



utility

## CHALLENGE

- Inefficient, laborious invoice approval process based on paper, inter-office mail and file cabinets

## SOLUTION

- Integrated solution providing electronic invoice capture, archiving and approval

## RESULTS

- Elimination of thousands of dollars in vendor late fees
- Invoice approval times reduced from one week to minutes
- Reduced clerical support, filing space requirements and photocopying costs

## Irvine Ranch Water District

### Integrated Solution Saves Time, Money and Space

#### ABOUT THE CUSTOMER

Irvine Ranch Water District (IRWD) provides domestic water service, sewage collection, and water reclamation for the city of Irvine, California and portions of surrounding communities. As a leader in water reclamation and conservation programs, IRWD employs state-of-the-art technology in every area of its organization, from engineering and scientific operations to administration, to minimize ratepayer costs and increase efficiencies for its 90,000 accounts.

#### CHALLENGE

While IRWD employs a very efficient computerized purchasing system, invoice payments required a laborious approval process often inhibited by human error. For example, purchasing staff would manually log invoices received, make back-up copies and send invoices across town via inter-office mail to accounts payable located in a separate building. As a result, documents were sometimes lost, payments delayed, and discounts missed, resulting in thousands of dollars in late fees. Administrators also spent countless hours looking for files to answer supplier inquiries.

Seeking a way to extend efficiencies to the final phase of its purchasing process, IRWD began investigating new ways to streamline processes and manage accounts payable workflow. Impressed by the company's ability to integrate and support best-in-class products and technologies, IRWD turned to IKON Office Solutions.

#### SOLUTION

Engaging its team of Professional Services consultants, IKON assessed IRWD's invoice document lifecycle from document entry to payment completion. The team's in-depth research analysis recommended IRWD implement an electronic imaging and content management system to capture, archive and approve its invoice documents. Working with its best-in-class enterprise management software partners, IKON designed a solution that leveraged IRWD's existing, in-house technologies and added strategic components to provide a cost-effective, accurate and highly efficient document management system.

*"IKON did a great job. From requirements gathering, to design, to implementation, everything went very smoothly."*

Tony Mossbarger, IT Manager

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IKON began with the implementation of best-in-class content management and capture systems to acquire, index and store IRWD invoices. This combination allows for invoices entering the organization to be scanned and electronically filed, so users can find them by searching on key fields such as supplier name, PO number, date or description of services. Users simply key-in one field of data, which triggers the automatic population of purchasing system data. Documents are also easily scanned into IRWD's electronic content management system.

Next, IKON automated IRWD's invoice approval process to enable accounts payable staff to send invoice images electronically for management verification and approval. A "show me the image" key was added to the accounts payable application, allowing staff to quickly view the invoice and access purchase order data. Today, approvers no longer wait for hard copies, but simply open their e-mail, view the invoice and approve it online. To ensure payment discounts are not missed, invoices can be flagged and sent to a special in-box for priority processing. In addition, invoices arriving via Microsoft Office are imported into the content management system, where they can be viewed online as required.

### RESULTS

One of IRWD's biggest challenges after IKON's installation of the new electronic imaging and content management solutions was to build staff confidence in the new system. Leveraging IKON's change management and training expertise, employees were provided extensive systems training, walked through new invoice processing procedures, and received comprehensive on-site support.

Since IKON's installation and training, IRWD's invoice approval times have fallen from one week to mere minutes. Early payment discounts are no longer missed and valuable staff time spent on clerical duties reduced, freeing employees to focus on more mission-critical activities. In one department, staff was consolidated from three positions to two when resulting efficiencies eliminated the need to replace a departing employee. In addition, filing space requirements and photocopying costs have been significantly reduced.

IRWD is now using the solution to provide project management support in its engineering department and to facilitate operations in its water quality laboratory.

Tony Mossbarger, IT Manager, is very satisfied with the new solution. "IKON did a great job. From requirements gathering, to design, to implementation, everything went very smoothly."

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