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## Five Star Service

Groupe Germain's hotel operations benefit from an improved payables process with Scotia Payment WorkStation software

**Annie Landry,**  
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A passion for excellence is unquestionably behind the success of Groupe Germain, a leader in boutique hotel development and management. The company owns and operates Hôtel Germain-des-Prés in Québec City, which houses the renowned Bistango restaurant, Hôtel Dominion 1912 at the Old Port of Québec, Hôtel Le Germain in Montreal and the soon-to-open Hôtel Le Germain in Toronto.

Groupe Germain caters to savvy business people who know what they want: quality, comfort and service. Running a business that accommodates a clientele with the most discerning tastes requires that management maintain the highest standards in every aspect of its operations - including the accounting department.

With 150 employees and over 200 different suppliers, Groupe Germain was already using an electronic payment system provided by another financial institution when they first heard about Scotiabank's all-in-one solution for initiating and transmitting Canadian and US payables and receivables. They decided to switch to Scotia Payment WorkStation® software to further streamline their payables process and, as a result of the successful implementation last June, have since moved most of their banking business to Scotiabank.

### Expediting payables processing for greater efficiency

Groupe Germain was convinced of the business benefits of an automated payables process, although they initially encountered some resistance from their suppliers. "Three years ago, when we made it a policy to pay our employees and suppliers electronically, some people weren't too happy," recalls Vice President Jean-Yves Germain. "But when they realized that receiving electronic payment was a reliable method and, in fact, easier than receiving a cheque, they became very supportive."

One of the capabilities Groupe Germain required from an automated payables system was that it automatically issues e-mail advisories to all payees. "We needed to be able to tell our suppliers which invoices were settled with each payment," explains Annie Landry, Groupe Germain's Vice President of Finance. "Another prerequisite was that we needed the system to be able to issue payments from different workstations."



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Scotia Payment WorkStation was installed on Groupe Germain's network, which included conversion software to enable Groupe Germain's files to be received by Scotiabank. Senior Technical Analyst David Hardman explains: "Although banks require the same basic information in an electronic file to process a client's payables, the way this information gets formatted varies with each financial institution. We provided Groupe Germain with software to convert their file format to one that our system recognizes."

The Technical Product Support group also developed a customized program that generates e-mail notifications to each payee with payment details including the corresponding invoice number and amount of payment. Recognizing the value of this function, Scotiabank is in the process of developing e-mail remittance using Scotia Payment WorkStation, which will be widely available later this year.

The system went live in June of last year and according to Annie Landry, it's working beautifully. "In addition to processing our payables, we are using Scotia Payment WorkStation to process receivables from our tenants in the form of pre-authorized debits for monthly rent," Landry comments. "It's definitely more user-friendly than our old system, but the most important advantage for us is that it interfaces with our accounting software, so we can simply import the data we need for each payment session and our accounts are updated without any duplication of effort."

Landry also credits Scotiabank's Patrice Gauvin, Enterprise Solutions Manager, and the Quebec-based team of Scotiabank specialists for proposing the solution and managing its smooth implementation. "Groupe Germain has continually sought to take advantage of evolving technology. Scotia Payment WorkStation is one example of our desire to optimize our operations and positively impact client services and supplier relationships."

## Electronic payments enhance the bottom line

As Product Manager Anna Yeandle explains, Scotia Payment WorkStation was designed with the needs of mid-sized businesses in mind. "The software lets you prepare and transmit multiple payment types in a single session - EFT, EDI, ACH, cheque payments and credit card debits. It helps businesses be more competitive by reducing transaction costs, late payment charges and bank service fees, while accelerating receivables."

Scotia Payment WorkStation also has built-in security controls that enable the client to define IDs and passwords, which control access to payment creation, approval and transmission. "We knew that Groupe Germain would appreciate the security features, since they operate multiple hotels and need to determine for themselves which employees have access to the system," Yeandle adds. "The system creates an audit trail of all transactions, so the client is always in control."

Jean-Yves Germain says he's surprised that more companies aren't adopting the electronic payment process in favour of manually-issued cheques. "When you consider that the cost of processing a single cheque can be as much as 30 dollars, and an electronic transaction can be done for as little as 20 cents, the choice becomes obvious," Germain concludes. "It's easier, and it saves money. It's the future."



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