

WINNER



Sponsored by The Accountancy Awards

Best Mid-market & Enterprise Accounting Software

Case Study

Company Snapshot

Number of users

4 finance plus 20 for timesheets and expenses

Previous System

Sage 50 cloud, Xero and hundreds of spreadsheets!

Go Live

October 2020

//
When we started using the system remotely, every day, we realised that it was as good as being in the office! "

BAILEYGOMM

BAILEYGOMM starts afresh with **iplicit**

Laura Orchard, Financial Controller at BAILEYGOMM, discusses the day-to-day demands placed upon their finance system.

Tell me about BAILEYGOMM

We were established, just over 40 years ago, as a mechanical and electrical design consultancy based in Ware, Hertfordshire. Since then, we've added another office in Northumberland and grown our team to service a broader range of clients with additional services to include Project and Construction Management, all within the Construction industry. We operate in a wide portfolio of sectors including Leisure, Retail and Pharmaceutical.

What are the day-to-day demands that are typically placed upon your finance system?

Purchase Orders and Timesheets are raised and submitted respectively, on a volume basis each day.

Timesheets are a really crucial point for us as we run multiple projects simultaneously with many resources spanning several projects at once. In particular, we need to be confident that all of our resource-time is being billed.

Historically this was achieved through a very convoluted array of spreadsheets, which would involve manually keying in data and then re-keying the same data elsewhere; the opportunity for error was considerable. The cost/charge-out rates would be in one spreadsheet while another had timesheets data, from the paper-based time sheet submission, with billing attached to this. Then the invoices were raised in Microsoft Excel!

We had no way of tracking outstanding purchase orders, expenses or work in progress as these were raised in Microsoft Word; I think we're typical of many small businesses that grow beyond the capabilities of their entry-level accounting software and then have to play 'catch up' when the outmoded and inefficient processes no longer deliver what you need!

iplicit

Are there any particular challenges for organisations in your sector?

The construction sector is relatively new to me as I joined BAILEYGOMM just 6 days before the first lockdown, so I've only been here for a year. However, it strikes me that aside from remote-working which has certainly been a big challenge for our sector and, of course, many others, I think that this is an industry that still has a large number of companies within the sector with predominantly paper-based workflows. Even prior to lockdown, it would mean that tracking and matching up paperwork was a continual challenge. I'm sure that each small business within this sector will have ways of working and filing which have evolved over a long period of time and are unique to them.

I remember when I first joined, having to remember the red file is for this and the purple for that and so on! Never mind the fact that once we were having to work from home, then it didn't matter what colour the files were - we couldn't access them! This was the real trigger that made us move to a true-cloud based system, and to select one that would also have inbuilt document management functionality.

We implemented **iplicit** between the first and second lockdown and when it came to lockdown 2, at first we were filled with dread, because we knew how difficult it was to function in lockdown 1, but when we started using the system remotely, every day, we realised that it was as good as being in the office! We didn't have to worry about printing off pages or entire documents to take home, just in case we needed them.

What was your key criteria for a new system and why did you choose iplicit over the other systems being considered?

