



Large North American Bank Eliminates Name Sanction Screening Alerts Backlog, Transforms Operations

This bank leveraged AI to streamline AML operations for ultimate efficiency and eliminated a massive backlog of sanctions alerts in the process.

Key Data

AI Digital Worker Purchased:

Evelyn Name Sanction Screening

Process Fully Automated:

L1 review and disposition of
Name Sanction Screening alerts

Backlog Eliminated:

20,000

Name Sanction Screening alerts

Ongoing Daily Alert Volume Dispositioned:

600–800

About the Customer

This North American bank has hundreds of locations across the United States and Canada.

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Automated alerts dispositioning brings efficiency, and efficiency streamlines AML operations so we can do all the work better.

— Director of AML,
Large North American
Bank

The Challenge

An early adopter of RPA (robotic process automation) since 2017, this large North American bank has multiple business streams in both the United States and Canada. Across four business units, the company was leveraging RPA to partially automate 130 business processes, of which more than 50% focused on anti-money-laundering (AML). But the RPA wasn't enough. “The key term here was ‘partially automate’ because we needed to fully automate those AML processes but didn't have a way to do that,” said the bank's Senior Compliance Manager.

What the bank had was a robust sanctions alert screening tool. Yet, since the tool did not offer an API, the bank was using RPA to scrape data from it to partially automate the review of name sanction screening alerts for final dispositioning. “Name sanction screening is a huge component of our AML efforts,” said the Senior Compliance Manager. “If we could significantly automate the process of dispositioning false positives around name sanction screening, we could gain massive efficiency and stop falling further behind each month.” At that time, the bank had a backlog of 20,000 alerts.

With the recent acquisition of another bank, the AML team of just 10 L1 analysts was facing a daily volume of between 600 to 800 alerts to review for name sanction. Yet, hiring additional analysts was not an option. According to the bank's Director of AML, in the new post-merger environment, budget initiatives prevented the hiring of additional team members, even though alert volumes continued to rise. “You can see why we began focusing our efforts to bring on AI and more intelligent automations with a specific AML focus,” said the Director.

The Solution

As the bank's AML leadership team sought a technology solution to their automation challenge, they discovered that artificial intelligence had been incorporated into a purpose-built set of technologies specific to AML. Called AI Digital Workers by WorkFusion, each Digital Worker highly automates a specific BSA/AML process, bringing humans in the loop as needed.

In the case of name sanction screening, WorkFusion's AI Digital Worker named Evelyn is purpose-built to disposition name sanction screening alerts (NSS alerts) intelligently and automatically, dispositioning 95 to 98 percent of NSS alerts.

Optimizing STP in a challenging data environment

When first implementing Evelyn, the bank faced challenges in achieving straight-through processing (STP) of NSS alerts. It was critical to overcome these challenges, as STP is the key to gaining efficiency in their AML operations. “Efficiency is key to all of it,” said the AML Director. “Automated alerts dispositioning brings efficiency, and efficiency streamlines AML operations so we can do all the work better.”



There were two main challenges to STP for the NSS project. First, the bank had strict InfoSec policies around personally identifiable information (PII) and only allowed extremely limited use of customers' PII. The AML team did not want to run afoul of the InfoSec policies and introduce any regulatory problems. However, they strongly desired to use only the bank's data – rather than generalized and anonymized data from multiple banks – in the NSS alert dispositioning process.

