



CUSTOM HOUSE

Four Advantages an Online International Payments Platform Gives Your Business

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As every business has noticed the financial landscape has changed drastically in recent months and the same is true for foreign exchange and international payments. The business of moving money from one currency to another and from one country to another has never been a more pivotal part of conducting business as it is now. With this current reality and the need for better, more efficient practices to handle international payments to ensure business continuity and minimization of the risks associated with foreign currency fluctuations, many businesses are moving to online international payments platforms to improve their bottom line. An online platform for foreign exchange can offer many benefits to your business that will positively impact your financial operations.

So why all the fuss about online platforms for international payments and how can they help improve business operations?

Traditionally international payments have been a time consuming process for many businesses due to the fragmented nature of transaction mechanisms and rules. Fortunately, foreign exchange companies have invested time and money into improving these processes for companies over recent years. The results are robust online international payment platforms that speed up payment delivery time, reduce errors and transmit additional necessary payment data for reconciliation by beneficiaries.

This white paper will examine the improvements to the foreign exchange market through online payment platforms and the efficiencies that they can offer a business of any size.

THE CHALLENGES AND TRENDS IN INTERNATIONAL PAYMENTS

By 2006 global business to business transactions had already hit 136.4 trillion USD and those transaction volumes are expected to grow anywhere from 10% to 20% annually. With the increased global nature of business and the resulting increase in international payments being made, comes the necessity for improved means for international money transfer and making foreign currency payments.

The foreign exchange industry has many challenges and hurdles, especially for companies doing international business attempting to navigate these complexities on their own. Making international payments involves significant risks and is slow compared to domestic payments, creating unforeseen demands on company time and increases to operating costs.

The complex regulations around sending international payments and the necessary due diligence to ensure all transactions are compliant, is time consuming and costly. There are many differences across settlement systems and the required information needed to be sent with the payment varies from country to country and amongst the different payment options. If a payment is sent that does not contain the correct information for the method of transmission of the country that it's going to, a business will incur repair fees and delays in settlement. This usually also requires the business to pick up the phone and attempt to determine where the payment is and what information needs to be fixed before it can proceed onto the beneficiary, potentially taking extra days or weeks.

Any company attempting to handle all the required operations of international payments in-house will soon discover that the sheer amount of work required staying on top of the changing international payments landscape takes more time away from core business functions and requires more time from existing employees or hiring new employees. The foreign exchange market operates 24 hours a day and nearly 7 days a week, meaning that your company to is exposed to the fluctuations and occurrences almost constantly and in every country where you do business.

As a result of these challenges gathering the necessary payment data for accounting and treasury needs for reporting from the fragmented collection of different payment data is an arduous process. The time consumed to pull together the required data in a useful format takes away from a company's core business.

THE SOLUTION: A FULL SERVICE ONLINE FX PLATFORM

With the continued growth in the foreign exchange and international payments industry and the resulting improvements in payment technology companies now have access to services that can improve how they handle international payments and the international nature of their finances, all without changing current company operations or holding foreign currency bank accounts. A full service online platform to handle your business's international payment needs is essential to stay competitive in your marketplace and speed up payment delivery to your beneficiaries.

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The efficiencies that your business can gain will outlast any prevailing market conditions. With speed and accuracy of payments, transparency into cost and status of a payment, increased control over the payment process, easy integration and 24/7 accessibility with dedicated support your business will gain a competitive advantage when it comes to managing your international financial requirements.

THE 4 ADVANTAGES OF AN ONLINE PLATFORM FOR FOREIGN EXCHANGE

#1: Speed and accuracy of all foreign currency payments

Avoid the hindrances of slow and inaccurate payments that may or may not arrive at their destination. An online platform removes the unknown and improves payment delivery times.

- With an online platform the digital information capture allows for payment data to be periodically reviewed by payment experts to ensure accuracy and completeness of the necessary transaction information thereby ensuring there are no delays or extra fees due to errors.
- Beneficiary details can also be stored to allow for faster entry of international payments if a company has recurring payments to the same beneficiary or multiple payments at a single time. The storage of these details also assists with the necessary compliance and regulation requirements for customer information retention.
- Settlement and reconciliation times improve because all the necessary information is transmitted along with the payment, including details such as invoice number, purchase order number and additional notes. This information prevents questions from beneficiaries as to payment details and provides faster payment times.

#2: Transparency about cost and status of payment

Control over international payments, when they're executed, at what price they're executed, and through what means they are transmitted, will mean that there will be no more fluctuations in the final cost to your business. Your accounting and treasury departments can record and report on information with certainty. You will gain the transparency into exactly what is happening with your payments and when – something that is difficult to obtain through traditional means of international payments.

