



Concur integrated solution delivers speed and transparency to a London charity

The finance team of the London charity Thames Reach needed a new system to speed up the invoice management process and give them easier, faster access to the right information. Concur Invoice and ExcluServ's Connector for Xero gave them the solution they needed.

Helping London's most vulnerable people

Thames Reach is a London charity helping vulnerable and homeless people to live in decent homes, build supportive relationships and lead fulfilling lives. It has a workforce of 300 people and 90 volunteers who work at the charity's head office and at around 50 locations across the capital.

The five-strong finance team handle the charity's accounts payable and receivable functions. Payroll is outsourced to the financial and systems consultancy firm ExcluServ, a long-standing partner of Thames Reach.

A disjointed invoice management process that wasn't fit for purpose

Paul Jackson, Head of Finance at the charity, was frustrated by its cumbersome and time-consuming manual invoice processes. Managers in each of the 50 offices across London would sign off invoices, keep a copy for themselves and post another to the HQ, where the purchase ledger would key in the information and file the invoice.

Moreover, the system didn't give Paul the transparency into invoices he needed. "Getting headline information was easy but if I wanted anything more than that, there was no interface that gave me what I needed unless my Purchase Ledger had printed reports for me."

So, when the software they were using for their purchase ledger became out-of-date and could no longer be supported, Paul saw an opportunity to streamline the process and get the transparency he needed. He turned to their consultants, ExcluServ, for help.

Upgrading the existing software to the latest version was not a feasible option so Thames Reach needed to implement an alternative system.

Partner



Company

ExcluServ

www.ExcluServ.com



Concur Connector for Xero



Company

Thames Reach

www.thamesreach.org.uk

Solutions

Concur Invoice

ExcluServ's Concur Connector for Xero

Industry

Charity

Established

1984

Why Concur?

- No upfront costs which made it a low-risk solution.
- The functionality of the ExcluServ Connector that means Xero and Concur act as a single platform.
- Thames Reach's existing relationship with ExcluServ, a Concur Partner.

“We have a longstanding relationship with ExcluServ. They challenge assumptions and offer valuable insights.”

Paul Jackson, Thames Reach

One integrated solution

A strong contender was Xero, already in use for other elements of Thames Reach's accounts systems. The cloud-based software was well liked and the finance team were all happy with the way it worked.

Jacques Malan, Technical Director at ExcluServ, then introduced Paul to Concur Invoice. He also suggested that ExcluServ develop a Concur to Xero Connector, available on the Concur App Centre, that would seamlessly integrate the two platforms so they acted as one and give many advantages.

Concur Invoice would capture the key invoice information and handle the invoice sign-off process. ExcluServ's Concur to Xero Connector would then automatically import all the information into Xero from where the finance team could process it for payment. Thames Reach would be the first user but the tool would be available via Concur's App Centre to any organisation needing a similar solution.

Paul could immediately see the advantages of the solution. “The accounting profession has got stuck in having huge controlled environments that only the finance team can access. What you actually need is a simple set up where information is useable, accessible, delivered on time and available to everyone. That's what Concur, Xero and the ExcluServ Connector give us.”

“Concur are open and willing to work with partners. Everything is transparent and we have a good working relationship both ways.”

Jacques Malan, Technical Director, ExcluServ

A streamlined, transparent and modern invoice process

The new process gives Paul greater transparency into his numbers and empowers him to access the information he needs quickly because a copy of every invoice is automatically imported into Xero by the ExcluServ Connector so he can see the detail without needing to log into a separate system.

It has dramatically accelerated the time it takes to approve and pay invoices and the chance of them getting lost in the system has been minimised.

The finance team no longer needs to file or archive, because all the information is automatically imported into Concur and Xero. It's something that has transformed storage challenges for Thames Reach. In the first six months of the financial year, filing has amounted to one concertina file. Before, the paperwork would have needed a six-foot-high filing cabinet.

A finance team with a new lease of life

Paul thinks his team are as busy as they were before, but that the work they do now in following up invoices and training new members of staff on the system is much more fulfilling.

“Concur completely changes everything: it's fantastic. I'm a great advocate based on what I've experienced and we're in the process of rolling out Concur Expense as a result.”

Paul Jackson, Thames Reach

Away from the day-to-day differences Concur and Xero together with ExcluServ's Connector have made, Paul is aware of bigger shifts the new system has facilitated. “Accountants generally have a reputation for being backward-looking because that's our role. But just having a system that works and takes advantage of technology makes a big difference. It puts us on the front foot and gives us self-confidence and a standing in the organisation we didn't have before.”

