

# Heartland Financial Keeps Middle Market Customers at the Heart of their AP Solution

## Challenge

Relationships are the core of Heartland Financial USA, Inc. Their banks serve as partners to their customers, with local decision-making supported by big bank resources. Unlocking their customers' growth potential with financial expertise and excellent experiences is central to their vision. This empowerment to serve local communities and businesses results in strong partnerships, and their philosophy is best summarized by their mission statement: "Enriching lives, one customer, employee and community at a time."

Local market competition continues to intensify as large banks flex their technology muscle to grow market share downstream among mid sized companies.

Well before the 2020 pandemic hit, Heartland put Integrated Payables (IP) on their digital roadmap to accelerate the adoption of electronic payments. They implemented a solution for their bank customers to achieve 100% automation of accounts payable, by seamlessly merging traditional treasury payments of ACH and check with commercial and virtual card onto a single platform.

### HEARTLAND FINANCIAL USA, INC.



Forbes Best Bank for five consecutive years



Diversified financial services organization with nearly \$18 billion in assets



11 community banks with almost 150 banking centers in the Midwest, Southwest and Western United States



Banks range in size from \$600 million to \$3 billion in assets, with 10 out of 11 banks over \$1 billion in assets

## Solution

Heartland's product implementation team started by gaining strong buy-in from leadership and alignment among treasury, card, operations and other stakeholders. The selection of Priority Commercial Payments as their partner was the next critical step to building the solution. They selected Priority's Commercial Payment Exchange (CPX) not only for the best-in-class technology, but for the Priority team's expertise and proven ability to:

- Streamline disparate bank products and functions
- Move innovative ideas into practical applications
- Deliver greater speed to market

Priority knows the middle market space, in which customers have lean IT and accounting teams. They configure easy-to-implement functionality that shoulders the heavy lifting of technology and supplier enrollment. The right-sized solution is flexible, with scalable applications that Heartland's group of community banks - and their customers - can grow into.

Priority CPX works with any card network or processor, syncs with any back-office system and automates every payment method from a single payment instruction file.

As proof of concept, Heartland adopted the Priority CPX platform for their own corporate AP. They experienced the solution first-hand and built enthusiasm for the roll-out to their community banks and their customers.

The white labeled IP program supports each bank in the Heartland group as they educate their customers about the benefits of IP with their own uniquely branded video marketing and AP spend analysis tools. The best-in-class dashboard and real-time reconciliation reports help Heartland's account managers strategically advise their customers. They can manage cash flow in real time, identify and target suppliers for virtual card, and watch rebate revenue grow.

## Results

Year-over-year, the Heartland program best-in-class IP payment solution with the CPX integrated payables platform inside has shown robust growth.

Selecting Priority CPX to deliver their IP solution has been central to Heartland's success in helping their middle-market business customers accelerate the adoption of payment automation. In addition, card spend generates valuable rebate revenue for customers and non interest income for the bank.

**220%**

increase in total  
card spend volume

**125%**

increase in the  
number of buyers

**214%**

increase in  
transaction count

**42%**

increase in average  
spend per buyer

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Clients need a solution like Priority CPX now more than ever. When banks offer integrated payables as a tool on their digital strategy roadmap, it brings great value to the client, and strong benefits to their vendors. Turning expenses into revenue is successful for everyone.

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**Julie Schmitz**

VICE PRESIDENT, TREASURY  
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