

Buying group increases member response time by 800% without increasing costs

Customers receive substantially faster turnaround times with FileBound's electronic documents and forms and automated workflow.

Business Needs

As a stockholder-owned buying group, Wheatbelt Inc. relies on membership fees rather than per-order margins to generate revenue. Paper-based and manual tasks increased operating costs and limited the service Wheatbelt could offer the members it depends on. The distributor needed a way to increase responsiveness to the needs of both member stores and vendors and eliminate the growing volume of paper files.

The Solution

With support from Upland's FileBound solution provider Select Imaging, Wheatbelt implemented a document and workflow automation solution to streamline processing of more than 300,000 business documents annually.

Benefits

- Using FileBound's e-form, document management and workflow capabilities, Wheatbelt has reduced vendor invoice process time from 3 days to 8 hours and vendor adjustment request and credit memo process from 60 days to one day.
- The increased efficiency gained by using FileBound has allowed Wheatbelt to significantly improved service for its members without increasing staffing or pricing.
- In addition to enhance productivity, the transition to managing documents electronically has improved employee morale, eliminated the need to store massive volumes of paper and provided disaster recovery.



Wheatbelt is a stockholder-owned buying group specializing in drop ship programs direct to the retailer and accounting services. Its nearly 200 members range from single-location stores to regional chains focusing on agri-business, pet and animal supplies, automotive, clothing and footwear, housewares, sporting goods and toys.

“FileBound allows us to track problems better if something does go wrong, but in some cases, we’re able to just pass the adjustment requests straight to the vendors.”

– **Steven Nash**, director of finance and information systems, Wheatbelt, Inc.

When customer service is the business

Wheatbelt acts a central office for nearly 400 retail outlets from mom-and-pop shops to regional chains that carry everything from saddles to plumbing supplies. The buying group manages billing and invoicing for about 1,400 vendors, allowing stores to place orders (and leverage any discounts) with multiple vendors with a single payment to Wheatbelt.

“Our biggest problem was paper,” recalls Steven Nash, director of finance and information systems at Wheatbelt. “We offer our members one source for paying bills and other accounting processes. We literally had tubs of paper and knew we had to eliminate them to improve our efficiency.” During peak periods, Wheatbelt receives up to 1,500 invoices per day as well as credit and debit documents.

The buying group realized that routing images of the documents, whether sent electronically or scanned onsite, would be the best way to reach its efficiency goals. Wheatbelt chose a FileBound solution implemented by Select Imaging (a FileBound Executive Partner) because FileBound’s reasonably priced, competitive features were determined to be a good investment.

Streamlining vendor adjustments and invoice processing

Wheatbelt’s first initiative was to scan debits and credits. “Our manual based system bogged down the process and made it virtually impossible to meet established deadlines and still maintain credible levels of accuracy,” says Nash. “Members had to complete a paper form to request credit. We would hold the form to see if there were any vendor issues and pull it later to process. Assuming there were no issues, the amount would be deducted from the member’s bill in 60 days.”



About Upland Software

Upland Software (Nasdaq: UPLD) is a leader in cloud-based enterprise work management software. Upland provides seven enterprise cloud solution suites that enable more than one million users at over 9,000 accounts to win and engage customers, automate business operations, manage projects and IT costs, and share knowledge throughout the enterprise. All of Upland’s solutions are backed by a 100 percent customer success commitment and the UplandOne platform, which puts customers at the center of everything we do.

With the FileBound solution, the member receives credit in about a day, instead of two months, which makes it much easier for the member to manage outstanding liabilities and cash flow. The member simply goes online to fill out the “eVAR,” an electronic vendor adjustment request form and submit the return authorization. Wheatbelt processes the credit and sends an email confirmation to the member.

“The eVAR really helped organize the process,” says Nash. “We can import the data directly from the e-form the member completed, which saves time. FileBound allows us to track problems better if something does go wrong, but in some cases, we’re able to just pass the adjustment requests straight to the vendors.”

Wheatbelt also scans invoices to make it easier to route, retrieve and store them efficiently. To eliminate the need to enter data into both FileBound and the ERP (enterprise resource planning) application, Wheatbelt integrated FileBound with their accounting software from Open Systems, Inc. This allows the team to meet 24-hour service levels even when they receive more than 1,000 invoices a day.

With FileBound, Wheatbelt has been able to improve its primary differentiator – customer service – without adding more staff. It’s reduced the internal workload, allowed the company to get rid of banks of filing cabinets and eliminated “lost” documents on employees’ desks, all of which has had a positive impact on employee morale. “FileBound has us thinking about the business differently,” states Nash.