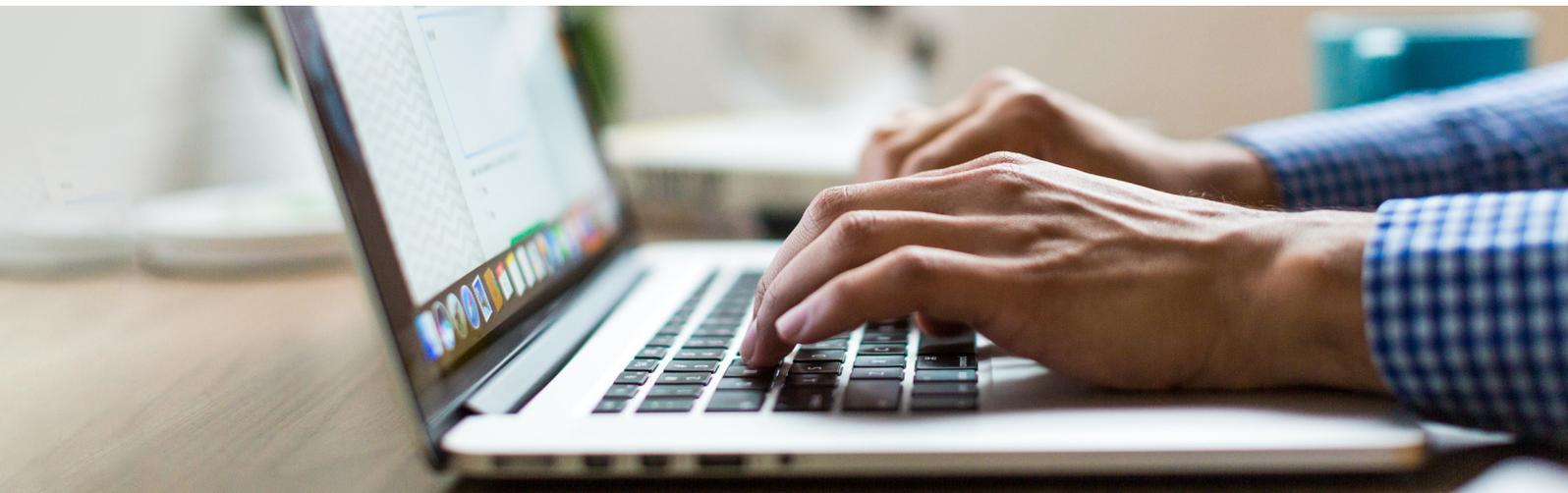# How an Education Provider changed their business model in a matter of months.

A More4Apps Case Study

When one of New Zealand's largest universities was suddenly required to track time and cost of its human resources, their existing systems became obsolete and they required a new tool to support a whole new business model - FAST.

The Institute of Professional Learning (IPL), within the university, provides professional learning opportunities across the education sector in New Zealand. It works with schools, Communities of Learning and corporate sector.

The NZ government's Ministry of Education (MoE) provides a central fund for Professional Learning and Development (PLD).

However a policy change meant that the schools who used this resource must apply for allocation and select a facilitator, rather than IPL being bulk contracted to deliver those services. The facilitator would then quote the project, and once the quote was approved, would then deliver against the agreed scope, billing either the school OR the MoE directly.

This was a radical change to the IPL's business model, as they were now essentially a consultancy business. In order to survive, their business processes required significant changes taking into account a number of complexities.

Complexities:

- Delivery of contracts is charged on a time and material (travel costs) basis, subject to the contract rules and limits. The IPL needed to be able to track, record and bill out all time and cost in order to remain profitable.

- IPL has over 50 facilitators delivering educational services out of 5 regional offices to the entire country so needed a solution that was ubiquitous.

- Not only were they required to accurately record time and cost against specific projects, but the planning of human resources needed to be presented in a way that allowed management to review availability and constraints on each of the 50 facilitators.

- Contracts often span up to 2 years and are normally delivered in blocks (i.e. teacher only days and school holidays).

- Furthermore, in some cases 4 or 5 facilitators would be working on the same project spanning 2 years. This is very difficult to control and enter directly into EBS.

