CrownMedia
FAMILY NETWORKS

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How Crown Media Increased Approval Workflow Efficiency by 7x with Epicor Advanced Requisition Management

CASE STUDY

"Getting away from double data entry and having a system in which we can pay multiple vendors on a single project is so important for us because that's the way our business is organized."

Michael Walker,
Financial Controller, Crown Media Family Networks

HIGHLIGHTS

CHALLENGES

- Paying multiple vendors was difficult when each PO was tied to one vendor
- Legacy software didn't integrate with Epicor Kinetic
- Linear approval matrix added extra time to each workflow

SOLUTION

Epicor Advanced Requisition Management helps:

- Pay multiple vendors for a single project
- Link invoices with PO lines via ARM's AP Approval Workflow Module
- Automate non-linear approval workflows
- Gain a single view of AP activity in Kinetic

RESULTS

- 7x increase in approval workflow efficiency
- Single source of truth for ERP and PO approval workflows
- Accurate and unified view of total project costs

Challenges

INEFFICIENT APPROVAL WORKFLOWS ADD HOURS OF OVERHEAD PER MONTH

At [Crown Media Family Networks](#), a typical project environment involves all of the different phases required to create a new movie or television show. A lot of people — including multiple vendors — help new films and media go from development to distribution.

But before Crown Media had Epicor Advanced Requisition Management (Epicor ARM), its previous purchase order (PO) system made it difficult to pay multiple vendors efficiently.

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> "Under our old system, we could create a single purchase order but it was tied to one vendor. The biggest issue this caused is that we had to receive against the purchase order for the vendor that it was created for. We had to create dummy vendors because we were paying so many different vendors on a project," says Michael Walker, Financial Controller at Crown Media.
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Under this system, whenever the Accounts Payable team received against the PO, it would create an invoice batch in Kinetic against an invalid vendor. To resolve this, they had to go into Accounts Payable, delete the batch, and re-enter all of the information manually. A lack of detailed integration severely inhibited the team's efficiency.

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> "We had all of this double data entry for the majority of our work that we were trying to get away from," Walker says.

The legacy system impacted approval workflow efficiency as well. It only supported linear approval chains, which meant that each person had to wait on another's action.

> "Our project purchase order approval matrix was very linear. We wanted a way to send it to every executive at the same time, without having approval being contingent on someone else," Walker elaborates.

The desire to streamline requisition management, eliminate duplicate entry, and pay multiple vendors on a single project led Crown Media to choose Epicor ARM.

> "Unlike Epicor ARM, our legacy PO system was outdated. It wasn't made for Epicor, so it didn't work hand-in-hand with our ERP at all."

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Solution

MULTI-DIMENSIONAL PURCHASE APPROVAL WORKFLOWS FULLY INTEGRATED WITH EPICOR KINETIC

Epicor Advanced Requisition Management solves Crown Media's biggest challenges by integrating seamlessly with Kinetic and making it easy to process invoices, pay vendors, and kick off automated approval workflows.

With the click of a button, a user can enter a PDF invoice into ARM's worklist. All entry fields (invoice number, date, vendor, etc.) are intuitively laid out. If the invoice is associated with a purchase order, the user can filter for PO receipt lines and easily match them to the invoice.

> "Now, when we receive an invoice against a PO, we've devised a process that allows us to receive against the vendor and create a batch within ARM that's synced to our ERP. We only have to do that one time, as opposed to one time within the PO system and then go over and delete the bad batch and recreate it within Kinetic."

If there is no variance between the invoice and the PO lines, the invoice automatically gets approved and pushed through to Kinetic. If there is a discrepancy, ARM determines variance tolerance based on Crown Media's preconfigured settings. Small variances within an acceptable tolerance are approved, whereas large variances kick off an automated approval workflow.

> "The implementation team helped us set up a 'blast notification' for all of the executives involved in approval. That was huge because now nobody has to sit around and wait for anyone else. It saves us a lot of time and it reduces stress on our team," Walker says.

After an invoice has been approved, the invoice is automatically removed from the ARM worklist to eliminate any chance of redundancy. The invoice and all associated information are then easy to find within Epicor Kinetic, including a copy of the invoice PDF.

But the true beauty of ARM is its flexibility and its ability to consolidate all requisition information in one place. Walker illustrates this with an example:

> "We have something in the industry called 'breakage.' For example, if we need snow in a scene and we need to pay someone to blow snow, but we didn't plan for that upfront, we call that breakage. We didn't have a good way to track breakage under the old system, so it was entered as a second PO. But there was no way to tie it to the original PO or consolidate overall project costs.
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> ARM completely solves that issue, because now we can create that change order on our original PO and we can continue to receive against the original PO and know exactly whether we're over budget or not. Having that data in one spot is a huge deal."

> "Everyone relies on good data. Now we can say, 'This is exactly how much it cost us to make this movie.' That's confidence we didn't have before switching to Epicor Advanced Requisition Management."

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Results

STREAMLINED PROJECT REQUISITION WORKFLOWS

With the Epicor Advanced Requisition Management platform, Crown Media now has a complete procure-to-pay solution. Data entered in Epicor Advanced Requisition Management is automatically synced with Kinetic, giving executives a holistic view of overall project costs. According to Walker, this has helped Crown Media eliminate guesswork from budgeting.

> "We used to have an educated guess on what each project cost. Now we know. It's good to have a reliable system in place that captures all that data for you," he says.

Epicor ARM has alleviated all of the original issues that Crown Media had with its legacy system. No more duplicate data entry or creating dummy vendors tied to specific purchase orders.

> "We're receiving thousands of invoices each year and the process of deleting a batch and then recreating it was probably 3–5 minutes for each one. ARM is a huge time saver over the course of the year."

Most significantly, Crown Media has completely replaced its previously linear approval process. Now, every approver can review and sign off simultaneously, **improving approval workflow efficiency by 7x on average**.

> "Quite literally, a request could be approved in minutes. The cost savings come from the fact that executives never have to wait for someone in front of them to approve," Walker says.

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"Now we can approve a project in minutes. The biggest advantage of choosing Epicor ARM is the immense time savings."

Why Choose Epicor Advanced Requisition Management?

An ERP-integrated purchase management system helps generate business efficiencies by automating manual tasks and streamlining daily processes. Automated processes and flexible approval workflows help teams throughout the organization facilitate communication and manage spend.

In addition to enabling flexible invoice resolution and multi-dimensional purchase approval workflows, Epicor ARM also:

- Empowers real-time GL Budget checking along every step of the approval chain

- Supports special pricing arrangements made with suppliers, including preferred and one-time vendors

- Enables you to easily create a Request for Quote (RFQ) and manage supply bids

- Helps you manage internal transfer requests and control if material should immediately go into stock or be automatically expensed on receipt

- Integrates with supplier websites to simplify purchase order and approval processes (supplier PunchOuts)

Get a complete procure-to-pay solution seamlessly integrated with your Epicor Kinetic system.

Contact your Epicor customer account manager to see a demonstration.

Contact Epicor

Epicor Advanced Requisition Management has been developed by Precise Business Solutions, one of Epicor's longest-serving, premium channel partners. As a trusted Platinum ISV partner, Precise develops powerful, flexible companion solutions to extend the core functionality of Kinetic within the areas of project management, procurement and counter sales.

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