Upstream

CASE STUDY

CUSTOMER
Probuild Constructions

INDUSTRY
Construction

CHALLENGE
Mistake-prone & onerous manual
invoice processing

OUR SOLUTION
Accounts Payable Automation

OUTCOME
Improved productivity & supplier
relationships

PROBUILD

PROBUILD STREAMLINES ACCOUNTS PAYABLE WITH UPSTREAM

Probuild Constructions is an Australian-owned, tier-one building company that has created major projects for clients nationwide for the past 30 years. Known for building the country's tallest residential towers, iconic shopping centres, and stunning commercial premises, Probuild focuses on innovative thinking to drive exceptional outcomes.

PROCESSING A MULTITUDE OF INVOICES

Probuild manages significant numbers of invoices every month from contractors and suppliers. With a manual invoice processing approach, paperwork was everywhere throughout the office and job sites. This created opportunities for invoices to get lost, duplicate invoices to be paid twice, late payments that forfeited early-payment discounts or even incurred penalty fees.
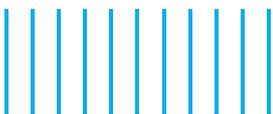
Angela Costa, Transactional Services Manager, Probuild Constructions, said, "When paper invoices would get lost in the pile, suppliers would ring us to chase payment. Often, we'd have to get our suppliers to resend the invoices, starting the process all over again. There was no easy way to track invoices and the amount of manual work required was significant.

"This was exacerbated by the fact that some suppliers would both email the invoice and send it in the mail. It wasn't until we started keying in the details of the paper-based invoice that we would realise it was a duplicate. This wasted valuable time and there was always the risk that an invoice would be paid twice.

"In a previous role I had worked with an invoicing system and I knew Probuild required something similar. As the business was growing and taking on more projects, it became more important to take control over the invoice process. It was essential to eliminate the paper chase to free up everyone, especially project managers, to focus on value adding activities rather than on tracking down invoices."

❝ *The solution is very intuitive and easy to use. We've seen a significant drop in handling invoice queries since implementing it because the information is so easy to see. The team likes using the Upstream solution, particularly the search functionality and comprehensive visibility into data."*

— *Angela Costa* —
Transactional Services Manager
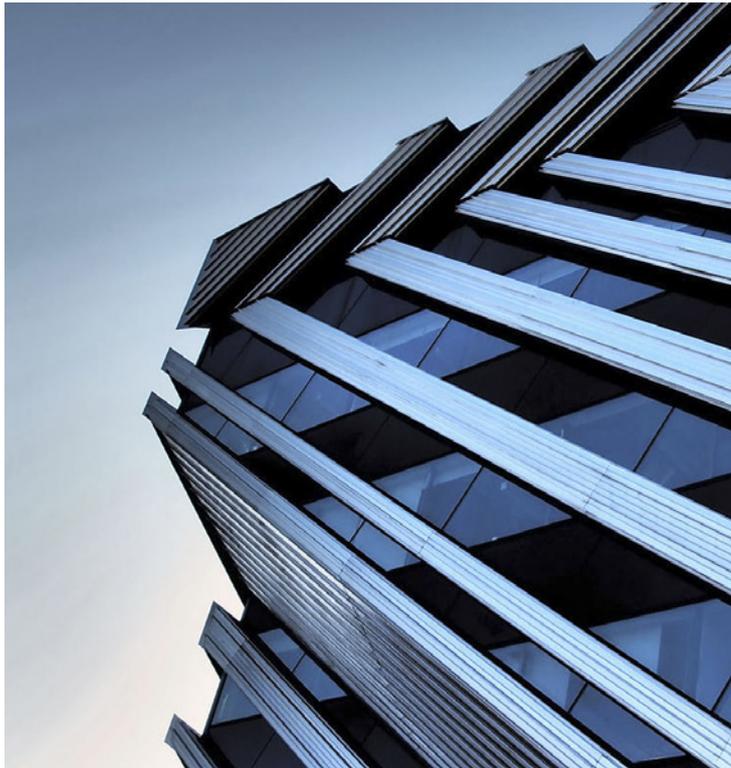
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>
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> *Transactional Services Manager*

FLEXIBLE AUTOMATED WORKFLOWS

Having worked with Upstream in the past, Probuild contacted the team along with three other invoice processing solution providers to find the right solution for the business's needs.

