

A "no" hardware solution



New Zealand hardware chain PlaceMakers has turned to Speedscan to provide an accounts payable workflow solution.

PlaceMakers is the trading name of Fletcher Distribution Limited, a division of the retail trading arm of Fletcher Building Limited in New Zealand.

It is New Zealand's leading and largest supplier of building materials and hardware, employing over 2,500 staff at more than 50 stores across the country.

Finance Manager Steve Scott said the outsourced solution had provided an immediate operational cost saving with minimal CAPEX required.

"It has created visibility into an area that was previously difficult to review," he said.

The finance division at Fletcher Distribution receives over 100,000 invoices a month. Prior to the use of Speedscan around half of these were being delivered via Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) from major suppliers, but the remainder arrived in the post.

"When we first moved to EDI the technology wasn't there to handle the other invoices electronically," said Scott.

"Father Christmas would arrive each day with a big mailbag and dump the envelopes on a desk. We had 15 staff that spent their day opening mail, checking the invoices and manually keying in data. It was very expensive."

The Speedscan workflow implemented over the past two years has done away with that. Invoices delivered to a private box are dispatched each day to Speedscan's scanning facility in Glenfield, Auckland.

The scanning facility boasts an array of best of breed hardware technology including Kodak High Performance Scanning equipment and Dell Server Infrastructure.

This is combined with Speedscan's custom developed routing and workflow engines incorporating OCR, Forms Recognition and

Image enhancement components as well as advanced data entry and validation tools.

The invoices are scanned and a 2-way match is performed using the Purchase Order number to compare to Look Up Tables sent on a daily basis to Speedscan.

In the future Placemakers will explore moving to a 3-way match, using Purchase Order, Goods Receipt and Invoice. At the moment scan captures the header information from each invoice and the line item details on the invoice are checked on-screen from the Purchase Order.

Speedscan integrates with Fletcher's BizTalk server, sending relevant data in XML format to allow integration with Fletcher's Oracle workflow.

"There is a lot of handshaking going on between our two systems and we ensure the Look Up Tables are always up to date," said Scott.

"We did look at adopting an in-house solution but it would have still left us needing people to open envelopes and the IT resources to support the hardware and deal with software upgrades," said Scott.

"The Speedscan solution has lowered the demand on internal IT resources and reduced our full-time staff. The ability to destroy the original invoices after three months has reduced our storage requirements enormously."

There has been a significant improvement to accuracy and validation between Speedscan and Oracle.

Speedscan reporting allows monitoring of productivity and efficiency, including the reporting on the time it takes to process an invoice.

It also provides improved Audit tracking and Accountability through the use of History screen management.

"Speedscan were innovative, flexible and easy to work with" said Scott.

Speedscan

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