

A CLIENT STORY

# Coupa Delivers Good News for UK Publishing Group

Newsquest Media Group is one of the largest regional news publishers in the UK, with a turnover of nearly £200m, a portfolio of more than 165 news brands, and more than 40 online and print magazines. Newsquest also owns several digital and specialist media businesses such as s1jobs and Exchange & Mart.



## Highlights

- 95% speed increase for requisition/PO approval
- 6.25% reduction in invoice processing time
- 10% savings in overall spend
- 45% reduction in expense approval and payment times

## The Challenge

Newsquest had a Purchase to Pay (P2P) system which was nearing end of life. The business was looking for a new, "best in class" and cost-effective replacement, that would provide greater visibility of the purchase approval process.

Local ad-hoc solutions supported expense management, providing some basic functionality, without any mobile functionality or speed of reimbursement.

Following a robust market review and tender process, Newsquest selected Coupa as the P2P and expenses platform, alongside Xoomworks as the implementation partner. Coupa represented value for money by leveraging a competitive contract with Newsquest's parent company, and Xoomworks' track record of successful implementations, its UK presence and ability to spin up the necessary resources quickly were major factors in the decision. **"Due diligence discussions with other Xoomworks Coupa implementation clients revealed widespread satisfaction with its technical ability and agile project management capability,"** explains Jason Baldaro, Group Purchasing Manager, Newsquest.

## The Solution

Following a detailed scoping exercise, a blended project team with Xoomworks and Newsquest resources was established, sponsored by the Chief Financial Officer and Regional Finance Director. Key business users, including financial controllers, accounts payable clerks, finance systems managers and buyers around the business, carried out the User Acceptance Testing. Their role was vital to ensure audit requirements were satisfied.

The project initially focused on efficient requisition and purchase order processing, including automated invoice matching and integration with the ERP system. "Getting POs up and running first was critical, as without this we would not be able to take advantage of Coupa's invoice processing capabilities," says Jason, "This would be followed by implementation of a more user-friendly expense management."

## Key Benefits

The solution is now fully operational, supporting end to end P2P and expense processing.

**Robust process:** "We now have enhanced control and visibility of our spend, before orders are placed," explains Jason, "The PO approval process is robust and user-friendly, allowing approvals to be made from mobile devices and reducing approval times across the board. Coupa adds enhancements with each major release, and we test and launch these ourselves once confident."

**Strengthened relationships:** Relationships with preferred suppliers are stronger, with 'punch out' buying options in place for seven key suppliers. "Integrating Coupa with suppliers' own web shops ensures we get the full benefit of negotiated pricing, and is a new consideration added to tender specifications where appropriate," says Jason.

"Thanks to Xoomworks' leadership and approach, providing all the resources when we needed them, the project was completed on time and on budget, bringing us the benefits we were aiming for."

**Visibility or KPI's:** "Coupa's Insights features are beginning to give us ideas for improvement, a real time snapshot of how we are performing against a range of

Jason adds, "During a recent upgrade to our ERP, we had taken the opportunity to consolidate multiple charts of accounts into one structure, putting us in a good place to simplify the implementation, and allow us to provide a solution for all our businesses in one go."

Supplier data was cleansed, with dormant suppliers excluded from the data migration. PO processing email addresses were requested from suppliers, in an attempt to maximise the benefit of Coupa's electronic PO facilities. "A significant number of our suppliers are individuals who provide content for regional news titles, and IT abilities within this group vary widely," explains Jason, "It has been difficult to get some of these contributors to engage, but the numbers are rising all the time and generally, supplier adoption of the Supplier Portal, Coupa PO inbox and cXML invoicing routes is increasing on a monthly basis."

KPIs, including PO approval times, invoice turnaround and an indication of the savings we are making from smarter purchasing," explains Jason. "Some spend is difficult to manage, such as social media and complex distribution contracts, but even these "unbacked" invoices have bespoke approval chains and we are finding new ways to implement PO's for these complex categories."

**Enhanced expense process:** The management of expenses has been transformed. "Users can now submit their expenses via a mobile app as well as the Coupa browser based interface," highlights Jason, "We didn't have anything quite like this implemented across the business before and users have been very positive about the improvements in speed and efficiency."

**Simplified approval process:** Newsquest used the Coupa implementation as an opportunity to simplify and rationalise approval financial thresholds, from up to 15 levels down to just four. This has removed roadblocks to approvals, without sacrificing the required control.

**Accounting accuracy improved:** Automated coding of spend is now happening at the requisition and PO stage, and is carried through to invoice processing and payments. Even invoices without linked POs can be processed quickly using Coupa coding templates, allocating spend to predefined categories.

Jason concludes, "Since Coupa went live we have seen significant improvements on purchasing KPIs, including speed of requisition/ PO approval times, invoice and expense turnaround times and overall spend savings."

Training material including recordings of MS Teams sessions, are available via a SharePoint site along with a YouTube video specifically for freelance journalists and photographers, showing them how to register and invoice via the Coupa Supplier Portal. These videos are updated using SharePoint Streams as additional Coupa functionality is deployed, upgrades implemented by Coupa, or Newsquest processes change.



## Outcomes

- End-to-end P2P and expenses supported by Coupa solution
- Significant savings from smarter purchasing
- Improved visibility and control over spend activity
- Speed and efficiency benefits from automation and mobile access

## Working with Xoomworks

"We really appreciated Xoomworks' deep technical knowledge and its strong project management skills. They pushed us to prepare properly for the implementation, ensuring we started using Coupa with a clean and rich set of supplier data."

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