FOR MCA FUNDERS

The spreadsheets migration playbook:

A guide for MCA funders moving to a purpose-built lending platform

How to move from Excel to a lending platform without disrupting live deals, breaking ACH schedules, or losing your collections context mid-move.

BEFORE WE GET INTO IT

Migrating out of spreadsheets is never fun

But neither is living with spreadsheets as your lending operating system. The difference is that if you choose the right platform, the pain of migrating is short-lived, and what comes after is an operation that actually runs without you holding it together by hand.

You already know this. Spreadsheets were never the plan — they were what you ran on until something better existed. The problem is that "until" tends to get pushed forward, and meanwhile your operation gets harder to run. The bigger your portfolio, the more the cracks show.

This guide covers what to do before you touch anything, what the spreadsheet-to-automated-platform migration actually looks like for an MCA shop, and what to watch out for so you don't disrupt live deals, break ACH schedules, or lose your collections context mid-move.

How to use this guide

Start with the diagnostic on the next section. It'll tell you whether you're ready to move or whether you still have prep work to do. Then follow the plan in order. Don't skip the parallel run section — that's where most migrations either succeed or fall apart.

SECTION 1

Are you ready to move?

Five questions that tell you where you stand before you touch anything.

Before you start configuring anything, answer these five questions honestly. They'll tell you where you are and what needs to happen first.

The 5-Question Readiness Diagnostic

1. Can your ops manager explain your entire deal lifecycle from submission to final payment without opening a spreadsheet?

If the answer is no, your process only exists inside your spreadsheets, not as a defined workflow any loan management platform can replicate accurately. When you configure a new lending platform, you're mapping your process into it. If you can't articulate that process without opening a file, you'll build the platform around whatever the spreadsheet happened to capture. **Document the workflow first, then configure.**

2. Do you know which spreadsheet is the source of truth for active deal balances right now?

If two people on your team would point to different files, your balances are already living in multiple places and at least one of them is wrong. When you import data into a loan management platform, you import from one source. **Consolidate first.**

3. Have you reconciled your active portfolio balances against your ACH processor in the last 30 days?

Your ACH processor is the only place where payment activity is ground truth. Your spreadsheet balance is a calculation, and every manual entry, missed update, or formula error since the deal funded has moved it further from reality. If those numbers don't match before you migrate, the gap comes with you. **Reconcile first.**

4. Do your underwriters apply the same credit criteria on every deal, or does each person have their own version?

A purpose-built MCA platform's scoring engine enforces whatever rules you configure. If your underwriters are working from different FICO floors, NSF tolerances, or industry restrictions, you need to decide which version is correct before you build the scorecard. **Standardize the box first, then build it in.**

5. Is your team ready to change their process, not just their tool?

Your ops rep who built the master spreadsheet spent years getting it right. Asking them to switch will feel slower at first, because it is. Leadership needs to be unified that the platform is now the source of truth, full stop. Any ambiguity gives the team permission to default back the moment anything feels unfamiliar.

If you answered yes to all five, you're ready. If you answered no to any of them, those answers are your pre-migration checklist. Fix those first, then start the clock.

SECTION 2

Pre-migration: what to clean up first

The quality of your migration is determined entirely by the quality of the data and process you bring into it.

The biggest mistake MCA shops make during migration is importing dirty data into a clean system. A unified lending platform calculates payoffs, generates syndicator statements, and calculates commission payouts based on whatever you put in it. If your merchant name has three different spellings across deals, your balances haven't been reconciled, and your deal statuses mean different things to different reps — all of that comes with you.

And because your new platform will run automated calculations on that data, a wrong balance won't sit quietly in a cell. It will show up in the payoff letter you send the merchant, the statement you send the syndicator, and the commission payout you send the ISO.

Do this work before your platform vendor is involved.

Pre-migration data cleanup checklist

Work through this before your first import. Flag anything you can't resolve immediately — those are your migration blockers.

