Bill Pay Workflow + Checklist
for Accountants & Bookkeepers

Standardize your firm's bill pay process to expand your service offerings and better accommodate your clients' needs

Hubdoc™   veem®

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Offering bill pay as a service can be challenging
...but it doesn't have to be!

Offering bill pay as a service is a great way to expand your service offerings, better accommodate your clients' needs, and gather better client data, faster. However, paying bills for your small business clients is a notoriously complicated and demanding process, particularly when using old, paper-based methodology.

To complete a traditional, paper-based bill pay process, your firm would have to arrange a staff member or courier to physically collect all your clients' suppliers bills, or rely on the client to send everything in the mail (and hope they didn't forget anything!). Gathering physical bills is only half the battle – upon collection, your team would then be tasked with manual data entry and hard-coding, reviewing each bill for approval (with no audit trail), then finally, cutting a check to your client's supplier.
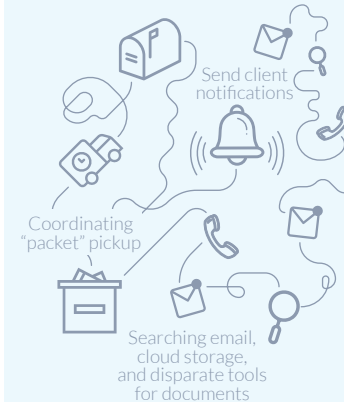
Not only is this process tedious, it's also costly and time-consuming. Paying someone to physically pick up documents, or spending your own time to do so, is extremely limiting – there can be up to five document touches to fully complete an accounts payable process. Plus, if a client is mailing their documents, it can take up to three or four weeks to actually ensure a supplier receives payment.

It's no wonder why many firms avoid adding bill pay to their service offerings. All of the steps mentioned above add up to weeks of your resources spent on low value-add tasks, making it difficult to justify the ROI on this type of service. However, a standardized bill pay workflow, supported by the right technology, can make it easier to offer bill pay services and unlock a number of benefits for both your firm and your clients.
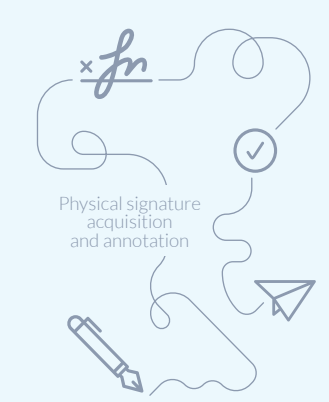
The Old Workflow
Manual processes

Intake *(Approx duration: 3-6 hours/client/month)*

Send client notifications

Coordinating "packet" pickup

Searching email, cloud storage, and disparate tools for documents

Processing & Coding *(Approx. duration: 3-4 hours/client/month)*

Manual data entry

Scanning

Hard-coding

Approval *(Approx. duration: 2-4 hours/client/month)*

Physical signature acquisition and annotation

Payment *(Approx. duration: 2-4 hours/client/month)*

Print checks

Send to client

Client mails paid bill
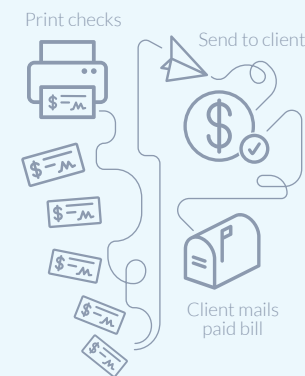
Accounting *(Approx. duration: 8-16 hours/client/month)*

Manual reconciliation

BILL PAY WORKFLOW + CHECKLIST

The benefits of bill pay workflow standardization

Before introducing new technology or outlining a new service offering, you should first standardize your workflow. Standardization is especially important for bill pay because it helps your firm set costs and allocate resources. With one set bill payment workflow, you know exactly how much time and effort you need to devote to a client, who is responsible for specific tasks, and when/how to involve the client.

A few more benefits of standardizing your bill pay workflow and leveraging technology are outlined in the following chart.