Angela Costa said, "Upstream had exactly what Probuild needed and nothing was a challenge for the team. Probuild had a few processes that were slightly unusual but it was easy for Upstream to come up with a solution that worked for us."

For example, Upstream needed to create a solution that could handle simple projects as well as for more complex projects with many layers. It was important for Probuild to have individual workflows that suited a variety of situations.

Angela Costa said, "The most impressive thing was that Upstream never said no. The team thought about how they could develop workflows that matched our requirements and built it for us."

Upstream developed a solution based on M-Files and ABBYY FlexiCapture that streamlines and automates the accounts payable process. On scanning the invoices into the system, key metadata is captured and matched against purchase order numbers and linked to specific project codes within Probuild's system. This information determines who the invoice needs to be sent to for approval before it can be paid. The Upstream solution automatically checks to ensure invoices aren't duplicates so we don't need to waste time or money on duplicate invoices.

ALLEVIATED WORKLOAD & IMPROVED RELATIONSHIPS

Following a smooth implementation process with extensive collaboration, the Upstream solution began attracting positive reactions from team members immediately.

Angela Costa said, "The construction side of the business said they had never enjoyed a finance initiative as much as this one. They can see the benefits for their time and the business as a whole.

The Upstream solution has removed a lot of complexities from the accounts payable process, which means we're no longer doing as much paperwork, printing, and filing."

In the past, every few months the paper-based invoices would be sent to an offsite third party for batch scanning. The Upstream solution means that's no longer necessary as each invoice is scanned for processing on receipt.

Payment terms flag the due date on the invoice so Probuild no longer pays invoices late. The business can now take advantage of early payment discounts, which has resulted in improved relationships with suppliers.

Angela Costa said, "It's easy for the business to answer queries from suppliers now because we can see at a glance where each invoice is in the process, whether it's been approved or paid, or held up for some reason. Suppliers have definitely noticed a positive change in how we work with them."

THE BOTTOM LINE

- Improved accounts payable by digitising and automating processes

- Reduced potential for errors, late payments, and duplicate payments

- Improved supplier relationships and productivity through more efficient invoice management

The Upstream solution is integrated with Probuild's existing enterprise resource planning (ERP) solution, with key information automatically importing into the ERP system. This information was previously entered manually, taking up more time and risking errors.

Invoices are automatically routed to the correct person based on a predetermined approval matrix set according to rules such as approval limits. This makes the approval process faster so invoices are paid sooner. Furthermore, project managers can approve invoices via their smartphone, so they don't have to come back into the office to approve payments. This saves time for them and lets them be productive from anywhere.

Angela Costa said, "The solution is very intuitive and easy to use. We've seen a significant drop in invoice queries since implementing it because the information is so easy to see. The team likes using the Upstream solution, particularly the search functionality and comprehensive visibility into data.

"For example, we can now see how much work we're doing with each supplier and what they're charging us across the business. We can use that data as a procurement tool to negotiate discounts and terms.

"Because the Upstream solution has been so successful in improving our accounts payable processes, the business is now considering expanding it across the payroll function."

UPSTREAM HELPS BUSINESSES WORK SMARTER, DIGITALLY

With a history spanning over 30 years in the print and document management industry, Upstream is one of Australia's leading content, workflow and print management solutions companies.

Our strengths lie in understanding the immediate and long-term goals for improving processes and reducing paperwork, data entry and duplication, effectively streamlining and optimising workflow. We deliver flexdible, cost-effective solutions that alleviate your administrative burden and provide real value to your business.

Upstream's suite of award winning products are uniquely tailored to suit your business needs.

Our solutions include workflow, content management, 'Smart' barcode forms, cost recovery, regulatory compliance, and print management to name a few. We specialise in business processes such as POD, HR onboarding, Accounts Payable automation, Sign on Glass mobility solutions, as well as having extensive experience in document storage and retrieval.

Have you identified document processes in your business that are weighing you down? Get in touch with our specialists, we're always here to help.

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