- [ ] Merchant legal names are standardized across all records, with consistent punctuation and entity designation.
- [ ] DBA names are separated from legal names and documented for each merchant.
- [ ] Active deal balances have been reconciled against your ACH processor within the last 30 days.
- [ ] Duplicate merchant records have been identified and merged into a single record.
- [ ] Each active deal has a confirmed payment amount, frequency, and start date.
- [ ] All ACH authorization records are attached to the correct merchant and deal.
- [ ] Syndicator participation percentages have been verified against the last investor statement.
- [ ] Commission structures for active ISOs are documented and confirmed.
- [ ] Deals in collections are flagged with current status and last contact date.
- [ ] Deals in legal or default are separated, flagged, and set aside for manual handling.
- [ ] Any manually modified payment plans (holdback adjustments, temporary reductions) are documented.
- [ ] Bank statement records are filed and linked to the correct deal, not floating in a shared drive.

Pre-migration process documentation checklist

Before you move your operations to a platform, you need to know what your actual process looks like. The real one, not the version you wish were true.

- [ ] Deal statuses are defined as a fixed list that every rep uses, with no freeform variations.
- [ ] Decline reasons are standardized as a defined list, not freeform text entered by each underwriter.
- [ ] Approval authority levels are defined, including who can approve up to what amount.
- [ ] Exception approval process is documented, including who signs off and how each exception is logged.
- [ ] Collections escalation stages are defined from first missed payment through legal handoff, with timeframes for each stage.
- [ ] Renewal eligibility criteria are written down and accessible to the full team, not held by a single underwriter.
- [ ] Commission logic is documented in full, including split rates, clawback conditions, and payout timing.
- [ ] Syndicator payout schedule and waterfall logic is documented.

On data cleaning timelines

Plan two to three weeks for data cleanup if your portfolio is active and your spreadsheets have been built by more than one person over time. Every discrepancy you find requires the right person in the room to confirm which number is correct. If your operation is under 50 active deals and one person owns all the data, you can move faster. Either way, the cleanup is what makes the rest of the migration clean.

SECTION 3

The 3-phase migration plan

Configure, run parallel, then cut over. In that order.

MCA migration has one non-negotiable rule: you do not cut over cold. You don't shut down your spreadsheets on a Friday and run everything on the new platform on Monday. If anything is misconfigured — a payment schedule, a balance, an ACH reference — you won't find out until it's live and a merchant gets the wrong debit or an ISO gets an incorrect offer.

PHASE 1

Configure and load

Weeks 1-3

Get the platform set up around your actual process before any live data enters it.

- User roles and permissions configured — underwriters, ops, collectors, finance, and executives each have the right access level
- Deal stages defined and locked, covering your standard statuses from New Submission to Paid Off.
- Underwriting scorecard configured with your FICO thresholds, revenue minimums, time-in-business requirements, and position stacking rules
- Decline reasons, approval conditions, and exception logic documented and entered.
- ACH processors connected — Onyx IQ integrates natively with ACHWorks, Actum, ACH.com, UZO, and Wells Fargo.
- Commission structures configured for active ISOs.
- Syndicator profiles set up with correct participation percentages.
- Historical closed deals imported as reference records, not as active portfolio.
- Onboarding timeline confirmed with your vendor — most MCA platforms target 2–4 weeks to go-live.

PHASE 2

Parallel run

Weeks 3-5

This is the most important phase and the one most operators want to skip. You're running two systems at the same time — but this is proof work. When something doesn't match during the parallel run, you fix it in a controlled environment with your spreadsheet still there as the fallback.

What to compare daily

What to compare daily	Why it matters
New deal status in platform vs. spreadsheet	Confirms workflow routing is correct.
Payment schedule outputs vs. ACH processor	Catches misconfigured payment amounts or frequencies before first debit
Active deal balances vs. spreadsheet source of truth	Identifies any import discrepancies before they compound
Collections queue vs. manual tracking	Confirms failed payment triggers and escalation logic are firing correctly
Syndicator allocations vs. investor spreadsheet	Catches any rounding or percentage errors before a statement goes out
Commission calculations vs. ISO tracker	Confirms payout logic matches agreed structures

Run the parallel period for at least one full reporting cycle — typically two weeks minimum for an MCA shop with daily ACH activity. Do not move to Phase 3 until every item above passes clean.

