

APX + OfficeTools: The Most Efficient Way to Handle Billing and Run Your Office



As work is increasingly going remote and companies are ditching paper in favor of automation, many accounting firms are seeking better ways to manage key office processes like billing.

For Slater & Rutherford CPAs, a full-service accounting firm with approximately 20 employees, both in-office and remote, serving for-profit and not-for-profit businesses in Prescott, Arizona, since 2008, the answer to better billing and office management came from using Abacus Payment Exchange (APX) from AbacusNext in conjunction with OfficeTools. Before APX, the firm had to devote multiple days out of every month to billing.

That all changed when the firm implemented OfficeTools to manage its practice around 2009. With the help of APX and OfficeTools, Slater & Rutherford has seen significant increases in available time, cash flow and efficiency.

OfficeTools in Action

Slater & Rutherford uses OfficeTools to handle many aspects of the business. It's a workflow tool for getting projects through the office, a timesheet keeper and time tracker for capturing billable versus nonbillable hours, a base for contact management and billing clients and an internal document flow tool to access documents.

The firm also uses OfficeTools as a portal that allows clients to access documents and exchange documents with the firm, complete with an e-signature feature. It also functions as a top-level reporting tool for all facets of the business, including revenue reporting, time and utilization reporting and billing reports via APX.

Essentially, APX and OfficeTools handle everything other than the firm's tax and auditing work.

At a Glance

About Slater & Rutherford

A full-service accounting firm with approximately 20 employees, both in-office and remote, serving for-profit and not-for-profit businesses in Prescott, Arizona since 2008.

“I would say it runs our office, so we use as many pieces of it as we can.”

Gidget Slater,
CPA & Managing Partner

Life Before APX

Prior to implementing APX, it was a very different story.

Slater & Rutherford only accepted credit cards for payments, either in the office or over the phone, and had a separate credit card vendor to process them. The firm first made the switch to APX when it learned that it could use APX through OfficeTools to process credit cards more cheaply. As usage expanded, the firm added Pay Now functionality and online recurring payments, making things even more convenient for clients.

“When we looked to OfficeTools to process credit cards, it was just the natural progression to use APX for the online availability,” explains Julia Jones, accountant and administrator at Slater & Rutherford. “We didn’t look for other options, because APX applies payments directly to the invoices that we create in OfficeTools. If we hadn’t used it, there would have been a lot more steps to apply payments to the invoices we’ve created in OfficeTools.”



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Life After APX

So what concrete benefits did Slater & Rutherford see from utilizing APX with OfficeTools? Significant time saved, increased cash flows and more efficiency, just to name a few.

Since implementing APX, online payments, especially recurring payments, have been a positive experience for Slater & Rutherford’s clients. The firm handles around 200 recurring payments every month as part of a subscription maintenance program. “It’s helped our business tremendously to be able to just keep clients on maintenance, and cash flow is significantly better than it was before we had APX,” says Slater. “It was great to have the availability to do that through the same program that has our billings, so we can apply everything directly.”

Before APX, Jones says she spent three days handling billings each month, because she would have to bill every single client individually. Now, with recurring payments, everything is programmed with clients’ credit card information, and APX simply bills those clients the same amount every month. The time saved has been significant.

Finally, the firm has had to deal with far less bank processing than it used to. "It's all automatic versus getting checks and having to deposit the checks through the bank," says Slater. "It's not only timesaving, but also means dealing with fewer transactional payments and applications." Jones agrees, explaining, "It's really freed us from having to deal with another bank or service, where we'd have to separately apply payments to bills in OfficeTools. Now that's all integrated."

With the Pay Now feature, the firm can also easily remind clients if payments haven't been made within 30 days. "It has made a huge difference," says Slater. The firm used to send out paper bills, but has gone paperless since COVID-19. Now, with Pay Now, it takes Jones roughly 10 minutes to send payment reminders, and the firm has the possibility of getting paid immediately, which reduced collections and is drastically different from when it used to have to print and mail paper bills.

When asked if the firm would recommend APX for payment processing, Jones replies simply: "If somebody's using OfficeTools, then I think they should be using APX."

Slater agrees. "I was here before we had APX and can say it revolutionized our whole business. It's a good product, constantly improving. OfficeTools with APX really manages our entire office."



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