

## Professional Women's Soccer Team Scores a Win With Paperless Bill Management and Payment

In September 2008 it was announced that a new team, FC Gold Pride, had joined the Women's Professional Soccer league. As the team prepares for opening day in April, 2009 management and players alike are laser-focused on putting a winning team on the field and invigorating the Bay Area soccer community.

Like any new business, getting started is the hardest part. This challenge is doubly true for a professional sports organization, which has more moving parts than the average new business. In addition to handling the day to day operations of the business and implementing key business processes, a

professional sports organization needs to hire coaches, recruit a team, select a venue, and market and sell tickets, among other things. As if that wasn't enough, FC Gold Pride knows its ultimate success will be measured by how it performs on the field. As a new team in a young league, FC Gold Pride must be ready to win.

To achieve these lofty goals, FC Gold Pride management knew it needed to eliminate all unnecessary distractions. Anything that stood in the way of the team's focus on winning out-of-the-gate would have to be addressed and resolved without interrupting the team's preparation. To wit, team owners Brian and Nancy NeSmith, who are Silicon Valley entrepreneurs, were determined to automate and outsource as many of the organization's key business processes as possible. Brian and Nancy did not want their general manager, Ilisa Kessler, or coaches and players, to be bogged down with paperwork. Going 'paperless' would increase organizational efficiency and lower costs, but, more importantly, it would keep the team's focus on the field.

### The Challenge

Pat Carson, owner and founder of Bay Area Accounting firm, Carson & Crew, was hired to oversee the team's finances. Pat was tasked with implementing an accounts payable solution that would allow

"There is a tremendous energy around starting a professional sports organization, but we cannot allow the pressure of driving the business side of things to become overwhelming. Bill.com eliminates the pressure of bill payment. Bill payment can now get done in a single day. When you're dealing with players, coaches and vendors that need to be paid quickly, the knowledge that bill payment is happening when it should lifts a huge burden, so we can focus on our goals on the field."

**Ilisa Kessler**

**General Manager, FC Gold Pride**

Brian, Nancy and Ilisa to quickly and easily track, approve and pay vendor invoices, and process employee expense reports. As a professional sports organization facing hard deadlines such as preparing for a player draft or gearing up for opening day, not having to worry about when or if vendors and employees have been paid on-time is a huge plus.

Indeed, the team works with numerous vendors, including attorneys, uniform companies, ticketing agencies and marketing firms, that have varying expectations in terms of when and how they are paid. Several, in fact, require payment before services are delivered, and of course the team could ill-afford not to comply – imagine having to play without uniforms, or if the vendor in charge of printing tickets failed to do so because it had not been paid on-time. Likewise, no team wants its players wondering when they will be reimbursed for expenses.

Pat's task was automating accounts payable, but her bigger-picture goal was keeping vendors, players and team staffers focused on the job at-hand. Among other things, the system she chose would need to be inexpensive, easy to use and accessible over the Web, since Pat, Ilisa, Brian and Nancy work in different locations, and often after-hours, from their homes, in order to meet all deadlines. Finally, Pat needed a solution that offered out-of-the-box integration to the team's accounting system, QuickBooks, thus ensuring end-to-end financial management and business reporting accuracy.

## The Solution

Pat chose the web-based accounts payable service from Bill.com, which hosts and manages the service so clients like FC Gold Pride can focus on their core businesses. Bill.com helps CPAs and small business executives streamline bill payment and manage cash flow by automating the process by which bills are captured, reviewed, approved, filed and paid. Users can access the system any time from any where, using an Internet connected computer or mobile device.

Today, FC Gold Pride's vendors and team employees fax invoices and expense reports to a designated phone number, where they are automatically uploaded to the Bill.com application. Ilisa

“Bill payment can be a time-intensive process fraught with multiple human touch points and just as many opportunities for error. By automating accounts payable, we get a process that is fast, accurate and transparent – accomplishments that simply are not possible when accounts payable is performed manually. Accountants and bookkeepers looking to make life easier for their clients and themselves will find that Bill.com more than lives up to its promise.”

**Pat Carson**  
**Carson & Crew**

then logs into the application to review an electronic copy of the bills, along with supporting documents such as current and past bill images, and cleared check images and contracts.

Pat is alerted when Ilisa approves a bill for payment, and she executes payment by clicking a button in the application; Bill.com handles all check printing and mailing. The entire process can happen in a matter of minutes, without Ilisa or Pat ever having to touch a paper bill, file any paper, write a check, or put envelopes in the mail. And Bill.com integrates to QuickBooks, so all cash flow, payables, and expense data is recorded in their accounting system with no duplicate entry.

### **The Results**

The result has been a big win for FC Gold Pride. By automating invoice receipt, review, approval and payment with Bill.com, FC Gold Pride is streamlining a process that could take a week or more per invoice to complete manually. Now, bill payment typically happens less than 24 hours after an invoice shows up in the Bill.com system.

Pat, Ilisa, Brian and Nancy can now access invoices and expense reports from anywhere in the world, so there is never any question about the status of a payment, or when (and by whom) it was approved and paid. The result is a comprehensive and tamper-proof audit trail of expenses, and increased efficiency and transparency in all facets of the business.