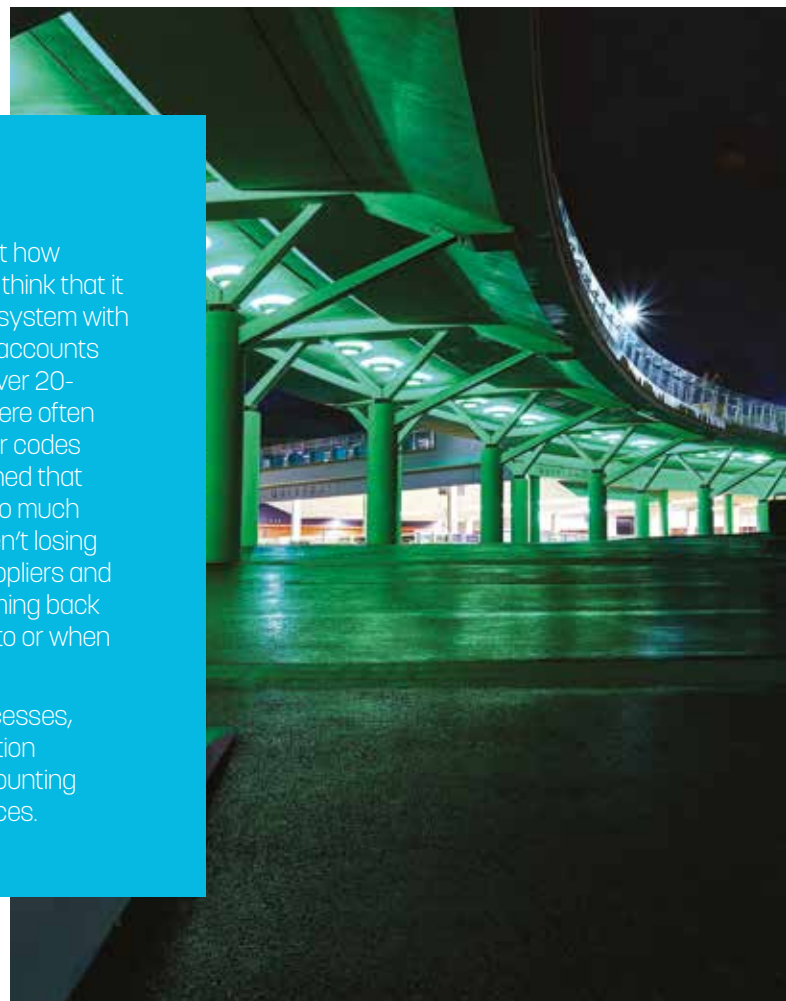
Three things were of paramount importance to us when looking for a new system;

- 1.** Firstly, it had to be true-cloud so that we could work on any platform, anywhere, and have an experience as good as being in the office.
- 2.** Secondly, the system had to have a comprehensive way of being able to submit timesheets and generate invoices from them as this is a significant area of revenue for us. We needed a system that could allow all resources to easily submit timesheets, from their mobile devices if they wanted, and for the system to ensure that all hours were accounted for, across all projects.
- 3.** Thirdly, project costing was an essential requirement given that we can have over 50 live projects, at any one time. We have various ways of working from project to project, sometimes on a fixed cost basis and sometimes cost plus; it was therefore essential for us to be able manage our time and our expenditure, to make sure that we were maximising our profit on any given job. Being able to allocate costs, against a specific project and provide real-time analysis regarding the profitability of any given project, at any time, is something our team required to enable informed business decisions to be made part-way through any job, rather than having to look back to analyse what occurred, after the job was complete.

What led to your decision to change systems?

I spent much of my first week listening and learning about how things were done at BAILEYGOMM though, looking back, I think that it hit me on the first day that this was an outdated finance system with outdated manual practices supporting it. I had joined an accounts department that had evolved with the same resources over 20-30 years. Documents that were emailed into the office were often printed off to maintain a paper trail and our nominal ledger codes numbered almost 3,000. In particular, I was very concerned that the process associated with timesheets and billing had so much room for error that we couldn't be confident that we weren't losing chargeable hours. In addition, our purchase orders to suppliers and contractors were often huge, yet the partial invoicing coming back had no real ability to be tracked regarding what it related to or when it could be billed!

I looked at what we had, with regard to systems and processes, and the condition they were in and felt that the best solution would be to start afresh with a more comprehensive accounting solution that would support more efficient working practices.



What other systems did you consider?

I looked at a few systems generally and then boiled it down to a final three; these being Exchequer, Sage X3 and **iplicit**.

How have you found the process of updating your system for new legislation – e.g reverse charging?

