

Beacon 8.07 Release Notes

We are excited to announce major feature & user experience enhancements to both Beacon FLOW and Beacon Travel Planning this month based directly on user feedback! These enhancements cover workplace productivity gains, further customized routing options and enhanced visualizations.

Feature spotlight

- **Beacon Travel Planning** (previously Conference Travel) gets a significant user experience facelift, enhanced business logic options, and new functionality. There are new filtering, sorting, and paging options on the main list screen, and improved data entry controls on the event screen to include uploading bulk TBD travelers with a single click. There's enhanced flexibility when entering placeholder travelers, adjusting dates, and choosing status.

Highlights from this release

- **Beacon FLOW:** You can now create a simplified workflow that skips the review stage. We added agreement start and expiration dates for any FLOW so you can track upcoming packet renewals more easily. We also fixed a printing issue with the PDF viewer, added filtering options to the list screen, and restored some missing icons.
- **Beacon Finance:** Column sort order is now maintained properly when adding or removing a column on the Transactions and Approved Requests screens. We've also cleaned up some of the presentation, most notably popups and filtering utilities. New users now correctly get assigned a default account structure.
- **Beacon HR:** Added a new Accessions, Departures, and Transfers Multi-Year report. Also fixed a bug in the column selection screen. You can optionally map contractor Federal Task Leaders to any FTE, not just a defined Official Supervisor (contact us if interested).
- **Beacon (all):** A new print icon in the header offers better print functionality in all modules; some screens continue to offer custom print functionality. Please reach out if you have trouble printing any screen and we'll work towards a swift resolution.

Specifics

Module	What we did	Why we did it
Travel Planning	Added a new overview of requests for the Executive Officer.	Executive Officers needed a dashboard report for their pending actions.
Travel Planning	Added filtering, sorting, and paging options to the main list page.	Filtering is now possible on date range, division, and conference name, making it easier to quickly find the records you're looking for.
Travel Planning	Improved usability of Event screen with selectors for country and state, a calendar date selector, and some new options. Also now shows total dollar amount for the trip.	The Event screen has been beefed up with additional useful information, and we've given the whole screen a facelift to improve its usability.

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Travel Planning	You can now enter multiple unknown travelers when planning for a conference in a single click.	This allows users to plan some aspects of the trip prior to assigning travelers without having to add unknown travelers individually.
Travel Planning	You can now enter an individual travel request after the cut-off date.	This provides for real-world situations where availability shifts or late arrangements must be made.
Travel Planning	Once the request is submitted to the travel team, the travel planner is blocked from making changes.	This ensures that the information being reviewed doesn't change between stages.
Travel Planning	Added a new "Pending Review" status which is sent to the travel team who can then modify the package before routing it to the Final Approval.	<p>Previously, the only status capturing both the initial request as well as a packet under review by the travel team was "Draft".</p> <p>Now there is a convenient way to distinguish between "Draft" status created by the initiator and "Pending Review" by the travel team before the packet is sent to the Final Approver.</p>
Flow	Fixed the PDF viewer's print function.	We weren't satisfied with the built-in PDF print function in the viewer, so we built a new one.
Flow	Updated images for sorting list screens.	<p>When tidying up our images, we neglected to update some icons and their absence created a confusing gap on the main list pages in Flow. We've fixed that.</p> <p>Now, you should be able to see an icon in all cases in all browsers vs. a blank space sometimes.</p>
Flow	You can now create a workflow that skips the review stage.	<p>Users requested more flexibility in creating routing paths.</p> <p>We are spending a lot of time prioritizing flexibility vs. a one size fits all solution. Please bring us any suggestions for next month!</p>
Flow	You can now filter your list by calendar year, or search for text.	<p>As the list of active workflows grows, users have wanted more filtering options because searching is well, easier than scrolling.</p> <p>The search text option scans key text fields for the requested pattern.</p>

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Flow	Updated language in automated emails	We adjusted the language for clarity after getting feedback from users that instruction sets weren't always clear in terms of who had action vs. who was just simply being notified as an FYI.
Beacon	New print icon in the header offers an improved print option for all screens to strip out headers, footers and navigation elements so you just print the data. (Some pages retain custom printing options.)	<p>The screen presentation has changed over the years, and our older printing functions weren't keeping up. We overhauled printing to be more consistent, and to strip out unnecessary page elements where possible. We'll continue to tweak individual screen printing as needed.</p> <p>Special cases, such as PDFs, reports, or particular large/complex screens may continue to have special print functionality.</p> <p>Please let us know if you would like to see further improvements with printing. We know it's important.</p>
Finance, HR	<p>HR now properly integrates and displays new OC codes from Finance. These will be visible when new OC codes come into play next FY.</p> <p>In sum, we are ready for FCI.</p>	<p>As part of the rollout of new OC codes, we had to address significant logic behind the scenes to support the FCI initiative.</p> <p>We're continuing to work with many stakeholders to ensure as smooth a transition. We do expect task numbers to take some time to polish during the October month as we start seeing FY2020 data real time.</p>
Finance	Fixed a bug in which new users weren't correctly assigned default account structure.	<p>When we added IC-wide column functionality, we inadvertently broke the part that adds default columns when new users are created. This fixes that issue.</p> <p>Sorry about that.</p>

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Finance	Revamped old-style popups to newer on-screen modals.	<p>We've put lots of effort into standardizing our visual language this year, but Finance in particular had some complex functionality that was challenging to translate. Between popup blockers and old look-and-feel, we felt it was time for them to go.</p> <p>Let us know what you think.</p>
Finance	Column sort order is now maintained properly when adding or removing a column on the Transactions and Approved Requests screens.	<p>Users reported this as a major pain point. We pardon the turbulence. Please let us know if you continue to have any problems here.</p>
HR	Added a new Accessions, Departures, and Transfers Multi-Year report.	<p>This consolidates existing "Accessions & Departures Multi-Year" and "Departures and Transfers" into one report per user request.</p> <p>Check it out! We realize the ad-hoc and standard reporting in the HR domain can be confusing. We would love to hear if you find this new report useful or if you'd like to see any adjustments to make your life easier.</p>
HR	Column selector screen now properly adds columns from Alphabetical view.	<p>Previously, when sorting the available column list alphabetically, users could add columns as expected, but they would throw an error on saving. We found and fixed the error.</p>
HR	Adjusted logic to better capture new contractor records.	<p>In some cases, disparity and errors in source records could cause some contractor records to be missed as timestamp data suddenly became unreliable upstream.</p> <p>We've improved our logic to catch this data anomaly, so all your contractor records download into HR in a timely manner.</p> <p>Please continue to reach out should you find missing contractor data.</p>