Bottomline

3 Critical Business Continuity Measures for Accounts Receivable

The COVID-19 global pandemic is forcing us all to confront big questions about how to keep ourselves and our loved ones safe while living and making a living. There are no easy answers.

Many companies have had to shut down or limit access to offices, encourage or mandate work from home, and cancel events and gatherings. These are the right measures to protect society at large, but they are also costly, difficult, and carry unknown implications for every level of an organization. Balancing the necessity of distancing employees with continuing vital business in a struggling economy is top of mind literally everywhere. Even the best business continuity plans didn't contemplate the circumstances we now find ourselves in.

AR departments are responsible for sending invoices and collecting payments, but due to work from home measures, employees must now manage these processes in new, unexpected ways. How can AR departments continue to do their part to keep business moving forward?

TRADITIONAL AR CHALLENGES ARE NOW EXACERBATED

Many AR departments still rely on manual processes, including mailing invoices and receiving paper checks. Automation and digitization of AR processes can seem like a nice-to-have when all is going smoothly, but the present moment has shed light on how reliance on paper-based approaches can impact business continuity and put AR staff attempting to visit your office at risk.

When asked how COVID-19 is impacting them, treasurers reported a **5x negative outlook** for liquidity on receivables.[1]

1. ST Treasury Coalition Survey

What needs to happen to keep businesses running?

- ✓ Mailed paper invoices need to be converted to electronic formats to avoid sitting unpaid in empty offices

- ✓ The ability to receive and process payments electronically is a must as accounts receivable departments grapple with remote work challenges

- ✓ Employees attempting to juggle home, health, and career must be positioned to be as productive as possible

- ✓ Processes that were engineered to be secure in an office location must now be replicated virtually, taking into account new security considerations

- ✓ Accounts Receivable teams need visibility to payments made and in-process in order to help their organizations manage cash flow

How Automation and Digitization Can Help AR Now

The uncertainty surrounding the timeline for containing COVID-19 and returning to pre-pandemic operations make the need for change apparent. Streamlining key functions and gaining better visibility to cash can't solve every challenge that the current crisis is bringing to the fore, but it can allow your AR team to handle many of them more easily and efficiently, while eliminating the risk of traveling to your office locations.

1 DIGITIZE PROCESSES SO THAT THEY WORK EVEN WHEN CRISIS STRIKES

When your team is working in remote locations, being able to create and send invoices from anywhere to anywhere is a big deal. Automation eliminates the need to generate paper invoices and ship them from the office, a difficult task in the current environment. It also takes away the need to travel to the office to receive and process paper checks.

2 TURN CHECKS INTO ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS & REMITTANCE

Converting to ACH or virtual card payments prevents you from having to process paper checks in the office. As an added bonus, the remittance data you receive from those payment types will be more robust, helping you to more quickly reconcile payments. Some electronic remittance formats can even help your AR team achieve straight-through processing in a time where productivity and accuracy matter more than ever.

3 ENHANCE SECURITY AND REDUCE RISK

The importance of security cannot be overstated. Sadly, fraudsters are attempting to capitalize on the pandemic with an increase in phishing and other fraud attempts. Getting paid electronically reduces your reliance on fraud-prone checks. Choosing to join a third-party payment network can add another layer of security by keeping your sensitive business and banking information securely stored and validated. These third-party solutions can also mitigate the risk of fraudsters gaining access to your account or impersonating your business.

Don't Go It Alone

Unfortunately, during a crisis we are confronted with unforeseen circumstances that make business as usual impossible. In this complex environment, getting paid electronically and automating key AR functions may make a difference when it comes to your business's ability to maintain its cash flow. That's why it's necessary to have the right partner to help you manage process changes, work through issues, and help you make the transition.

Looking to talk about what you're working through? We're happy to listen, and to offer tips to help your AR team emerge from this stronger and more efficient than ever before.

GET IN TOUCH

Bottomline

Corporate Headquarters
325 Corporate Drive
Portsmouth, NH 03801
United States of America

Phone: +1-603-436-0700
Toll-free: +1-800-243-2528
Fax: +1-603-436-0300
info@bottomline.com