

## CASE STUDY

# How Group 1 Automotive leveled up its shared services department and recovered \$5 million in aged receivables

To provide the best service to customers, Group 1 Automotive has a shared services center that centralizes back-office accounting functions. Those functions include processing accounts receivable, accounts payable, billing, inventory, and warranty claims for all retail automotive locations in the United States.




## ABOUT E78

E78 Partners delivers advisory, talent, and managed services that address the critical finance, technology, and transformation challenges faced by investment managers, private equity sponsors, and corporate leaders across the middle market through Fortune 500 companies.

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## THE SITUATION

However, the shared services center faced two primary challenges: It was short-staffed and in dire need of process improvement.

“We needed to stabilize our workforce after making a significant corporate acquisition and losing staff during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic,” shared vice president and corporate controller Chris Gillette. “Additionally, we needed to address some of the process issues we were having in areas such as collections that arose due to the rapid growth of the organization and high turnover.”

To solidify confidence in the shared services center and keep customers satisfied, Chris needed a dedicated partner to augment staffing and assist with the process issues. His search for such a partner led him to E78 Partners.

## THE CLIENT

Group 1 Automotive is an international Fortune 300 automotive retailer with more than two hundred dealerships in the United States and the United Kingdom. Through its omnichannel platform, the company sells new and used cars and light trucks, arranges vehicle financing, provides automotive maintenance and repair services, and offers vehicle parts as well as service and insurance contracts.



## THE SOLUTION

**E78 Partners is a one-stop shop for middle-market finance and technology leaders. It provides a unique range of services to rev up client operations and fuel high-performance organizations, thereby accelerating value creation on the road to success.**

“Initially, I wanted an intellectual partner that could sit down with me, help me think through things, and be my right hand,” said Chris. “Ultimately, E78 Partners was the right hand I needed to look at resource planning and help me drive the necessary change.”

From there, the engagement of E78 Partners grew to provide contract workers who helped deliver direct services, identify inefficiencies, and generate process improvements.

“The support we received from E78 Partners ran the entire gamut,” said Chris. “The contractors assisted us with services that included accounts receivable collections, general accounting, and payroll processing. From there, they partnered with our staffing firm and helped me interview new talent so that I could bring on full-time resources while reducing the number of temporary staff members.”

According to Chris, working with the team at E78 Partners was seamless from beginning to end. “I believe this was such a successful engagement because we were intellectually aligned partners,” he said.

## THE APPROACH

### Executive and Back-Office Staffing

- Provided an interim Director of Shared Service
- Helped onboard 150 new staff members

### Accounting Services

- Supplemented the shared services accounts receivable, accounts payable, and payroll team with high-caliber individuals who were trained on the new processes
- Assisted with collection efforts to reduce days sales outstanding and improve working capital

### Business Planning

- Identified opportunities for improvement and optimization
- Documented standard operating procedures for specific process areas

## THE RESULTS



### Increased Staffing Levels

E78 Partners assisted Group 1 Automotive in onboarding 150 new staff members into the shared services center. That assistance included identifying and screening candidates as well as training them to replace the temporary workers assigned by E78 Partners. “The team at E78 Partners saved us time and effort by using their expertise,” said Chris.



### Collected \$5 Million in Receivables

“E78 Partners created the framework for a collections team, which did not previously exist,” said Chris. “That helped us to collect more than \$5 million in aged receivables.”



### Updated Standard Operating Procedures

E78 Partners created a baseline for new training materials that made a range of processes more efficient. Additionally, Group 1 Automotive now has new policies and procedures along with drafts of new training manuals.



*“E78 Partners helped us create the foundation for the culture we are trying to build, which is one focused on excellent customer service. Now, we are able to pick up the tasks and carry them to the next level.”*

— **Chris Gillette**, Vice President and Corporate Controller


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