- Real time exchange rates allow for your business to know the exact cost before initiating a transaction ensuring cost certainty for more accurate business projections.
- With all data for international payments in one place there is a complete overview of international business activities in one location. The data can also be easily transferred to your company's accounting software with a simple download in the file format you prefer for consolidation of your finance operations.
- Detailed data is captured allowing accounts payable and receivable staff to confirm payment and accurately match payments to invoices. The detailed reports are available

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in real-time allowing for tracking of trends in payments, reducing transaction costs and improving management of working capital.

#3: Complete control over all transactions and easy integration with current practices and technology

Sending payments through an online platform ensures that your business is always compliant with the necessary regulations and maintains up-to-date and accurate information for all countries and currencies – a task that would be too time consuming for a business focusing on their core revenue generation streams.

Online platforms offer you both dedicated service when you need it and the flexibility to handle and control your daily foreign currency needs.

- Customized permission and access levels for each and every type of user that you have ensures that your company's designated representatives maintain control over payments. This also ensures that internal security controls are maintained through these tailored permission levels.
- Role based permission levels allow for dual signatures – let accounts payable staff enter payment information for payment approval by a supervisor or controller.
- A platform can be set up and tailored to your company's existing operations. Don't struggle with software that forces your company to deal with processes that cost your company time and money. And for added security the platform completes payments on the back end through verified fund transfer mechanisms.
- Transmission of more data available with electronic transaction ensures that the payment arrives at the intended beneficiary free of errors. Reducing errors in transmitted data reduces required repair fees for inaccurate information and improves settlement times.

#4: Accessible 24/7 with secure access and dedicated support

Online platforms offer you both dedicated service when you need it and the flexibility to handle and control your daily foreign currency needs. An online platform doesn't mean you lose the human element of business, but it does mean that you get the best of both worlds; the ability to conduct business easily online and the access to expert advice when you need it.

- An online platform is available 24 hours a day, and 7 days a week to allow your business to make payments when you need to regardless of location or time zone.
- With an online platform you still have access to currency specialists for foreign exchange strategy and risk management consulting. There will always be unique transactions, having access to experts in the industry for advice and knowledge give your company the advantage to read the market and position your company better within the market.
- Multiple payments options provide ease of use. Many methods of payment can be initiated and approved through the online platform without having to make a trip to the bank.

- Benefit from the dedicated banking relationships held by your provider and make and receive international payments without having to hold unnecessary foreign currency accounts – simply use your existing domestic currency accounts.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A FULL SERVICE ONLINE FX PLATFORM

When assessing the services of an international online payments platform there are various things that your company needs to consider. Online platforms can provide your company with a competitive advantage as long as you ensure that the provider you choose works for your company's needs. An online platform offers a distinct advantage to your business by streamlining your international payments process while easily integrating with current processes and software thereby saving your company time and money allowing you to focus on the core of your business and make a positive impact on your bottom line.

There are a few important aspects to consider when sourcing which online platform that will best work for your business.

The 11 Point Checklist of What to Look for in an FX Provide

1) 24/7 Accessibility

Access to handle and execute your international payments 24 hours a day, 7 days a week with real-time rates ensuring that urgent last minute payments never have to wait until the next day or if you have operations in different time zones staff outside the time zone of your main location aren't held at the mercy of dealing with the working hours in different time zones.

2) Comprehensive Reports

Ensure that the detailed payment data generated can easily be shared with any accounting software or financial software that you have ensuring that you have easy data capture for any reporting or financial data that you need including information for financial audits such as what payments have been sent and how much has been sent.

3) Compliance

Ensure that the provider handles all compliance and necessary regulations. The best online platform providers will handle all required legal information for payment transfers, background checks for all payment beneficiaries and ensuring the necessary information is available for audits and reporting for you.

4) Dedicated and Knowledgeable Foreign Exchange Specialists

Ensure that your business receives the best service with an expert assigned specially to your account to consistently help your business with your unique needs. Your company gains the advantage that you always deal with the same foreign exchange specialist available by phone for advice who knows your needs and can help you continually improve how you send payments.

A full service online platform to handle your business's international payment needs is essential to stay competitive in your marketplace and speed up payment delivery to your beneficiaries.

Online international payment platforms that speed up payment delivery time, reduce errors and transmit additional necessary payment data for reconciliation by beneficiaries.

5) No Account Fees

Ensure that there are no monthly or yearly account maintenance fees or account set-up fees when sourcing a provider. Since your provider simply facilitates the transfer of your money and does not actually hold it, fees are an unnecessary expense for your company to incur.

