ApprovalMax

Solutions & Services
Collaborative School Administration

xero PLATINUM PARTNER

Paperless accounting for a primary school: how a cloud app stack streamlines approvals, reporting and the overall finance function

#AccountingAdvisory   #Education   #Bills   #NotForProfits   #AUNZ

"ApprovalMax saves us a lot of time and paper. The Principal and Deputy Principals love that they can now approve any time they want. It's also much easier to work from home during school holidays, or a lockdown.

With ApprovalMax invoices easily flow from email to Hubdoc to ApprovalMax, then to Xero for payment and to our reporting module Monty. To top it off, a detailed audit trail shows who approved when and which invoice."

DIANE MAWHINNEY,
Executive Officer
St Albans School
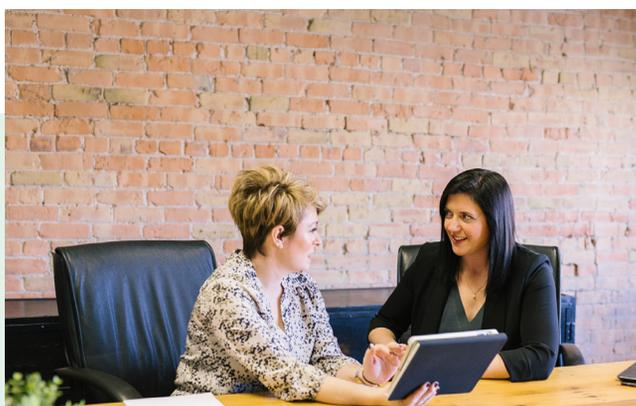
Partner company
Solutions and Services has been supporting New Zealand schools with financial and administration services for over 27 years. Being Xero partners since 2014 and now Xero Platinum partners, they serve more than 400 schools in various ways.

Type of business
Accounting and advisory practice

Location
New Zealand

The challenges

As schools use public funds, they are very closely audited and their approval process must be transparent. Auditors need to see every single invoice and verify that it was approved by the right persons. All paper documents have to be kept for 7 years.

Incoming invoices require the approval of the budget holder, the Principal and one of the two Deputy Principals. Even though Hubdoc and Xero were already implemented, the approval process still had to be performed on paper. Invoices used to arrive by post or email, printed out and got stamped and coded manually by the executive officer, who then had to ask first the Principal to check and sign, and then the Deputy Principal to do the same.

The manual process of checking and approving each invoice was pretty time-consuming, despite the comparatively low number. It kept the staff really busy because it was all done on paper and the sheer volume of documents that had to be filed for audit purposes was overpowering.

Introducing an app stack for efficient paperless accounting

To solve these issues, Solutions and Services recommends to existing and new customers an app stack that includes Monty, Hubdoc and ApprovalMax.

Now, the vast majority of invoices are emailed to the school accounts and forwarded to Hubdoc for coding. Next, they enter ApprovalMax via Xero. The automated approval process routes them to the curriculum budget holder or the Executive Officer as a first approver, then to the Principal, and lastly to one of the Deputy Principals for the final approval.

There is no more manual checking and signing. The school also uses so much less paper because all invoices are stored in the cloud with an audit trail that's available online. The Principal and Deputy Principals just love that they can approve invoices whenever it suits them, be it during the day or after hours. It also makes working from home during the school holidays, when the staff don't have to be in their office, a lot easier. They just approve invoices from the notification email on their phone as soon as it comes through.

Results of the implementation

- ✓ Fully paperless workflow and complete eradication of error-prone and time inefficient manual authorisations
- ✓ Transparency and control: invoices cannot "go missing" as it is simple to track them
- ✓ Flexible workflow setup based on invoice values
- ✓ Convenience for budget holders: easy approving via laptop or mobile app

"We use much less paper as invoices are now stored electronically and there's a detailed audit trail available online. ApprovalMax truly simplifies the approval process for all parties involved,"
– says Diane Mawhinney, Executive Officer at St Albans School.

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.

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