> **"With Accredo you can create workflow shortcuts that save time. Working hand-in-hand with Ferret it has greatly simplified the processing and authorisation of creditor transactions."**
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> Madi du Preez, Finance and Administration Manager, Independent Egg Producers

Accounts payable integration streamlines processes for kiwi egg co-operative

Independent Egg Producers (IEP) is a co-operative of egg farms in the North and South Islands that switched to the Accredo accounting solution three years ago. The move has proved fruitful. Accredo meets the co-operative needs as a whole but is flexible enough to accommodate the different business processes of the individual egg farm owners. Innovative software customisations are saving administration time, and most recently, an integration with Ferret Software's data extraction service has eased an onerous weekly accounts payable task.

IEP operates a virtual office, and its egg producers connect to the Accredo system via a cloud server. IEP Finance and Administration Manager, Madi du Preez, says the co-operative decided to move to Accredo because it wanted a more robust and centralised business management system.

"We had several different systems in use across the farms and used a third party product to integrate those into IEP's system, but that wasn't ideal. We undertook a market analysis, and Accredo came out ahead. It had rich functionality, and the software handles a lot of different business processes."

Helping du Preez roll out the solution was Accredo QSP, Donna Ruwhiu, a Business Advisor at accountancy practice, Barr Burgess and Stewart.

A custom fit

Accounting systems are generic beasts, says Ruwhiu, "but when you have custom scripting tools, you can make it a better fit for the client. It adds a lot of value when you can finetune a process exactly the way the business wants it to run."

A good example is the customisation Ruwhiu did using Accredo's Special Pricing module. What used to be a tiresome longhand process of raising credits, is now a breeze, says du Preez.

"The special pricing function in Accredo allows each farm to control and monitor all the different price variations they have with customers. But Donna added to it, allowing us to issue credit notes quicker and cut down on errors."

Simplifying pack and pay

Du Preez says the custom load sheet Ruwhiu built for IEP simplifies another problematic routine for the egg farms. "Each farm loads the truck slightly differently for the daily delivery runs. Donna designed a daily load sheet unique to each farm that assimilates all the information needed

Accounts payable integration streamlines processes for kiwi egg co-operative…continued

to pack the truck and do the delivery in the manner that is most optimal for them."

Another script Ruwhiu created has cut down the time it takes to pay each of the farms. Says du Preez: "It is now a quicker process and more transparent, thanks to Accredo."

> "Ferret distinguishes between different invoice types and only pushes through successfully processed documents into Accredo."
>
> Andrew Storm, General Manager, Ferret Software

Data extraction done right

The Ferret integration with Accredo is one du Preez is particularly thankful for as it solved a nagging accounts payable problem for IEP. Prior to the integration, du Preez was loading hundreds of creditor transactions from the supermarkets' weekly promotions. It was onerous due to the volume but also because the invoices arrive in three different layouts.

"We knew data extraction software could streamline the process, but unfortunately, the solution we had at the time couldn't handle the complexity reliably, so that is where Ferret really shined."

Ferret's 'Drag It In' service does a large part of the document translations for IEP. It pulls in the documents, stores them in the way IEPs wants and picks up all the fields IEP needs to see.

Ferret Software, General Manager, Andrew Storm, says their SaaS data extraction solution works differently to most OCR (Optical Character Recognition) software. Ferret validates the data it extracts before sending it back to the customer's system.

"Our software doesn't interpret data as traditional OCR software does. We have a human first map the data that is already there, and we do this for each supplier, before processing the document."

Storm says with traditional OCR software a user often has to step in and validate what has been extracted out of the documents. "Many customers quite rightly feel that defeats the point of having data extraction software in the first place. With OCR software, if you get lucky and get an 80% success rate, it still requires the customer to check 100% of the invoices to find the 20% that failed. That is a real drag on efficiency."

Accuracy increases, workload eases

Du Preez says having Ferret and Accredo working hand-in-hand has eased the load on her plate. "The biggest advantage is that when I am away, I can hand over this process more easily to someone else because now it is much more automated."

Says Storm: "The benefits are obvious. IEP gets all its invoices processed with complete accuracy and all the normal data extraction benefits such as the elimination of manual data entry and a paperless scanning and filing process. It speeds up productivity."

Ferret offers a flat monthly billing module that allows du Preez to buy transactions in bulk and use them up as quickly or as slowly as needed. "Ferret allows you to use everything you buy – there is no time limit, and you can carry over from month-to-month."

Ruwhiu says the ability to deal directly with Ferret's developers meant the integration with Accredo went exceptionally smoothly. "There is no way an out-of-the-box OCR product could do what we have achieved with Ferret and Accredo. As an Accredo QSP, being able to work with the developers is gold."

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