

E-Invoice Enables Paperless Invoicing through Transparency and an Easy Tracking System



The Cram Group deploys comprehensive multi-application solutions for customers in the construction industry.

Extending the processes that current construction software products provide, The Cram Group has developed e-Invoice to incorporate streamlined workflow and a role based interface.

Developed in cooperation with North Shore Long Island Jewish Hospital (NSLIJH), e-Invoice extends and simplifies processes for the construction industry. It allows users to electronically manage thousands of invoices by enabling vendors and contractors to submit invoices online and have visibility to the entire approval process.

Full integration with The Cram Group's ProjectXnet, Meridian Systems' Prolog Manager and ColumbiaSoft's Document Locator allows users to extend their existing applications and enable native collaboration among more than 50 companies contributing to a paperless invoice process.

By providing electronic invoicing following these programs' workflow-based approval, e-Invoice facilitates the online submission and approval of invoices resulting in reduction of paper, duplicates and misplaced invoices. During the review process, users have the right information available to make decisions, which is aggregated from Prolog Manager & Document Locator in a web based user interface. During the approval process data is validated against Prolog Manager business rules and other custom criteria. When the e-Invoice workflow is completed, data is updated in Prolog Manager. PDF versions with the entire process history are simultaneously distributed and archived in Document Locator as a system of record.

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Carole Reiss,
Financial Manager of P. Chow Architect

Efficiency and Faster Turnaround

The Cram Group developed e-Invoice with NSLIJH in early 2007. NSLIJH asked the companies it works with to use it with them, and with positive results, according to Carole Reiss, Financial Manager of P. Chow Architect, and Steve Perry, Senior Project Accounting Manager of Bovis Lend Lease.

Previously, both companies used paper-based billing. Now, both Reiss and Perry agree, "It gets us paid faster."

Reiss said that P. Chow Architect had a particular difficulty, in that NSLIJH wanted only one invoice per month per project. "That was more difficult to monitor before we used e-Invoice, because we have so many projects with them."



A Window Into Invoicing

Users find the real-time visibility into the entire invoice approval process refreshing, and efficient.

In fact, Reiss has found that perhaps the biggest benefit that has come from using e-Invoice is that there is greater transparency in the payment process. She notes that "we can see where there is a hold up if the invoice is not paid."

All Reiss or Perry have to do now is go online and click through projects and see who has the invoice in their inbox, and call that person directly to remind them that it's there.

This feature is particularly useful with a customer like NSLIJ, who, according to Perry, has a "lengthy, four- to five-step approval process for its invoices. Now we know who to call and go straight to them."

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Steve Perry
Senior Project Accounting Manager
Bovis Lend Lease

Lost and Found

Lost invoices are a thing of the past as well. Reiss is pleased that they now receive reports if an invoice is rejected so they can address any issues immediately. And Perry likes being able to see online, in real-time who has possession of the invoice.

But, Reiss adds, it's more than the invoicing itself that is useful. "All of the financial information e-Invoice captures is extremely helpful for budgeting, including the payments, amounts, change order amounts, etc. I can click on the last invoice paid and it comes up with the invoice history of every invoice paid. And it shows the total amount of the contract balance left, so it's easy to be sure we're on track."