



GET BACK TO GREENER PASTURES

Pinnacle Exception Management

By: Matthew Milam, Senior Technical Writer/Trainer, The Pinnacle Corporation

In today's economy we are moving ahead by inches, not miles, and the age old adage of "time is money" has never felt closer to home. We can look across the scarred landscape of what was once green pastures from a friendlier time and see our managers and auditors weary and in need of relief. Here you are, sitting at the office, thinking, "What can I change? What can I do to make the tides turn?" In some cases it's not the battle plan, or even the troops, it's the tools that need to change; and times...they are a changing.

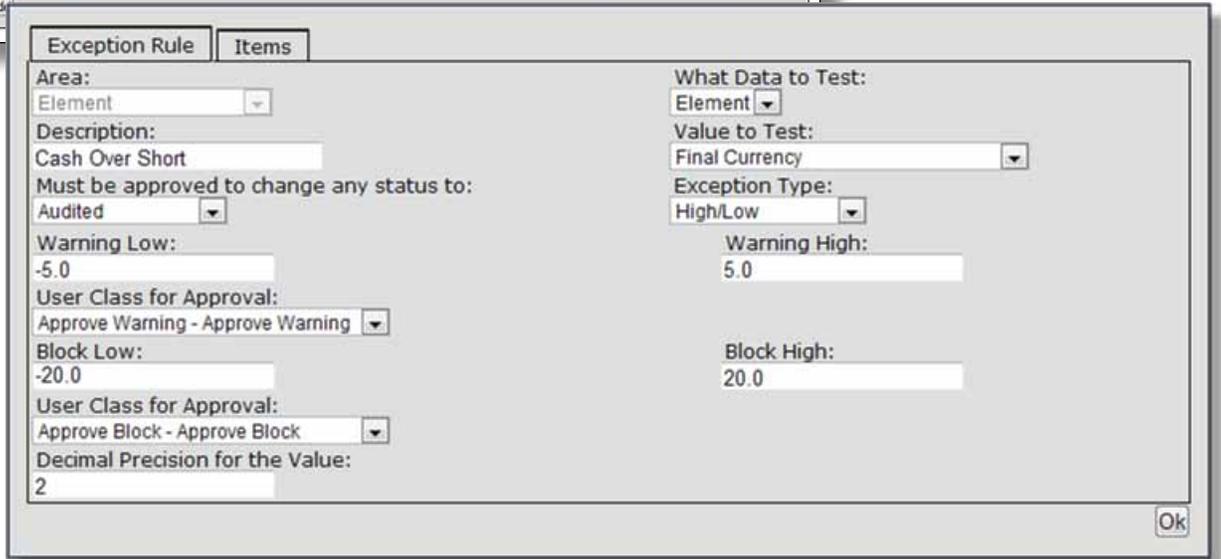
One of those tools you can add to your arsenal is exception management with the Pinnacle Symphony Business Platform. Working with clients throughout the industry, I often see home offices that have a 5-7 day turnaround on paperwork and store managers who are spread so thin they make needless mistakes on their paperwork, despite their best efforts. Exceptions can take you a long way to making these problems less frequent and freeing your employees' time for more valuable endeavors.

Exceptions at their core are automated rules that test the same things your store managers and auditors do every day. When you check to see if your cash over/short is in balance, or that a deposit was entered, you are looking for exceptions. In many cases your employees have a long checklist of things to check and verify, and making one mistake can be costly in terms of time and money. Automating these daily checks means your auditors only have to spend time validating data they know is wrong, or could even mean preventing errors from ever occurring by preventing a store from making the mistake in the first place. To help automate this, the exception tool within the Symphony Business Platform lets you check the following kinds of rules:

- **High/Low** - Compares a value to a high and low range; an exception exists if the value is outside the set range (Example: Cash Over/Short)
- **Average High/Low** - Works like a High/Low, except it uses an average

based on the number of business days you define (Example: Testing a smaller threshold for trends on the Cash Over/Short)

- **Zero/Not Zero** - You can set up a Zero Exception Rule to generate an exception if the value is not zero or a Not Zero Exception Rule to generate an exception if the value is zero (Example: Test to make sure the deposit total is not zero each day to ensure a deposit is entered)
- **Compare Values** - Tests total type elements to indicate the allowable tolerance when comparing a total against another element on a sales and cash template
- **Date within Reason** - Checks to see if the date entered is within the defined high/low tolerance as the number of days from the business days entered (Example: Making sure an Electronic Invoice is entered in a reasonable time from when it was supposed to be received)



From these rules, you can set up exceptions throughout the Symphony Business Platform to test business rules and make sure paperwork is entered correctly. This means less time doing data entry and more accurate paperwork initially. Also, Symphony Business Platform tracks three sets of numbers for each screen to allow you to decide if you want to test the home office or store:

- **Electronic** – Numbers polled at the store level
- **MWS** – Numbers entered by the store manager
- **Final** – Numbers entered by the home office

By setting up an exception on MWS values, you could test a store manager and you can use Final Numbers to test the home office. In many cases, you can even test the variances between these two numbers.

To help prevent errors in your final paperwork, you can actually block a store manager from sending paperwork if it has exceptions, for example, if they have not entered a deposit. You can also block the home office from sending data to the financial system until they get large errors approved. This gives you more control over your paperwork and can prevent costly errors or even catch suspicious behavior.

To round everything out, Pinnacle provides a detailed report that lists exceptions that are generated, who approved those exceptions, and the reasons why. This gives you all the tools you need to make your paperwork more accurate and keep everyone accountable. Times are tough, and if we keep with the status quo, things are only going to get tougher. Most are trying to do more with less and giving your employees more and better tools to do their jobs can mean the difference between coming out the other side stronger and better prepared

versus just making it another day. The great news is that if you already have a Symphony product, then you already have this tool at your disposal; and with new store level exceptions and a centralized location to set them up, it's even easier to use than before. If you are not a Symphony Business Platform user, now may be the time to give your troops some new tools to help save time and money!

For more detailed information on how to use and setup exceptions, consult your System Manager Documentation. ©