Partner Success Story

Haines Watts & ApprovalMax

Spend control for a hospitality business

#Audits   #Expenses   #Hospitality   #FinancialControls   #PurchaseOrders   #UK

"When working with a hotel business, it's impossible for our finance team to leave their office location in order to ask operations staff about purchase orders and approval-related information.

In the past, our client simply didn't have enough control in place. Everyone could basically order what they wanted for no reason. Obviously, they could not just halt operations while collecting approvals. So, they needed a solution that puts spending under control AND keeps the business running at a pace.

Automating the purchase order approval process was essential for establishing efficient spend control, and we could not have done it without ApprovalMax."

Company
Haines Watts is a Top 15 firm of chartered accountants who specialise in advising and supporting business owners. They serve over 35,000 companies around the UK, which gives their clients access to a huge amount of business expertise and knowledge.

Type of business
Haines Watts offers tax, accountancy and business advice as well as expense control, corporate finance and forensic accounting.

Location
UK

The challenges

At the Haines Watts' client – a large hotel – numerous procurement requests get initiated by various operations personnel. With the hotel operating 24/7, people work in shifts and are away from their desks & computers most of the time. This used to cause big problems in terms of authorisation, and coordinating procurement decisions.

Purchase orders and bills were being processed using a combination of manual approvals and emails. Paper clutter, lack of transparency, the inability to trace back approval decisions – those were the significant drawbacks of this former process.

There was not enough control in place. Everyone could basically order what they wanted for no reason. However, halting operations while collecting approvals was certainly no option. So, Haines Watts needed a solution that puts spending under control and keeps the business running at a pace throughout.

Resolving the challenges of working with large clients: clear processes and shared accountability

Today, every purchase order goes through ApprovalMax. Both their creation and approval can be done either on the go using the mobile app, or via the web interface.

"ApprovalMax allows us to embed the approval process into a proper system, gather all approval-related information and route purchasing documents to the required authorisation levels. It implements the necessary layer of control; and makes the process efficient, standardised and therefore audit-ready."

Firstly, purchase orders are created outside of Xero. This protects financial data from unauthorised access and also enables defining certain rules for specific purchase order requesters to restrict them regarding the suppliers they can use and items they can order.

Purchase orders are then run through a business-defined authorisation process, making sure that purchases of a certain size or type get authorised by the responsible budget holders. All approvals can be done on mobile devices, helping approvers to review and authorise (or reject) on the fly, making the whole process much faster and a lot more efficient than before.

Finally, after having been authorised properly, purchase orders are synched to Xero for further processing. This includes emailing purchase orders to the supplier and making them available for the "Bill to purchase order" matching at a later stage.

Results of the implementation

- ✓ **Transparency and traceability of the complete purchasing process**
- ✓ **Mobile creation and approval of purchase orders**
- ✓ **Protection against unauthorised access to financial data as well as the option to restrict requesters regarding the suppliers they can use and items they can order**
- ✓ **Enhanced productivity because less time is spent on paperwork and clarification regarding payments**
- ✓ **Fully documented and audit-ready approval process**

The Approval App You'll Love Using

ApprovalMax allows accounting and advisory practices to set up approval-driven financial controls for Accounts Payable and Accounts Receivable. It replaces paper- and email-based approvals with fully automated multi-role and multi-tiered approval workflows. This ensures full regulatory compliance, simplifies audits and facilitates client collaboration.

ApprovalMax

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