

Case study: London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham



E-invoicing can transform the way your business runs

Efficiency gains in financial supply chain management

E-invoicing is an electronic service which facilitates the exchange of information between buyers and suppliers. It allows invoices and related documents to be issued, received and reconciled electronically and can be deployed within either an accounts payable or accounts receivable environment.

With 140,000 invoices to process from over 8,500 different suppliers, the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham (LBH&F) had been considering ways to simplify its payment methods for some time. “We’d looked at a system based on scanning in paper invoices, and an electronic method that required suppliers to pay for the service, but when we saw what RBS had to offer we felt it was well ahead of anything else on the market”, said Mark Cottis, LBH&F’s E-procurement Consultant.

RBS’s web-based, paper-free service enables LBH&F and their suppliers to exchange information instantly and securely – without the need to change their existing technology. For LBH&F, RBS’s e-invoicing system also helps to reduce costs.

“Our suppliers are very diverse – from sole traders to large businesses – so we needed a one-size-fits-all solution that also had the flexibility to match their needs”, Mark added. After an introductory letter from the council’s payments team, RBS took responsibility for

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**Mark Cottis, E-Procurement Consultant,
London Borough of Hammersmith
and Fulham**

transitioning the suppliers from paper to electronic invoicing. “There was a little bit of reluctance initially, but they came on board once they could see the benefits: free automated invoicing that saves them time and can result in them getting paid quicker”, said Colin Lowen, RBS’s Client Relationship Manager for the Council.

The biggest benefits of RBS’s web-based system are being felt inside LBH&F’s finance directorate, with an increasing number of suppliers now moving from paper to e-invoicing, and by doing so improving efficiency and reducing errors.

“With invoices automatically matched to purchase orders, there is less chance of quantities or rates being mis-keyed, making the whole process more secure and reliable”, commented Cathy Oatway, LBH&F Payments Services Manager, “and less paper means lower postal and transport costs, saving time and money as well as reducing our carbon footprint.”

Although RBS e-invoicing is a new product, and LBH&F has a variety of payment systems that include non-PO-related orders, the implementation process was smooth, and has been tailored by the RBS team to suit the client.

“We started with the big, more standard suppliers like our stationery provider, and as time moves on we will gradually bring the rest onto the e-invoicing system, with a target of realising six-figure annual savings” said Mark Cottis. He adds that, “with councils seeking to maintain frontline services while also keeping council tax bills down, efficiencies from programmes such as RBS e-invoicing are becoming more and more important”.

Benefits of E-invoicing

- Can significantly reduce costs
- Enables real-time data delivery
- Eliminates errors and bottlenecks
- E-invoicing is VAT compliant
- Can help reduce environmental costs
- Inherent security
- Accurate management information
- The service can be made available to your overseas subsidiaries and trading partners