Updates in general have been brilliant. Reverse charging is the latest one, as it's only just come into practice. It seems like whenever there's anything that I have in my head, as a roadmap for things I need to be concerned about in the future, I ask the question and learn that the team at **iplicit** is already working on it! The other thing to say about the updates is that they are so intuitive – reverse charging for instance; the way its implemented means that even staff members who have no formal accounts training, could make entries if required because the process and interface makes it very easy for the user to understand what to do.

Will you be returning to the office or is there a new normal for working practice?

We are certainly all looking forward to getting back to the office! Though I expect that flexible working will be very much of our new normal as well. For example, a number of us have children and having the ability to access the finance system securely, from anywhere, means that we won't be so tied to office hours and office-based working when we return.

For example, last Friday I had some home-schooling issues that impacted my day, but with **iplicit**, it was no problem to access both the system and all the relevant documents on Friday evening – yes that's how rock and roll I am – and keep on top of things as though I was in the office. It's just little things like this that make it so much easier to work with the system; in the past, if something was on my mind in an evening, I'd have to wait until the next morning to get to the office and address it – sometimes this might mean that I'm worrying about something all weekend! Now, with **iplicit**, I can just access anything I want, whenever I want, wherever I am; it makes for a better night's sleep!



We have been back in the office since lockdown ended, but it's great to know we have a system that supports flexible working if it's required."

