

Virtual Card Accounts streamline invoicing and enable easier supplier payments

Tourism Australia is the government agency responsible for attracting international visitors and encouraging Australians to travel domestically for leisure and business events

Case Study

The Challenge	<p>TA organizes advertising, PR and media programs, trade shows and industry programs, consumer promotions, and consumer research in around 30 key markets.</p> <p>TA presented Citi with three challenges. Firstly, it needed to streamline invoice-related processes. TA's International Media Hosting (IMH) team, which is responsible for coordinating media itineraries, works with over 1000 suppliers and vendors, and receives over 20,000 invoices a year, which must be accrued for and processed. Secondly, most of the IMH team are contractors, and, in line with TA's internal policies, are not issued with corporate cards. As some suppliers and vendors only accept payments via credit cards, the team sometimes had to make payments using their personal credit cards. In order to be reimbursed the employee had to be set up as a vendor in the financial system, increasing the administration burden and causing delays. Thirdly, TA's event management platform, customer relationship management (CRM) system and enterprise resource planning (ERP) system were not linked, resulting in the need for duplicate entries.</p>
The Solution	<p>Having worked closely with TA for six months to understand its requirements, Citi proposed the use of a Virtual Card Account (VCA) solution. The robust controls offered by VCA enable TA to give its contractors access to the platform. This means they can make instant payments and reduces the need to accrue for invoices. VCA also offers custom fields, which TA uses for analysis of actual versus planned spend based on supplier, event ID and general ledger codes.</p>
The Result	<p>The VCA solution has reduced the administrative burden associated with invoices for the IMH team, allowing them to spend more time planning and coordinating events. The built-in security matrix ensures that VCA requests are reviewed before being applied to transactions, ensuing better control: this could not have been achieved through the use of a standard corporate card. The solution has also made invoice processing more straightforward for the finance team while suppliers appreciate the new payment method. TA is currently using a web-based platform but in the long term it will integrate to VCA with its event management platform, CRM and ERP.</p>