Standardization result	Benefits for your firm	Benefits for clients
Set fixed costs	A standardized bill pay process creates predictability and negates the unpredictable costs associated with manual intake and data entry (e.g., paper, mail, gas, etc.). Standardization enables you to easily predict time and costs, allowing you to set a fixed pricing model.	Fixed costs (e.g., a recurring monthly bill) will help clients set their budgets. This can help them forecast revenue, profit, and loss, which in turn allows them to manage potential growth and development. It also enhances their relationship with you (their advisor), focusing less on billable hours and more on the value you provide.
Reduce document touches	With the right technology, neither you nor your staff need to pick up documents, manually enter data, code transactions, and so on, reducing the margin for lost documents or human error (not to mention storage space!).	The right technology will provide a simple way for clients to upload their bills, as well as save them from physically storing them or manually mailing bills and payments. In other words, there are fewer documents to manage and worry about!
Increase visibility into cash flow	A standardized bill pay process empowers you to know exactly where (and when) client cash needs to be allocated, and have a complete understanding of money going out and money coming in. This will also provide you with a better foundation for forecasting cash flow.	With the right technology, clients can gain a straightforward understanding of the money they are spending on supplies, business expenses, etc., in near real-time. Visibility into their cash flow will help them to make more strategic purchasing decisions.
Remove ambiguity	Standardization and technology will enable you to create an audit trail, as well as gain more control over the status of payments, missing documents, and so on.	Increased accountability in the bill pay process will help ensure suppliers are paid on time, reducing the probability/risk of client-paid late fees.
Save time & increase focus on tasks that provide more value	If you're able to eliminate filing, mailing, and sorting receipts, manual data entry, handwritten notes and checks, printing checks, and paper processes in general, you'll be able to save a ton of time. Better yet, automating administrative tasks means you can focus your time on providing more value to your client (i.e., through timely advisory services).	With a standard, automated bill pay workflow, clients can spend less time and resources ensuring all bills and invoices are sent to you in a timely manner. Instead, they can focus on running their business.

Bill pay workflow

Document Intake → **Processing** (coding + posting) → **Approval** → **Payment** → **Reconciliation**

As mentioned, before you implement technology, you should standardize your workflow. A few tips to help you standardize your bill pay workflow include:

Map out your process
Take pen to paper and write out the steps required to complete the bill pay process. This free **Bookkeeping Workflow Template** can help!

Account for customization
Each client is different. Ensure your standardized workflow can be adapted to account for particular client needs, and ensure you're documenting any client customizations in your CRM.

Keep it simple
Standardization is most effective for processes that have a lot of steps, involve multiple stakeholders, and are completed at a high volume. Outlining all the steps required to complete any process might seem daunting, but try not to overthink or overcomplicate it. You can (and should!) continue to optimize for increased efficiency as you execute your standardized workflow and implement new technology.

Choosing the right technology

To implement your standardized bill pay workflow and experience the benefits outlined in this document, it's important to choose cloud accounting tools that can support your entire workflow. The typical tech stack for bill pay includes document collection software (e.g., **Hubdoc**), payment processing software (e.g., **Veem**), and your cloud-based general ledger (e.g., **Xero** or **QuickBooks Online**).

Using Hubdoc for document collection and management

Hubdoc is a data capture solution that enables advisors to automatically collect clients' bills, invoices, and receipts; extract the key data; then publish them to Xero or QuickBooks Online for payment processing and reconciliation. Hubdoc currently supports automated connections with over 700 banks, utilities, and online suppliers on North America, eliminating the need to chase after your clients' documents month after month. Paper bills and documents can also be easily added to Hubdoc via our mobile app, email, and our integration with Fujitsu ScanSnap Cloud.

Hubdoc integrates directly with Xero and QuickBooks Online. As an alternative bill pay solution for advisors located in and making payments within the USA, Hubdoc supports an integration with Bill.com (**learn more here**).

Using Veem for payment processing

Veem is a global payments processor enabling accountants and their clients to send and receive transfers seamlessly. Available in over 96 countries, Veem has helped more than 100,000 users escape the high fees and slow processes of wire transfers through fintech innovations and advisor-friendly features.

