

Why The Lannisters Need a Good Expense Management System

The iconic TV series, Game of Thrones, is an adaptation of “A Song of Fire and Ice”, a series of fantasy novels by George R.R. Martin. The show which is in the midst of its sixth season is due to air the season finale by the end of June 2016. The show has everything one could & would expect from a fantasy TV show; feuds between noble families, intrigue, magic & even dragons. It is focused on the war for the control of the Iron Throne of the Seven Kingdoms. What stands out in the show is the iconic motto of the Lannisters, “*A Lannister Always Pays His Debts*”, & how they have usually managed to do so.

This family, most known for having an outrageous amount of money, it seems, is now facing crippling debt. Sometimes it’s true that people with seemingly unlimited funds, are oftentimes notorious for underestimating the value of managing their expenses effectively. For a TV show, these problems only add to the juicy plot, but, as a decision maker of any business, why squander precious time on an avoidable problem? Here’s a look at some of the setbacks that led to the Lannisters’ facing bankruptcy & how smart financial guidance could have saved them.

1. Visibility into Employee Expenses



“I shall have to borrow the money. No doubt the Lannisters will be accommodating. We owe Lord Tywin some three million dragons at present, what matter another hundred thousand?”

-Petyr “Littlefinger” Baelish

Littlefinger, the Master of Coin, at one time, had borrowed about 100,000 coins of gold from the Lannisters, this being over & above his existing debt with the family of about 3,000,000 coins of gold. If he already owed the Lannisters such a large sum, and asked for more, wouldn’t it have been better for the Lannisters to actually check on what their money was being used for, instead of adding to their list of bad debtors?

Solution: The implementation of a more structured system of granting loans & paying their employees expenses, it will result in large savings of money. It is imperative for every business to maintain total

visibility into the spending of their employees, which in turn affords both, employers & employees more room to breathe. In today's market, there are a number of ways this may be done, in real time as well, such as giving employees their own pre-paid expense card.

2. Control over Expenditure



The Lannisters are known for their extremely lavish lifestyle. This is evidenced by The Purple Wedding which is one of the most extravagant events held by them. Starting from the gifts offered to the bride & groom – jewel encrusted chalices & rare weaponry – to the wedding feast – amounting to seventy-seven dishes & the different forms of entertainments made available for the wedding guests.

Solution: It is extremely crucial to allocate funds appropriately. For any business, the ability to maintain limits and top up funds on an employee's pre- paid card, or to block the card altogether, allows them the liberty to have total control of the allocation & usage of funds. An additional benefit is that this can also be done instantaneously.

3. Efficient Use of Time



Although the Lannister family has seemingly inexhaustible reserves of gold, as with any resource, it is in a finite supply. Tywin Lannister himself had once said "Our last working mine dried up three years ago." This leads to speculations that the Lannisters may simply be portraying an image to the outside world, but in reality may not be as well off as they would lead everybody else to believe.

Solution: A sure way to continue to maintain a good reserve of money is to be able to diversify and better allocate funds to different areas of businesses. When books are not maintained systematically due to many irregularities and the vast amounts of paperwork needed, accountants of businesses tend to spend more time than is required on this. This time could be put to better use by looking at which areas of the business really need more or less funds. What better way to do this than by going paperless and integrating expense data directly into your accounting system?