or of individuals being blamed for mishaps.

Demonstrate that you have taken their comments on board and selected a TMS that *helps them do their jobs better.*

The more involved and invested they feel, the less resistant they'll be to change and the faster the new TMS will be absorbed into daily working practices.

Getting people on board with a new TMS means focusing on the *people*, not the TMS.

Show them your aim is to further their goals. To maximise their value to the organisation. To strengthen their role. And crucially, how they can do all of these things with the right technology by their side.

Want in-depth, practical advice on rolling out a new TMS in your company? Click here to download your FREE eBook, How to Choose a TMS that Will Supercharge Your Growth.

Kevin Mitchell from Rochford Group covered a similar topic – TMS Implementations: 5 Steps to Ensure Success. Do it check it out if you are interested to read more.

An App Store for Enterprise-systems, a Reality?

Looking at the ubiquity of smart-phones and the high level of functionality available through apps, we are exploring how enterprise-systems may evolve.

If an ideal framework exists whereby stand-alone features can be simply plugged in, this would replace customization. Just like installing an app to a phone. Imagine it on an enterprise-system. The process should be fast and fuss-free.

A Treasurer's Conundrum in Accommodating Changes

In this business environment, companies are learning to manage their treasury and funding risks better than ever. Timeliness of insight is also important. Different regulations, languages and a gamut of reporting preferences may be required by the senior management to make strategic decisions based on accurate intelligence. This means a treasurer needs insight into local and international data and the confluence of all this business information needs to be reported in formats deemed appropriate, intuitive and adaptive for strategic needs. But hurdles remain:-

A recent (July-Sept 2014) Deloitte study of senior Finance executives reveals: only 8% of respondents view Finance as the primary source of insight in strategic decision-making. 32% consider the lack of appropriate analytical skills and behavior in the talent pool a significant challenge. 52% consider decision-support teams to have 'mediocre' analytical maturity. 41% perceive their business-partners to spend 30-50% of their time on lower-value tasks such as spreadsheet data-gathering, as opposed to providing insight. Troubling numbers, given that business-partners are a valuable resource. Finance is uniquely positioned to provide insight in strategic decision-making. How then will treasurers articulate their insight? Will spreadsheets do? This insight is a comparative advantage to driving business-performance in difficult markets. In light of this, are there also limitations to what a traditional enterprise-system can do?

In today's blog-post, we are exploring difficulties faced by treasurers in accommodating changes using conventional software, customization, spreadsheets and configuration. We will then suggest our viewpoint on handling

such changes, going forward.

A) Two Common Solutions That Come Encumbered with Hidden Complexities

1)Procurement:- To cope with changes, a business may choose to procure a feature-rich enterprise-system with many different built-in modules addressing as many as possible of the unforeseeable circumstances. If all modules are heavily used, there is no inefficiency. But that's rarely the case. This procurement approach sometimes results in purchasing of functionality that is unused or seldom used. The software is bloated for features that may never be required, contributing to ongoing costs and posing maintainablity issues. Therefore procuring a feature-rich enterprise-system can be inefficient.

2)Customization:- Another option is for companies to purchase an enterprise-system that can later be customized to meet growing needs. But there lies a slippery slope: With customization comes the intrinsically drawn-out process of testing and checking that incorporated changes work, and other parts of the enterprise-system are not affected. The irony? Businesses that insist on what they want will receive higher levels of customization and quicker turnaround times – even if the output is eventually not used in their decision-making.

The thinking here is: Wouldn't it be better if the enterprise-system is designed in such a way that new features and precise functionalities can simply be bolted on, skipping customization or expensive procurement altogether?

B) How Companies Avoid Customization To Meet Changes on-demand

1)Spreadsheets:- Regulatory scrutiny may require companies to perform analysis such as stress-testing and back-testing its liquidity position. While spreadsheets remain popular for calculating simpler analytics, when it comes to more complex reporting needs, spreadsheets are inadequate because disparate data needs to be obtained, consolidated and categorized to identify trends and anticipate problems. This is not easily achieved with a spreadsheet. Besides manual entry-errors, spreadsheets are not ideal tools for articulating insight, a function better served by analytical or visualization tools.

2)Standard Reports:- Standard report formats either contain more information than necessary, or spreads the information out instead of presenting the vitals on

a single page, or in a dashboard. Reporting tools and Business Intelligence (B.I.) tools can alleviate this problem. But a high degree of proficiency is required to use the tools well. External consultants are usually engaged for more complicated reporting.

