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PayPal Makes Portfolio Visibility Pay Off With Smartsheet

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With a record-breaking mobile payment volume of over one billion dollars, this year's Black Friday helped to propel PayPal to hit another milestone on its mission to democratize money. PayPal's primary goal is to make it easy and accessible for everyone to complete financial transactions with speed and flexibility, whether they are sending or receiving money.

In order to accomplish their mission and support the 254 million and counting active account holders in more than 200 markets around the world on its worldwide digital platform, PayPal's Office of the CIO (OCIO) manages multiple project portfolios that support hundreds of people in different internal functions across the U.S. — including finance, human resources, talent acquisition sourcing, recruiting, product development, risk management, sales, security, and more.

OCIO program manager Jeff Cowley's team manages one such portfolio, comprised of approximately 14 programs with over 150 cumulative projects in total. Cowley says his ultimate goal is to deliver on time, within budget, and on schedule. To do so, Cowley says, "we needed to get rid of the spreadsheets and dispersed manual processes we'd been using and adopt a single system of accountability, a system of record for the portfolio as a whole."

Cowley's team also needed a work execution platform that was flexible and easy to use to serve as the basis for a solution to manage their portfolio. They decided on Smartsheet for its flexibility and easy onboarding. "With the tool being

intuitive and those [Smartsheet] videos [on YouTube], we built a solution basically from the ground up," adds Cowley.

Giving Execs "Complete Confidence" in Project Delivery

Critical to Cowley's work is the ability to make the right decisions quickly, which requires clear visibility and transparency into the day-to-day operations of the OCIO, as well as a view of the entire portfolio. In the past, this meant creating countless PowerPoint slides to communicate the state of each project within the portfolio, often necessitating constant updates to stay relevant.

With Smartsheet, Cowley's team goes straight to their system of record, and looks at dashboards that read directly from that system of record. The data they're reading is pulled directly from the project plan, giving them an unvarnished view into reality.

"It's really important that on a day-to-day basis, we have clear visibility and line of sight to what's occurring, what's on point, who is on point, what's next in each of these work streams," Cowley says. "Smartsheet allows that summary view so you can really see the forest for the trees."

With Smartsheet, now it's all automated … the data is more accurate. It helps us make decisions faster as a result.

Success also requires providing executives with the information they need to quickly make decisions at the top. "We have a C-suite level meeting every Thursday," says Billy Runyan, Senior Director and Chief Architect at PayPal's OCIO."We were assembling that content manually and it took an army every week so that we could have a productive conversation with our leadership team.

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And not only is the data transparent, it's timely as well. "Your dashboard is connected directly to the database," explains Cowley. "It's not something that somebody's reporting on. So often you get these multiple layers of people extracting data, transcribing it, putting it into whatever reporting tool they want, and it gets further and further from the truth with each iteration."The impacts that we've seen are really around accountability and quality. We provide the information that they need to see on a day to day basis to have complete confidence that we're delivering according to their needs and in the best interest of PayPal. Smartsheet satisfies all those needs."

PayPal Makes Decisions Faster

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Mark Mader serves as President and CEO of Smartsheet (NYSE: SMAR), a high-growth software company with offices in Seattle, Boston, London, and Edinburgh that is transforming the way organizations plan, track, automate, and report on work at scale.