



BlackLine Account Reconciliations and Transaction Matching



Close collaboration and alignment

A team effort

"Clearsulting delivered a trustworthy, cost effective, and high-quality implementation of the Blackline application, which has assisted Pembina in reducing our financial risk related to reconciliations."

— Jana Murdock, VP Finance, Pembina Pipeline Corporation

First step: Blueprint

In 2023, Pembina Pipeline Corporation, a leading energy transportation and midstream service provider in North America, identified challenges in their monthly financial close processes.

With an eye on two software vendors, they engaged Clearsulting for a 2-month blueprint. The goal? To thoroughly understand process pain points, critical software capabilities, and areas that deviated from leading practice. After several process interviews spanning 6 business units and 8 corporate accounting teams, BlackLine was the preferred solution, fulfilling documented business requirements, closing gaps in their control processes, and reinforcing ownership and handoff with strong governance.

Implementation of Reconciliations and Open Item Matching

BlackLine helped streamline their close process by automating their SAP S/4 HANA balance feeds for their general ledger, subledgers, and bank balances into BlackLine. Instead of performing all reconciliations monthly, Clearsulting helped define a risk ranking framework that prioritized key accounts and decreased the overall frequency of reconciliation. Ultimately, technology acted as the enabler, and Pembina's internal approach to transformation cemented success for years to come.

When all was said and done, they achieved an initial 37% automation rate at go-live, grouped 6,500 accounts into fewer than 1,000 reconciliations, closed over 80,000 less extensions, rectified completeness gaps by cleansing the balance sheet, and deployed Blackline's SAP Open Item Clearing for 180 reconciliations.

Ingredients of success

Knowing their timeline

Pembina anticipated potential bottlenecks—holidays and quarter-end close wouldn't stop them from achieving their goals. Backed with early buy-in from leadership, existing knowledge of the platform, and an understanding of requirements from the blueprint, they carved time for key decisions and effectively collaborated with business and IT, treating all teams as one.

Prioritizing change management

With a dedicated change management lead on the project team, Pembina put a lot of thought into end user experience—knowing that bringing 100 users onto the platform was no easy task. They prioritized in-person training and support, appointed a business readiness team to act as change ambassadors, and engaged users throughout the implementation to strengthen adoption.

Performing thorough testing

End users from all business units and corporate finance teams were involved in testing—transformation was done intentionally, looking out for true value-add impact.

Optimizing past go-live

Once their design moved to production, Pembina had daily stand-up meetings to discuss progress, identify and resolve issues, and leaned on a ticketing system to document support. They made all training materials easily accessible to their teams, recording upskilling sessions and housing them internally.

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Industry: Oil and gas

Employees: 3,600

Geographies: North America

Challenges:

- Decentralized processes and inconsistent review requirements
- Lack of leadership visibility
- Unclear account ownership

Results:

- Automated 37% of certifications
- Reduced 6,500 unique accounts into <1,000 reconciliations via grouping
- Cleared >1,000 open line items
- Closed 26 company codes and >80,000 GL account extensions