3)Configuration:- Some companies with a large Enterprise Resource Planning system will attest that configuration is as painful, if not more so, than an outright customization. And the result? Not always intuitive. (You can further explore the relationship of configuration and customization here.)

From what we've discussed, customization is the only, sub-optimal solution.

C) Why not Apps?

If precise functionality can be met with an app, will the solution be more elegant?

Suppose new accounting standard requires certain position to use a different basis of valuation. Treasury accountant should be able to go to the equivalent of an "app store" where he can find the appropriate app for this purpose. Once he finds something that suits him, he can download it and "fire it up". And if this app is not appropriate, he can simply delete it and look for something else that fits better.

Translate this same convenience to reports, dashboards, alerts, e-banking, third-party integration etc… In fact what can be downloaded and installed is only limited by how open the enterprise system has been designed to receive new apps.

Using Apps to Upgrade and Enrich

Presently there are 240,000 apps in Amazon App Store, 1m apps in Apple, 1.3m apps in Google Play. Who will build these apps if not the enterprise-system vendor?

We envisage two groups: Partners or consultants who specialize in specific areas, for example the accountants and treasurers. Commercially, their apps could involve licensing, resulting a win-win relationship for all ecosystem users. The others are users who develop reports or apps, publishing them for free. The app-store therefore functions as an infrastructure that enables all system-users to leverage the smart practices, innovation, insight and solutions refined by a

community of professionals.

Opportunities Abound in Asian Treasuries

Asia is booming, and it is not just Asian companies but also global companies with operations in Asia. Regular readers of Singapore's leading daily business publication, The Business Times, will recall an article published earlier in July discussing survey results from PricewaterhouseCoopers' inaugural Asian-focused treasury survey.

Key findings which raised a few alarm bells include the following:

- While 66% of respondents were exposed to commodity risk in varying degrees, more than a third are not managing the risk at all
- Approximately half of the respondents used basic risk management techniques or a standardized approach to manage their financial risks
- The survey showed that less than one-third of respondents have real-time information on their cash position, and over 40% of the respondents do not have even basic cash-pooling structures in place
- More than 50% of respondents did not have a treasury management system in place, and those that did are only using the basic functions
- Respondents' key priorities in the near future are getting the right treasury personnel, more effective cash and risk management and TMS implementation

At CS Lucas, our industry observations are aligned to the key survey findings. We believe in doing the right things right, getting straight answers to complex financial questions. But many organizations, even the more enlightened ones, still regard corporate treasury as a cost centre with little value-add to the boardroom agenda. We have also found that very large organizations can still tolerate the risk of managing various products with rudimentary spreadsheets.

Clearly, there is a need to revisit the role of the treasurer. We need to effectively manage the broader enterprise wide risk via more sophisticated techniques to derive strategic benefits. The time is now for companies operating in Asia to address the challenges – managing financial risks, cash and liquidity issues effectively across geographically dispersed businesses, multiple emerging currencies, hedge accounting requirements and a diverse banking landscape.

McKinsey: Global treasuries still adopt "penny wise, pound foolish" approach

Recently, I had come across a 2011 article published by McKinsey and Company titled "Five steps to a more effective global treasury". It found that nearly half of the companies surveyed with less than $10 billion in revenue still used spreadsheets as their primary treasury system.

This 2011 survey result is worth revisiting as sadly, little has changed and the findings are still relevant. For example, it highlights the dangers of a "penny wise, pound foolish" approach in using spreadsheets vs investing in a treasury management system. While the rapid pace of software development over the past 20 years has brought to market a range of sophisticated tools that facilitate the treasury function, many CFOs today are still not convinced that advanced systems are worth the cost.

The perception has been that the earliest tools, spreadsheet programs, have dramatically improved, so there is no need to invest in integrated treasury management systems and enterprise resource planning (ERP) modules, which can cost over $1 million or more.

The McKinsey conclusion is consistent with CS Lucas' advice to those who would listen: "As companies assign new responsibilities to the corporate treasury function, treasurers must improve it with a global focus and streamline its

performance. That may require an upfront investment, but the payback is worth it.”

We would add one caveat to that: given the advancements in technology and design, a sophisticated treasury system that serves corporate needs, need not cost millions for an upfront investment. Instead, they are affordable, customisable and user-friendly.