The Impact of Document Management Software: Reinventing The Accounts Payable Process

Every business has invoices to pay. Whether one clerk or a team of 20, the Accounts Payable (AP) process is universal and one of the most heavily stricken by paperwork. The constant influx of invoices, purchase orders and packing slips can seem never ending, one pile after another. Even worse, managing paper-based documents can drive up costs and create inefficiencies in daily performance. From fraudulent charges, to missed deadlines and double payments (yes, I said DOUBLE), the best way to ensure your invoices are paid properly is by taking Accounts Payable digital.

I get it, change is hard. But no company wants to mismanage their financial data. Handling nearly all payments outside of payroll, AP departments need structured processes to prevent the common mistakes bound to managing paperwork. Document management software not only helps organize your AP department to operate more efficiently, but also provides advantages in productivity and collaboration, all while saving you time… and money! What's not to love? Let's take a closer look at how document management software reinvents paper-based accounting:

1. **Automate Invoice Approvals & Payments** - Paper-based invoicing can lead to delays if someone is unavailable or out of the office, causing missed payments and an increase in costs. Even dropping an invoice on an associate's desk is at risk of being thrown out, lost or viewed by the wrong eyes. With document management software your invoices are secure, yet always available from the convenience of your workstation. Out of office? No problem. Users can view digital files and start the approval process from a laptop, tablet or smartphone – and no one will even know you're still in bed! Alerts can also be set up to notify users when new invoices are ready to be reviewed and approved, automatically sending the documents in question to the appropriate recipients. Additionally, much of the main focus of AP departments is on the three-way match. The key to getting an invoice approved quickly is validating that you received what was intended to be purchased, and that the terms and amounts match the invoice and original PO. Document management software keeps files organized and accessible for instant matching.

2. **Data Entry: Visibility, Productivity & Accuracy** - What was that PO Number? How many pens did we order? Where is our package? With document management software, questions like these will be a thing of the past. Search via index information, body text, or even date range. Special characters can also be used to further filter results. *Voila!* Document management software lets you find what you need the moment you need it. But let's go back. Before we can search for a document, we need to capture it. Manually entering paper invoices can lead to entry errors and data loss. Document management software allows users to capture the necessary data through Optical Character Recognition (OCR). Place a stack of paper invoices on your office equipment device and move on to tasks of higher importance. Built in OCR capabilities will scan each document individually, grabbing all of the key data and automatically filing into Archives. Set, scan and forget – OCR does the work for you.

3. **End the Constant Compliance Worry**- Do you know if business rules are being enforced? Are you prepared to prove your company is in compliance with the SEC, FINRA or ESIGN regulations? Document management software can help your business tie together all the important documents needed during an audit. Purchase orders, delivery receipts, and check images can all be instantly and digitally available to anyone with user based permissions. These features can also help manage compliance risks by controlling policies and having a quicker response time to legal or regulatory actions. What about protection? Monitoring signatures and irregularities makes it hard for companies to protect themselves from fraud. But digital approvals identify which user took action and creates a reliable audit trail that can be easily used and viewed, validating the history of each and every document.

Paying your vendors on time is critical to the success of any business. Whether your company is big or small, with paper-based accounting methods it can be hard to keep track of where everything is located and what has been fulfilled. A paperless solution could prevent all of the issues that AP departments face, while keeping processes structured and well managed.

And there you have it. Learn how real document management users have streamlined AP tasks at significantly lower costs. Visit www.square-9/case-studies to find out!