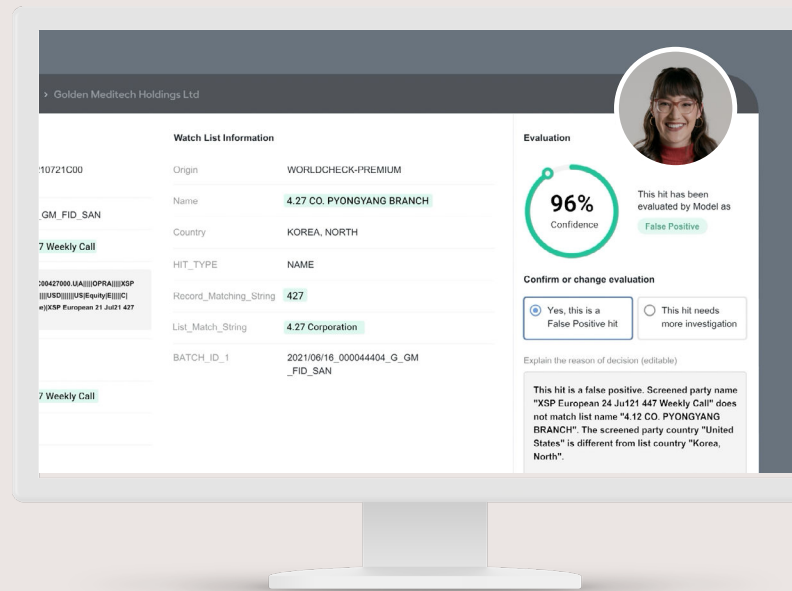
Second, even when data was made available for use, the bank had never needed to parse the data in a way that made it optimized for AI engines. After all, such a technology revolution had not been envisioned by most people. As such, the bank's data was not parsed in a manner that would have made it easy for Evelyn to perform (STP). So, the Director asked WorkFusion to work with the little clean data that was provided to see how well the solution would perform, purging the data after each use. "If successful with a small amount of data, we could then go and get approval to input more as a proven methodology," added the Senior Manager. WorkFusion agreed, requesting only a few simple data-quality upgrades, such as improvements to name, dates of birth and customer locations. The bank's team agreed and cleaned the data for a small sample set.

The bank's AML team was happily surprised that the WorkFusion AI and data experts were able to make the necessary data-balancing improvements using such a small data set. They transformed the small amount of sample data into the basis for robust NSS alert dispositioning. "We were shocked to achieve 60 percent STP with such a small amount of starter data," said the Senior Manager of AML. "So much so that I manually double-checked the results to prove they were valid."

He took it upon himself to personally review and analyze a full 1,000 NSS alerts dispositioned by Evelyn in an STP manner to verify that fully automated decisioning had, in fact, succeeded. Not only were the decisions all accurate, but Evelyn also automatically provided a text narrative appended to each alert decision. So now, the bank can confidently show auditors and regulators how each individual alert decision was made and the evidence behind it.

Building on success in full production

Once Evelyn had proven 'her' ability to automatically disposition NSS alerts accurately, the team began working on approvals to make the full production environment even more successful. They worked with InfoSec and WorkFusion to incorporate into the standard process a purging of all data once an alert has been dispositioned.



With InfoSec concerns managed, the AML team fed their entire backlog of 20,000 alerts into WorkFusion (Evelyn NSS). "Finally, we got this old monster backlog resolved, and we did it without having to hire additional staff," said the Director.

With Evelyn in full production, the team added a few more data filters customized to their specific business needs. All of this can be performed in Evelyn's no-code user interface, an advancement that non-technical users can leverage without the help of IT.

The Results

Today, the AML team has no NSS alerts backlog, and word of that success has spread fast. "Oh yes, now our AML team has full buy-in from IT, Technology, Client Management, Delivery Management, and Project Management departments," the Director said smilingly. "That's what success brings."

As a result, the bank is now looking to replicate their NSS alerts dispositioning strategy around payment transactions alerts. AI Digital worker Tara by WorkFusion automatically dispositions alerts related to the processing of payments, ensuring that payments to and from sanctioned organizations and individuals do not slip through unnoticed. As with Evelyn, Tara dispositions false positives at a rate of 95-98 percent of all alerts.

Commenting on the evolution of the AML team's use of AI, the Senior AML Manager said, "WorkFusion was willing to invest as much in our success as we did. Their AML, process and AI expertise really sets them apart and makes my job easier."





WorkFusion, Inc. is a leading provider of Intelligent Automation solutions for Fortune 500 enterprises, banks, insurance, and financial services companies. The company's AI-enabled digital workers augment traditional teams through regular "human in the loop" interactions and with support from the WorkFusion Network, a powerful AI cloud nexus. WorkFusion solutions help increase workforce capacity, enhance customer satisfaction, and ensure ongoing compliance.

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