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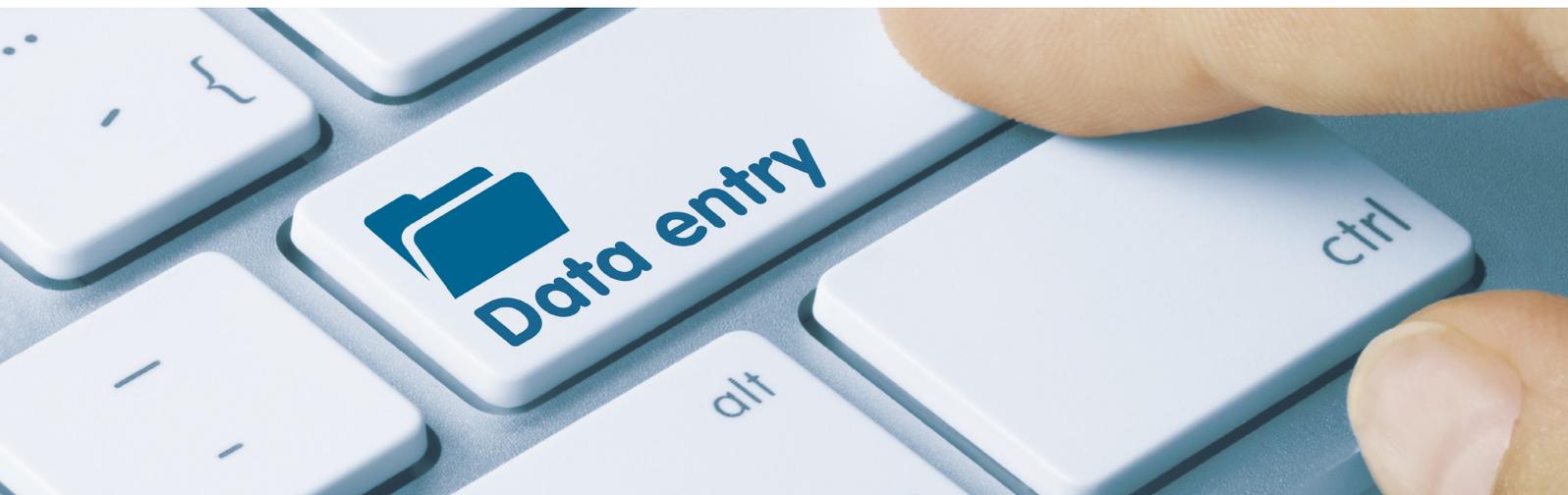
The current financial system configuration and processes had thrown up the following issues:

- Facilitators availability for future commitments were not visible.
- Contract costs were not easily obtainable, in particular travel costs.
- Invoicing, in particular travel costs was manual and inefficient.
- Revenue recognition was calculated manually and includes multiple assumptions.
- Reporting was adhoc and manually created from extracts and excel pivot tables.
- Revenue forecasting was difficult.

The following high level business requirements were identified, and the brief was to deliver the following:

1. Provide **visibility** and assist with the management of Facilitators availability and future commitment.
2. Provide **financial information** to enable management of the contract, in particular time delivered vs contracted and travel costs.
3. Enable the **efficient invoicing** of the contracts, including travel.
4. **Recognise revenue** in an accurate and timely manner.
5. Enable **analysis of financial performance** to ensure future funding and resourcing levels are appropriate. Including Forecast Revenue.

Fortunately, the university's research office had already been using the Oracle Projects module and More4Apps Budget Wizard for many years albeit in a basic way.

The solution was to use a custom-designed simple Excel budget spreadsheet into which facilitators could enter their hours and travel costs, and which would be reformatted in the background and uploaded by the admin team using More4Apps' Budget Wizard. The Wizard in turn integrated directly with Oracle Projects to enable IPL to perform Time and Materials billing in a timely way, eliminating the need or manual processing. In addition, the More4Apps tool allowed IPL management to see their facilitators' bookings and commitments in a clear visual layout, allowing them to better allocate and manage human resources.

Now, invoices are generated automatically with all relevant contract details, saving administration time and ensuring that payments are received promptly. The ability to identify and invoice hundreds of thousands of dollars in travel disbursements automatically, with full audibility to actual cost transaction, ensures that the all relevant disbursements are recovered appropriately. In addition, the Ministry of Education has multiple contract conditions related to the type and amount of travel allowed per contract, and Project Wizard's configurations allows IPL to easily control these contract conditions.

The business has stabilized allowing IPL to grow and continue to take on new staff (4+ in the last quarter).

Revenue recognition and forecasting is now automated, simultaneously saving hours of time manipulating spreadsheets and improving accuracy.

If you're in a consultancy, or using Oracle Projects or time and cost management, talk to More4Apps about how to streamline your data input and achieve more accurate billing and reporting.

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