Incoming and outgoing payments can be set up for client approval or sent straight from the Veem app via a two-way data sync. By using Veem with a general ledger, users will see open bills in the QBO and Xero tabs of their dashboard. Veem will then send payment receipts back in as soon as the money moves.

No more manual entry, no more missing payments. Just easy, automated reconciliation between your preferred accounting platform. (Please note: for users in Canada, Veem currently does not support payments within Canada; however, Canadian users can send payments outside of Canada.)

The bill pay process checklist on the following page includes steps for how to complete the bill pay process efficiently using Hubdoc, Veem, and your cloud accounting software.

Bill pay process + technology

PROCESS

DOCUMENT INTAKE

1. Collect and receive all client invoices and bills

Auto-fetch bills such as utility, phone, Internet, subscriptions, and more with Hubdoc.

Ensure clients have emailed or forwarded e-bills that cannot be automatically fetched into Hubdoc.

Ensure clients have manually uploaded any paper bills (via scanner or mobile app).

CODING, POSTING & APPROVAL

2. Code in Hubdoc

Each bill will automatically have the key data extracted and will be filed in Hubdoc by supplier and date. Use Hubdoc to code each bill as you would like it to be paid.

Using Hubdoc's Supplier Rules and Autosync features, your bills will code automatically and either be ready for publishing, or will publish automatically to the desired destination (Xero or QuickBooks Online).

3. Publish to accounting software & approve

In Hubdoc, click "Publish" to send bills to cloud accounting software (Xero or QuickBooks Online) with the transaction coded and the source document attached (if not published automatically).

In Xero or QuickBooks Online: if the bill is from a new supplier, update the supplier to include the following information: Company Name, Contact Name, Contact Email, and Phone Number.

If you're using Xero:

Publish the bill as a draft, then review and approve the bill in Xero.

If you're using QBO:

Establish your workflow with your client so that bills published to QBO are considered to be approved for payment. (Note: Approval can also be accomplished in Veem. Bills on your AP list will be automatically sent to Veem if the following data is available: Company Name, Contact Name, Email, and Purpose).

SUGGESTED TOOLS

Bill pay process + technology

PROCESS	SUGGESTED TOOLS

PAYMENT

4. Pay supplier with Veem

If the bill is from a new supplier, update the Contact Information, Contact Name, Email, and Phone Number in Veem. This must be completed in order to send the payment. (Once the payment has been sent, you will have the option to add bank information, which will shorten the payment process timeframe in the future.)

If the bill is from a recurring supplier, Veem will automatically pull in open bills from your accounting software. In the dashboard, select the bill, and select "Pay" to the right of the screen.

For multiple bill approvals, simply select the checkbox and click "Pay Selected". After clicking "Pay Selected", a confirmation screen will appear. Users can then consolidate similar suppliers by selecting the "Consolidate Payments" box.

If user-level reviews approvals, simply select "Review" on the bill, and then "Submit for Approval".

Bill payments will be recorded in your accounting software once the transfer is in progress.

(For information on how to accept a payment request with Veem, **click here**.)

RECONCILIATION

5. Reconcile transactions in your accounting software

Once paid, your accounting software will record the payment, and will either auto-reconcile the corresponding bill, or you can manually reconcile the transaction.

CONCLUSION

Increasing efficiency in your bill pay workflow

Bill pay is an important service that can greatly benefit small businesses; however, it is often overlooked as a viable service offering due to its traditional complexity. When it's paper-based, bill pay is tedious and time-consuming. With a standard, digital process, bill pay will allow your firm to easily gather the information and materials you need, enabling you to increase efficiency in your workflow and effectively offer bill pay as a service.

Cloud technologies allow you to standardize your bill pay workflow through automated processes and clearly defined processes. The results are clear and positive: time savings, the ability to set fixed costs, and better visibility into your clients' cash flow.

Ready to start introducing bill pay as a service? We've transferred the steps provided in the checklist above to a Google Sheet, where you can modify and adapt them to suit your firm's best practices.

ACCESS THE CHECKLIST

APPENDICES

Bookkeeping Workflow Template

Weekly Reconciliation & Month-End Close Checklist

How to Accept a Payment Request with Veem

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