PHASE 3

Cutover and lock

Weeks 5-6

Once parallel validation is clean, you cut over. Spreadsheets become read-only archives: saved, accessible for reference, and frozen.

- All new submissions are entering the platform with no new entries in pipeline spreadsheets.
- Active payment schedules are live in the platform and syncing with ACH processors.
- Active deal balances in the platform match the last parallel validation.
- Collections queues are active and failed payment workflows are triggering correctly.
- All users have been trained on their role-specific workflows.
- Old spreadsheets saved as read-only archives with a clear naming convention.
- Cutover date announced to the entire team — everyone knows which system is now authoritative.
- A dedicated support contact at your platform vendor established for the first 30 days post-go-live.

CRITICAL

On the ACH handoff specifically.

This is the highest-risk moment in the entire migration. A misconfigured ACH schedule means a merchant gets double-debited or misses a payment. Before you activate payment processing through your new platform, reconcile every active payment schedule to the penny against your ACH processor. Run a dry sync. Confirm the batch file matches expected daily collection amounts. Then activate. Do not do this during a high-volume week.

SECTION 4

Go-live readiness checklist

Don't declare the migration done until every item below is a clean yes.

Use this as your final gate before you declare the migration complete. Every item needs to be a clean yes. If any are no, resolve it before you go live. Each one on this list has broken a migration before.

OPERATIONS

- [ ] All active deals are imported and balances are reconciled.
- [ ] All active payment schedules match ACH processor records.
- [ ] Failed payment workflow tested: a missed payment triggers the correct queue and notification.
- [ ] Collections escalation stages are configured and tested.
- [ ] Payoff calculation has been verified against a known deal.

UNDERWRITING

- [ ] Scorecard rules match your current credit policy.
- [ ] Decline reasons are configured and mapped to the correct workflow outcomes.
- [ ] Exception approval process is active and exceptions route to the correct approver.
- [ ] Stipulation checklists are configured for standard deals.

BROKER AND SYNDICATOR

- [ ] All active ISOs are in the system with correct commission structures.
- [ ] Syndicator allocations match the last verified investor statement.
- [ ] ISO portal has been tested with at least one active broker.

TEAM AND PROCESS

- [ ] Every user has completed role-specific training.
- [ ] Written SOPs exist for new submission intake, failed payment handling, and collections escalation.
- [ ] A department champion has been identified in underwriting and operations.
- [ ] Old spreadsheets are saved as read-only archives with editing access removed.
- [ ] The team knows which system is authoritative and why.

SECTION 5

What happens in the first 30 days

Four specific things that change for four specific roles once the migration is clean.

Meaningful shifts don't happen on day one. They build over the first 30 days as your team stops reaching for the spreadsheet out of habit and starts trusting what the platform is showing them. Each one happens because a specific role stopped maintaining their own piece of the data and started working from the same record as everyone else.

SUBMISSIONS REP

Stops being a data entry role

ISO emails arrive, documents attach automatically, applications route to the underwriting queue without anyone manually building the file. Shops that have migrated to Onyx IQ have reduced submission handling from 18 people down to 2 on equivalent deal volume.

OPS REP

Stops logging into the ACH portal

Every payment plan change, holdback adjustment, or failed debit gets handled inside the deal record. ACH processors sync twice daily. Your ops rep sees what collected, what failed, and what's pending in a single dashboard, without opening a second system.

COLLECTIONS REP

Stops starting the day by checking what failed

Failed payments trigger automatically overnight. By the time your collections rep sits down, the queue is already built, the merchant has already received an automated notification, and the deal is already in the right stage. They start the day responding, not discovering.

LEADERSHIP

Month-end report stops being a project

Active balances, payment performance, delinquency rates, and syndicator positions are live in the dashboard. Month-end becomes a confirmation step because the numbers you've been watching all month are already there.

The first week is uncomfortable. The second week gets easier. By week four, the team that was most resistant will be the one most reluctant to go back.