6) Real Time Quotes

Ensure that any online platform you consider has real-time rate quotes for all currency pairs that your business needs. You want to ensure that you have up to the second rates (no delays at all) and the ability to lock in that rate for a period of time to execute your payment.

7) Easy Set-up and Integration Process

A provider should be well organized to guide your company through an easy sign-up process in order to get your company up and running as fast as possible. Integration is also key. Make sure that the online platform that your company chooses allows for data uploads and downloads to existing software (such as your accounting software).

8) Exceptional Customer Service

In addition to a dedicated FX specialist you want to ensure that from a service point of view you have a relationship manager that assists in all other aspects and ensures the service you receive consistently meets your expectations. In addition, the access to 24/7 customer support for the online platform to assist you with any other questions that you may have or real-time help when using the platform, even if it's 3 a.m., is a great advantage for your business.

9) Customized Permission Levels for Employees

With an online payments platform you should have the ability to designate role-based permission levels for accounts payable or finance staff. The ability to have any staff enter payments and have designated employees approve the payment before booking ensures payment accuracy and provides more control over cash flow to your business while helping to prevent fraud.

10) Expertise in Payment Accuracy and Data Transmission

Leverage the local market intelligence and knowledge of local payment requirements of currency specialists. Ensure that the provider can offer your business the experience in international payments and knowledge of the various rules and regulations of the various countries where payments originate and are settled without your company having to invest in new technology or new employees.

11) Secure Information Retention for Future and Recurring Use

Ensure that any online provider for your international payment needs has a platform that securely stores beneficiary and relevant financial information for fast and easy recurring or multiple payments.

THE CUSTOM HOUSE ADVANTAGE

Custom House: Improving your International Payments

- Accessibility:** Make payments when you want to, with 24/7 access to over 160 currencies.
- Service:** Keep the human element in service with a dedicated FX specialist, and a full team for support of your business's unique needs.
- Control:** Maintain oversight of all international transactions. Know how and when payments are being made for better business planning in the future.
- Transparency:** Track and monitor payment status with cost certainty of rates before payment initiation.
- Integration:** Get solutions that work with your current business processes.
- Reporting:** Detailed reports for the information you need, in multiple formats.

Custom House is an international payment and foreign exchange company that offers online platforms to all sizes of business in varying industries. Through our worldwide network of dedicated banking relationships and expertise in international payments we provide access to over 160 currencies and multiple payment transmission methods while ensuring that your payments are accurate and arrive quickly. With the wide range of currencies and payment methods we offer we can support your business anywhere in the world.

Our online platform offers real time rates and execution 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, keeping your business running no matter what time zone you're in. The ability to execute on competitive rates 24/7 means you'll never miss out on favorable market swings again waiting for regular working hours.

The online platform from Custom House also gives your company full control over employee access. With customized role based permissions you can give employees as much or as little access to the platform. Set transaction limit levels and second tier approvals to name just a few of the options. In addition to the increased oversight for international payments helping to prevent fraud, your business can plan for future business needs or view past activity with comprehensive reports.

The secure web based platform means no software installations and no updates needed. All your company requires is access to the internet and all updates will automatically appear when they are made. If payment regulations change, there's nothing for you to do, Custom House will handle everything for you and you will continue to see the same functionality with no changes to your business's processes.

With Custom House's online platform the system allows you to save beneficiary information, including email addresses for payment notification when a transaction is executed, for

future use. This saves time and improves accuracy for your company while helping to eliminate redundancy by alleviating double entry of information.

In addition to the ease, simplicity, and accessibility offered by the online platform Custom House is also an industry leader in risk management for foreign exchange and international payments. Our currency specialists are available to you whenever you need them to assist and offer advice to improve your business's cross border payment practices and help protect you from market fluctuations that can affect your operations. You also get the advantage of dealing with the same specialist each time thereby allowing Custom House to know your unique business and allow us to tailor currency strategies and risk management tools to what makes sense for your business.

With a solution from Custom House there are no account set-up fees, no annual or monthly maintenance fees and your business receives the exceptional service that you're looking for.

To book a free demo of the Custom House online platform for business payments, contact us at www.customhouse.com/freedemo

About Custom House

Custom House is an international payments company that helps everyone from small businesses to large corporations make and receive international payments and manage foreign currency risk. With secure, efficient solutions customized for your business's unique needs, our currency specialists will help you turn foreign exchange into a key competitive advantage.

Learn more about Custom House, visit www.customhouse.com



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