

International Success Story: Amazon.com Manages Worldwide Legal Spending with Serengeti Tracker

CASE STUDY

Amazon.com

What started as Earth's biggest bookstore now offers just about everything—from music downloads to diamond jewelry. Expansion has propelled Amazon.com in innumerable geographical directions as well, with offices, fulfillment, and customer service centers across the United States, Europe, Asia, Africa, and Latin America.



► The Challenge

From China to Chile, Amazon.com speaks the international language of commerce. As a result, the law department confronted a number of unique challenges when working with its overseas business units and law firms.

For example, paper bills and tax information needed to be routed for approval around the world and then booked to the correct ledger -- which became increasingly difficult as the company expanded. Too often, these complexities caused payment delays and administrative headaches at Amazon's headquarters in Washington.

"Often our work spans multiple countries and departmental budgets, and the invoices have to be reviewed by everyone involved," said Sam Bernstein, the Legal Invoicing and Operations Coordinator at Amazon.com. "We needed a web-based tool to handle our workflows around the world, so that I could centrally manage the billing, budgeting, and spend reporting from my office in Seattle."

► The Solution

Serengeti Tracker gives Amazon the tools they need to efficiently process international invoices. International tax and entity information for each invoice is automatically routed to local business units for review. If there is an issue then the invoice is rejected back to the firm. "This quickly trains overseas firms to bill to the right entity," Bernstein said.

Amazon also configured Tracker to hold invoices until the vendor has been set up in both the U.S. and international AP systems. According to Bernstein, "that feature alone solved a chronic International billing problem."

Today, Amazon uses Tracker to collect invoices, budgets and unbilled time from 100% of their firms (operating in more than 90 countries). With Tracker's built-in currency conversion, Amazon can review all financials in both U.S. dollars and native currencies.

In short, Bernstein said, "Amazon's international legal billing processes are built on Tracker—and it does a great job."

"Serengeti handles the complexities of international e-billing seamlessly. I couldn't centrally manage all of our legal spend worldwide without it."

Sam Bernstein
Legal Invoicing and
Operations Coordinator

► The Serengeti Advantage

Tracker's unique international capabilities make it the right choice for companies with legal work around the world. Law departments with high volumes of intellectual property work can require firms to provide country and filing details with each invoice. This information can then be viewed in spending and summary reports by country, mark, class, etc. Tracker also maintains the *Tracker Worldwide Directory of Firms* which includes 16,000+ firms in more than 160 countries. This tool simplifies the process of identifying, assigning, and tracking firms who are already working on the system.

"The global marketplace has led to a dramatic increase in the number of companies with foreign matters, and Tracker has become the system of choice for those companies. A wide range of law departments helped us design functionality that addresses the compatibility, currency, and training issues of international legal work."

Tom Melling
VP, Product Management
Serengeti Law

"Amazon.com replaced its Access-based system with Serengeti Tracker for processing payment. Tracker allows Amazon.com attorneys to efficiently review and approve bills online. It also enables us to generate up-to-date spending reports—in both U.S. and foreign currencies—which help to track spending across all parts of our legal department."

Joanna Leinaweaver
Legal Operations Manager
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