



Case Study

Norbella Deploys IPS Platform to Transform Media Payables

At a time when businesses of all sizes are looking to wring costs and inefficiencies from their back-office processes, Norbella has improved the effectiveness, accuracy and turnaround time of its invoice approval processes using a cloud-based AP automation solution Secaucus, NJ-based IPS.



The IPS 100% digital solution also helped Norbella’s finance function transition to a Work from Home environment during the COVID-19 pandemic,”

**Norbella Chief Financial Officer
Kevin Webb**

The Situation

For more than a decade, Norbella has been a media strategy, planning and buying partner to smart agencies and marketers. The company delivers a full range of services for television, radio, print, outdoor advertising, web, mobile search, social media, in-store, and sports and entertainment.

Each month, Norbella receives hundreds of invoices from suppliers for the media that it has bought on behalf of its clients. Many of these invoices are from individual broadcast television and radio stations. While Norbella receives supplier invoices through many different delivery channels, e-mailed PDF attachments and web uploads now account for most of its invoice volume.

The Problem

Before deploying the IPS solution, Norbella used a solution from another vendor for about a year. The base functionality of the other solution was “pretty good,” Webb said. But implementing the solution was long and burdensome. “The vendor was trying to massage the system to get it to work for us,” Webb said. It did not take long for Norbella to discover that the solution could not provide the flexibility that it needed. For instance, extracting information from the system was extremely hard. The solution could not retrieve archived supplier invoices in bulk for auditing; the invoices had to be retrieved individually and manually saved to a remote server that a client could access.

“The vendor wouldn’t or couldn’t tweak their system to fit our processes,” Webb explained. That is when Norbella began its search for a better way to process the invoices it receives from suppliers.

The Solution

During the summer of 2019, Norbella evaluated five accounts payable solutions. After narrowing down its list of prospective solutions down to three, Norbella selected the cloud-based accounts payable automation platform from IPS. The flexibility of the IPS platform appealed to Norbella.

“We did not want another off-the-shelf product. We wanted a solution that would address the way we work. It was clear to us that the IPS solution could be easily configured to our needs,” Webb said. The IPS customers that Webb called during his reference-checks confirmed IPS’ ability and willingness to configure its solution to meet an accounts payable department’s business need.

“The attitude and approach of IPS was so much different than our previous vendor,” Webb said.

Webb also was convinced that the IPS platform would be easy to use. “We do not have the time to train so many different users on the nuances of a system. Thankfully, the IPS solution is intuitive.”

The IPS platform also integrates seamlessly with Norbella’s platform from Advantage Software. Advantage Software is an enterprise-level platform specifically designed for advertising agencies and marketing companies. The Advantage Software platform automates all aspects of accounting, billing, project management, digital asset management, creative proofing, media planning and buying, and client relationship management with the needs of agencies and their clients in mind.

“By seamlessly integrating the IPS and Advantage Software platforms, advertising agencies and marketing companies can extend the value of enterprise software investments while achieving greater efficiency, accuracy and transparency across the accounts payable lifecycle,” said Advantage Software President Ellen Coulter.

Norbella deployed the IPS platform in October 2019. After conducting what Webb describes as a “soft launch” in late 2019, the agency began a full roll-out of the solution in January 2020.

Webb and his office manager were the only employees to be trained during the soft launch of the solution. Before Norbella fully rolled out the solution, Webb started training the people he believed would be the power users of the system. As a starting point, Webb held a large training session using live data from the IPS solution. He then held several follow-up sessions over the next six weeks.

Employees unanimously agreed that the IPS solution was far superior to the system it replaced.

The Benefits

The IPS solution has provided Norbella with immediate tangible benefits:



Higher efficiency.

The solution that IPS replaced was very hands-on. IPS reduces manual tasks by extracting and validating invoice data and matching it against information residing in Norbella's Advantage host system. As a result, between 33 percent and 50 percent of the invoices that Norbella receives hit Webb's desk for approval without the need for human operator intervention. In the past, none of Norbella's were processed straight-through.



Better accuracy.

It was not uncommon for Norbella's old accounts payable solution to misread the data on invoices. Between 3 percent and 5 percent of the invoices that Norbella processed resulted in an error. "The time spent correcting mistakes in our accounting system made us a lot less efficient," Webb explained. The intelligent data extraction and validation technology used by the IPS solution has reduced Norbella's error rate to less than 1 percent.



Faster cycle times.

The combination of less manual intervention and fewer data extraction errors has enabled Norbella to process the invoices it receives from suppliers a lot faster since deploying the IPS solution, Webb said. "Our pay cycle is a lot shorter," Webb explained.



Easy transition to Work from Home.

"We were always firm believers in a cloud-based system," Webb said. But the completely digital IPS

platform made it easy for Norbella to migrate to a Work from Home environment during the COVID-19 pandemic. Authorized users can access invoices from anywhere, at any time, using any device, Webb noted.



Seamless integration.

The integration between the IPS solution and Norbella's Advantage accounting platform enables invoice data to be uploaded quickly and accurately with little manual effort. "Having a fully integrated invoice-to-pay platform is essential," Webb said.



"I sit on a lot of groups with other small business CFOs. I always assumed that everyone had some type of digital process for processing and posting invoices. But it turns out that a lot of small businesses use old-school approaches to invoice processing: bookkeepers and lots of manual data entry. A solution like IPS takes these costs and manual steps out of the equation."

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Automating invoice processing and posting also has a huge upside for agencies, Webb said. A cloud-based accounts payable automation solution eliminates the need to have in-house resources manage the billing process, and capture, validate and match invoice information, he noted.

The Conclusion

Every business is looking for ways to wring out costs and inefficiencies these days.

Norbella is no exception.

The media strategy, planning and buying company significantly reduced the time, cost and effort involved in processing the paper and electronic invoices it receives from suppliers using an automated solution from IPS that seamlessly integrates with its Advantage accounting software.

The accounts payable solution also eased Norbella's transition to remote working.

Unsurprisingly, the IPS accounts payable automation solution gets a five-star rating from Webb.

"IPS is a great solution," he said. "Everyone here likes it. And everyone we have worked with from IPS has been great. And it is impressive that a platform like IPS is available for small businesses."



About IPS

IPS is a leading provider of cloud-based solutions that transform accounts payable and invoice processing end-to-end. The IPS platform combines intelligent data capture, robotic process automation, digital workflows, mobile, business analytics, supplier management and integration with any ERP application or downstream system. These are some of the reasons that IPS processes more than \$100 billion in accounts payable spend each year, has created over 1 billion digital records over the past decade, and is the market leader in media payables. www.ipswrx.com

