



CEBA Helps Global Licensing Organization Get More Out of NetSuite

HDMI Licensing Administration enlists CEBA Solutions to help it get more out of its NetSuite cloud enterprise resource planning (ERP) platform.

The digital interface that exists in nearly all consumer electronics products—including digital TVs, set-top boxes, media players, tablets and more—HDMI® allows users to enjoy high-definition video and digital audio content. A versatile interface, HDMI supports standard-definition, high-definition and ultra-high-definition videos on the devices we use every day.

Appointed by the HDMI Forum to license Version 2.1a of the HDMI Specification, HDMI Licensing Administrator (HDMI LA) is

the agent appointed by the HDMI founders to license earlier HDMI Specifications. The organization's roots date back to 2002, when a group of founders realized HDMI's growing

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importance as a global electronics specification.

Since then, nearly 10 billion HDMI-enabled devices have been shipped, with the latest HDMI 2.1a specification continuing to enable the development of new product categories and innovative solutions. In 2017, HDMI LA was founded and has operated as a standalone entity ever since (and with all seven founding companies on its board of directors).

Wanted: A Best Practices Solution

Today, the Silicon Valley-based company manages the royalties, protections, legal and compliance-related activities of the patents and trademarks related to the HDMI technology. According to Steve Robertson, CFO, the organization has doubled its revenues and activity levels over the last five

years. “It’s been tremendous growth,” Robertson said, “while maintaining a lean staff of about 45 employees worldwide.”

“We want to be as automated as we can possibly be given our resource constraints”

Steve Robertson – CFO HDMI

This commitment to maintaining a “lean” staff means HDMI LA relies on technology and automation to help the company streamline its operations, improve efficiencies and do more with less. When HDMI LA spun out of its previous organization in 2017, it needed a back-office system for managing the 2,000 adopters (i.e., “clients”) that either pay royalties or annual fees to utilize the HDMI technology.

“At that point, we were still relying on certain technology, tools and workbooks that were born in the heyday of HDMI, back in the late-2000s/early-2010s,” Robertson said. “That’s why we turned to CEBA Solutions to help get us to a more ‘best practices’ solution, from a back-office operations standpoint.”

Moving Away from Spreadsheets

Familiar with NetSuite, the team at HDMI LA completed an initial, Phase I rollout of the cloud enterprise resource planning (ERP) platform with an outsourced consultant. With NetSuite’s basic financial and reporting capabilities in place, it was then ready to optimize the platform and get more out of it.

“When I joined the company in early-2020, it was basically still a very spreadsheet-heavy environment,” said Robertson. “I immediately

brought on an interim controller because I needed another analytical mind to help think through how to make our environment more efficient.”

Robertson had worked with Zabe Siddique of CEBA Solutions in a prior position and asked him to review some of the areas where HDMI LA wasn’t making the best use of NetSuite, like dashboard reporting; the tracking of daily, weekly and monthly trends; and the management of non-standard invoicing.

“We reached out to CEBA for a third-party set of eyes, to look at areas where we were suboptimizing NetSuite and provide us with recommendations on how to address the low hanging fruit,” Robertson said, “and where we could get some quick wins.”

From there, HDMI LA would work with CEBA to create an automation roadmap that would lessen its reliance on spreadsheets and other manual processes without having to hire more staff. “We want to be as automated as we can possibly be,” said Robertson, “given our resource constraints.”

CEBA Speaks the Language of its Customers

Recently, HDMI LA activated NetSuite’s dashboard reporting functionalities and is using them to track revenue across different categories. It’s also using more of the ERP’s reporting features and will soon launch the consolidation module. “We have a couple of foreign entities and the consolidation and intercompany transactions are being pulled together in an Excel environment,” Robertson explained. “We’re hoping to change that in the next quarter or so.”

As it continues to extract more from its NetSuite investment and work toward an even more automated business environment, HDMI LA will be working closely with CEBA—an implementation partner that truly “speaks the same language that we do,” according to Robertson.

“I can explain a situation to Zabe and he knows exactly where we need to tackle that challenge and how to direct his team to ensure that we get there,” he added, “and to make sure that the ultimate outcome is exactly what I’m looking for as a client. He does a really good job of that.”

All in One Accessible Place

While its core business is licensing, royalties, and distribution of royalties to its founders, HDMI LA also manages projects like the certification of cables used to connect set-top boxes with TVs or laptops. CEBA helped the company implement a solution that allows NetSuite to handle these projects automatically, versus having to run that segment of its business manually.

“That has been a big enhancement to our utilization of NetSuite over the last 18 months,” said Robertson, who especially likes how CEBA has helped the company move away from exporting data out of NetSuite—and then manipulating it manually on pivot tables and spreadsheets—and instead consolidating its data in a unified ERP. “That’s exactly what we should be doing.”