

ICBA on AP Automation: “Things Don’t Slip Between the Cracks Anymore”



The [ICBA](#) (Independent Contractors and Businesses Association) is one of British Columbia's leading third-party providers of group health and retirement benefits for the construction industry. It represents more than 3,000 members and clients and is the single largest sponsor of trades apprentices in the province.

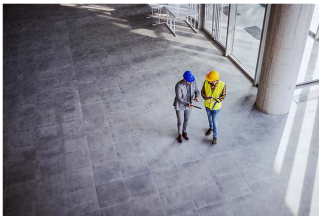
As it nears its 50th anniversary, the ICBA is charting an innovative course by forging a more digitized workspace in their accounts payable (AP) department.

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David Gaskin, CFO, ICBA

“In the past, invoices would accumulate on my desk, and someone else would have jumped in to help me out,” says David Gaskin, CFO at ICBA. The AP team processed over 200 invoices on paper every month and chased 12 approvers to sign them off. A lack of structure and transparency made the process to payments cycle slow and convoluted.

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Being full paper-based, the ICBA was experiencing slow and inefficient account payable

Introducing the “electronic cabinet”

In 2020, ICBA turned to Beanworks to enable a more transparent flow of [AP information](#) across all departments. “COVID-19 was the back-breaker. We were looking for a platform before that as well, but the pandemic accelerated our need to install something,” he highlights.

The decision-making behind the execution of AP automation happened in just a few days. With Beanworks, they were able to align their [invoice processing](#) and implement a detailed approval channel system. It was the game-changer.



The newfound transparency with automation has increased risk-prevention controls at the ICBA

It replaced physical cabinets and storage boxes with a central cloud platform, which allowed various AP workflows to come together seamlessly. Gaskin calls it the “electronic cabinet.”

“Before we installed Beanworks, I had to physically go to our accounting team to ask for a certain record or document. Now, I just open my desktop, and I can also access these documents from home,” he explains.

Enforcing financial controls such as departmental budget spend can be hard when organizations rely on paper. “The only way to force such controls would be to keep reminding people. Beanworks does that for us.”

Breaking down silos

ICBA was able to remove data silos across the brand, which has been critical in gaining transparency in AP. As a CFO, Gaskin has to sign off payments before they are released. With automated AP, he can quickly audit an invoice to view details such as who approved it, when, and the amount.

Enforcing financial controls such as departmental budget spending can be hard when organizations rely on paper. But with AP automation software, finance chiefs can easily set such rules. “The only way to force such controls would be to keep reminding people. Beanworks does that for us,” Gaskin says. He credits the detailed approval matrix as a critical feature – one that helps implement “rules that were easy to break before.”



Data is updated in real-time, making such details easily accessible for the finance team. “Things don’t slip between the cracks anymore,” Gaskin describes. “Everything I need to review and approve is there in the system.”

For ICBA, advocating for construction industry workers isn’t just about providing training and developing resources; it involves professionals working together to design a robust future. It entails a lot of complexity in a post-pandemic world, and that’s where tools like automation come in—giving ICBA a central place to compete with others and cater to the new demands in the industry.