Laura Orchard
Financial Controller

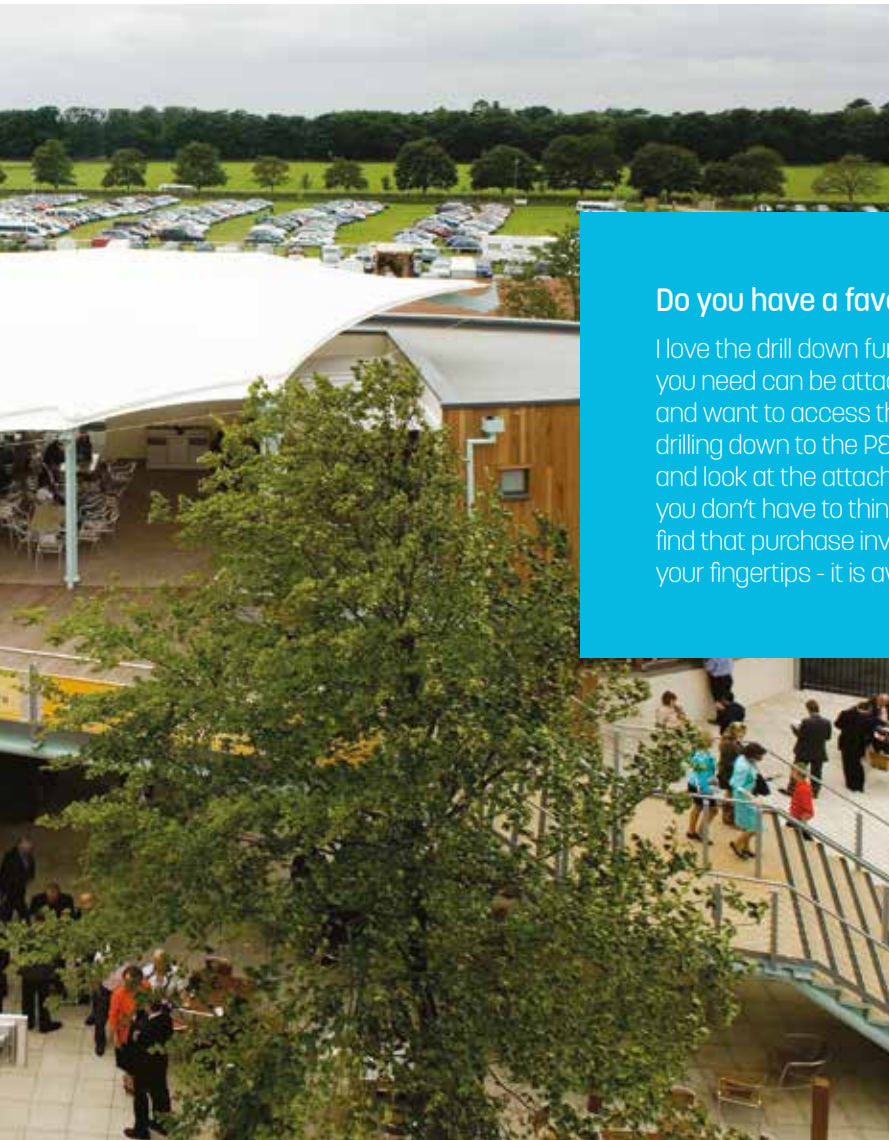




Has **iplicit** changed the way you work and if so, what benefits have you seen?

Timesheet invoicing has probably had the biggest impact on us; it was life-changing! This is a task that used to be a week-long process, every month, with the old system - now it takes just half a day with **iplicit**!

Historically, we would create a timesheet for each resource say, Joe Bloggs and Tim Smith for example. And Joe might have worked on projects A, B and C, with Tim working on projects B, C and D. Someone would then print all these timesheets off and then take everyone's project B hours and rekey into a timesheet just for project B in order to get all project B's hours signed off. Then an invoice would be created manually, and the process repeated for each project. And remember, we have many resources across anything up to 75 projects at any given time! But now, the system handles all this for us automatically and not only cuts down the time taken dramatically, but also eliminates the possibility of error when producing the invoice.



Do you have a favourite feature within iplicit?

I love the drill down function; when you're in a document, everything you need can be attached - it could be that you're in a sales invoice and want to access the sales order or vice versa, or when you're drilling down to the P&L and you can just go right to the document and look at the attachments; it makes the workflow so intuitive that you don't have to think 'let me go over to purchase and invoices and find that purchase invoice' with drill down, whatever you need is at your fingertips - it is awesome!



Timesheet invoicing has probably had the biggest impact on us; it was life changing! This is a task that used to be a week-long process, every month, with the old system - now it takes just half a day with iplicit!

Laura Orchard
Financial Controller





Changing Finance systems can be quite a daunting prospect; having been through the process, what advice would you give other Heads of Finance who are contemplating upgrading their system?

Don't compromise on your list of requirements! When researching possible systems, I found that vendors would try to talk me out of some aspects of my requirements list because their system couldn't do it!

Have honest conversations with each supplier and if their system can't do what you need, then understand why not and whether there are alternative ways of achieving the same goal. In having these conversations, you will also get to experience how supportive and understanding each supplier may be in the future. For me, having a supportive relationship was paramount, given we'd be using whatever system we chose for years to come. No system is perfect, but when I felt like a vendor was trying to talk me out of what I wanted, that certainly triggered a warning alarm for me.

I would also advise that you get really deep into a demo of the system - don't just accept a presentation or quick look at the software interface. Talk to people who use the systems you are considering too; there is no substitute to listen to others who are living with the system every day.

Anything else you'd like to say?

The whole team at **iplicit** has been great, but I'd like to say a special thank you to Brian and Tommy - they've been absolutely incredible. Brian will always make time to help me and has been very flexible and patient to ensure I always get the help I need. The feedback, regarding **iplicit**, throughout the business has been excellent. As I had only recently joined the company and we were in the middle of a global pandemic it was certainly quite daunting for me to set about a brand-new implementation. I have implemented other systems before but not under similar circumstances, unexpectedly working from home. This time around, Brian and the other **iplicit** resources were my team, my partners and my sounding board! They really helped me make a success of it.

For further information contact
info@iplicit.com or visit [iplicit.com](https://www.iplicit.com)

[iplicit.com](https://www.iplicit.com)

t. 020 7729 3260 e. info@iplicit.com

UK: Studio 1 • Floor 2 • 144 Cambridge Heath Road • Bethnal Green • London E1 5QJ

Ireland: Unit F7 Riverview Business Park • Nangor Road • Dublin 12 • Ireland

© **iplicit** 2020. All Rights Reserved.

