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# Customer **Story**

## Axxess International Inc.

# Freight forwarder and customs broker realizes rapid process improvements after turning to Hyland and the cloud

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**Stéphane Rouleau,** Axxess International's vice president of administration and IT

## The Challenge

Axxess International Inc. launched as a three-person operation in 1998.

The freight forwarder and customs broker — with nine branches and service points, and more than 170 employees — is "in growth mode all the time," said Stéphane Rouleau, Axxess International's vice president of administration and IT.

At the start of the pandemic, the majority of the company's employees worked from home. It was very challenging for Axxess International's IT team. The company, Rouleau said, has a "very lean help desk" and a couple of servers that share the many documents that pass through its system.

Axxess International's biggest challenge was integration. The global business needed a cloud-first solution that improved its processes and maintained continuity as the bulk of its employees shifted to remote work.

"I have a good development team with analysts and developers, but I don't want to take care of the technical side. That's not my core business," Rouleau said.

## The Solution

Early in the pandemic, business slowed. Rouleau said the company had to decide whether to invest or make cuts.

"We decided to keep everybody and work on things that will help us restart faster," he said.

Axxess International turned to OnBase, a Hyland content management platform, to manage its processes. The company, because it hadn't worked with process management tools, started slow, creating an accounts payable solution for freight and brokerage transactions.

"As soon as that was put in place and the wow factor started to settle in,

we decided to go forward immediately with a couple of other projects," Rouleau said.

Next up were some initiatives in Axxess International's U.S. and Canadian customs departments. OnBase is now used by U.S. employees to manage the release of imported goods at the border. In Canada, Axxess International's "traffic team" — employees who receive freight and commercial documents, such as invoices, packing lists, certificates of origin and bills of lading, that arrive by ship and plane — began deploying OnBase.

"We used to manage this process with Outlook. Managing a workflow with Outlook: Ouch," Rouleau said. "It was getting more and more difficult because the team was growing," Rouleau said.

Axxess International then extended its use of OnBase to its Canadian customs brokerage release department.

Now, more than a year after its OnBase integration, the company is planning "many more projects," including work in its ocean import and North American trucking divisions, Rouleau said.

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## The Difference

### "The Wow Factor"

Axxess International, like so many transportation and logistics companies, used to be paper intensive, especially when it related to customs documents. Rouleau is very much looking forward to the day he can "get rid of all of these filing cabinets."

Once the OnBase-led processes were up and running for commercial invoices, "the wow factor" kicked in, the Axxess International VP said.

"They made a point of showing what they did to other departments, and everybody wanted their turn and wanted to get in on this," Rouleau said.

### A people-first approach

Customer service is Axxess International's mission. Person-to-person interaction is a must and voicemail isn't an option.

That approach has served Axxess well, but it's become more difficult as the company has grown.

"We don't want our service to be diluted, so we need to continuously improve the processes and the workflow," Rouleau said.

That's happened with OnBase and it's best reflected in the surveys the

company conducts with its customers. Clients often say how much they appreciate the service they receive.

The responses reinforce to Axxess International that it's "doing something right here," Rouleau said. The vice president of administration and IT added that suppliers and clients say the company's processes are running efficiently and smoothly.

"The technology helps us do that," he said.

### Send the Invoice!

The processes are being managed so well, in fact, that Axxess International's accounts payable team is reaching out to suppliers for the invoices.

"We sometimes call them to ask, 'Hey, where's our invoice? We need to close our file!'" Rouleau said with a grin.

### Easy Adaptation

What stands out most to Rouleau is OnBase's ease of use. The solution is simple to introduce and explain to a new user and Axxess International is thus able to quickly improve its processes.

"This software adapts to your process. Not the other way around," Rouleau said.

### "It's Best-in-Breed"

Axxess International's OnBase integration marked the third time in Rouleau's career that he was tasked with finding a document, workflow and content management solution. He's selected Hyland and OnBase twice and he said he'd do it again.

"Every time, I was very objective and tried to remove my past experience and knowledge of the software from the equation. I tried to involve as many people as I could into the process," he said. "And I don't see a better software out there. It's best-in-breed."

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