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Citi Partners with CSI for B2B Virtual Cards

Citi Commercial Cards has integrated with the accounts payable (AP) automation platform of Corporate Spending Innovations (CSI) to support payments buyers make to their suppliers, including with virtual Visa and Mastercard cards. The partnership will focus initially on digital media and advertising companies, a vertical in which CSI has significant connections to suppliers. Other verticals will follow, as will rollout to Canada and Europe.

Commercial credit card products from Citi include corporate (travel & entertainment) and purchasing/fleet. Citi is the largest U.S. corporate card issuer on the Visa and Mastercard networks and ranks 7th largest among issuers of purchasing/fleet cards. Both T&E and purchasing card products can involve virtual cards.

Making card payments as easy as possible for its commercial card clients has been a pursuit of Citi in recent years. Integration into the accounts payable process makes it more likely one-time-only virtual cards will be used.

Citi Commercial Cards integrated with Cvent in 2018 and Coupa Pay in 2019. It also maintains referral partnerships with other B2B accounts payable companies.

CSI, a subsidiary of Edenred, helps corporations automate all of their accounts payable and corporate travel spending using virtual cards, paper checks, wire transfers, ACH payments and direct payments within proprietary networks. Foreign currency exchange services are available for cross-border transactions.

The company connects over 3,500 companies to their suppliers, providing real-time decisions on the best payment method for each invoice based on information it holds about 900,000 suppliers using factors such as invoice amounts and supplier preferences. It automatically sends a payment by virtual card when the opportunity exists.

CSI customers that use its full service can see data on transactions automatically completed including file updates, vendor flagging and reconciliation. Alternatively, CSI can

IN THIS ARTICLE



customize payment files for over 100 ERP (enterprise resource planning) systems including with the supplier name, identification, transaction amount and invoice number.

One of the first nonbanks to become a virtual card issuer for B2B payments, CSI is a certified issuer and processor of Mastercard and Visa card payments. It supports virtual cards in 40 countries.

The company sells its accounts payable automation platform service directly to medium and large corporations and also maintains partnerships with 10 regional and national U.S. banks that integrate with the platform via an API. Those banks market CSI's AP automation to their corporate customers on a white-label basis. The combination of AP automation with a bank's commercial card and treasury management services helps with retention of corporate banking relationships.

Edenred focuses on B2B payment services. It operates in 46 countries. Last year, revenues reached \$1.80 billion tied to \$35.00 billion in payments, including prepaid private label cards and vouchers that companies provide to employees.

Edenred purchased CSI in January 2019 and has deployed some of the company's assets in Europe. It also sees opportunities in Latin America in addition to continued growth in North America.

INTERVIEWED FOR THIS ARTICLE

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