BEFORE YOU CHOOSE

Choosing the right platform

The right platform is the one built for how MCA operations actually work. Here's how to tell.

What staying on spreadsheets costs as volume grows

Before you weigh what a platform costs, run what your current setup is actually costing you.

At your current volume, count what you're spending on:	Honest answer
Hours per week your submissions rep spends building deal files by hand	____ hrs × ____ weeks = ____
Hours per month your ops manager spends rebuilding the syndicator report	____ hrs × ____ /hr = $____
Hours per month spent reconciling ACH records against your spreadsheet balances	____ hrs × ____ /hr = $____
Deals delayed or lost last quarter because approval was too slow	____ deals × avg margin = $____
People hired in the last 12 months specifically to handle manual data work	____ headcount × annual cost = $____

Add those up. That's what staying costs at your current volume. At 2x volume, every number roughly doubles.

What to confirm before you sign with any platform

Not every platform marketed to MCA funders was built for MCA operations. Some are generic CRMs with MCA features bolted on. Others handle origination well but were never designed for daily ACH servicing or syndicator reporting.

1. Full lifecycle in one system

Origination, underwriting, funding, ACH servicing, collections, syndication, and portfolio reporting should all run inside the same platform on the same deal record. Every tool boundary is a place where data has to be reconciled manually.

2. Direct ACH processor integration

The platform should connect directly to your ACH processor and sync automatically. If your ops rep still logs into a separate portal to set up payment plans or check daily returns, the core servicing problem isn't solved.

3. No-code scorecard configuration

Your head of credit should be able to update FICO thresholds, NSF tolerances, and industry restrictions without filing an engineering ticket. If every credit policy change requires a developer, your underwriting box will always lag behind your risk appetite.

4. MCA-native, not MCA-adapted

Platforms built for MCA from the ground up handle factor rates, daily ACH, holdback adjustments, and renewal logic as built-in workflows. Platforms adapted from generic LOS or CRM tools handle them through configuration that often breaks on mid-contract changes.

5. Audit trail on every decision

Every approval, decline, override, payment change, and collection action should be timestamped and logged against the deal record with the rule set that produced it. If you can't pull a full audit trail on any deal in one click, you have a compliance exposure.

6. Dedicated support contact, not a ticket queue

You need a named person who knows your operation and can be reached directly when something breaks. A general intake form means you're a ticket number when your ACH sync fails on a Monday morning.

7. Realistic implementation timeline

A platform built for MCA should get you live in 2–4 weeks for a standard operation. If a vendor's implementation timeline starts at 3 months before any deals run through it, the platform wasn't built for how MCA operations actually work.

What to ask every vendor in the demo

Most demos focus on what the software can do in ideal conditions. These questions surface how it behaves in the conditions you actually operate in:

Ask this	What the answer tells you
If a merchant requests a holdback adjustment on day 12, how does that get handled inside the platform?	If the answer involves any manual step outside the system, mid-contract servicing is not fully built.
Can I see what happens when an ACH payment fails overnight?	Watch whether the failed payment automatically routes to a collections queue or requires someone to log in and find it.
If my head of credit changes a FICO threshold today, which currently funded deals were approved under the old rule?	Tests audit trail depth. If they can't show you a versioned history of scorecard changes mapped to decisions, the compliance layer is weak.
Who is my dedicated contact after go-live, and what's their direct line?	If the answer is a support portal or a shared inbox, support will be slow when it matters.
Can I export all my deal data, and in what format?	Tests data portability. A vendor who makes this hard is designing lock-in into the product.
Show me a syndicator statement generated directly from the platform	If they can't show you a live example, syndicator reporting is either manual, limited, or not yet built.

YOU NOW HAVE A PLAN

Ready to see your business without the spreadsheets?

The prep work in this guide is what most MCA shops skip. It's also why most migrations take longer than they should. You're ahead of that now. Book a walkthrough of Onyx IQ and we'll show you exactly how the platform handles the lifecycle you just mapped — automatically.

Book a demo