



HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT EXPENSE MANAGEMENT TOOL FOR YOUR FIRM



Choosing an expense management tool for your practice can be a challenge. To truly live up to the promise of saving time and money, you've got to get buy-in from your team and your clients to make their lives easier.

We spoke to the co-founders behind Iridium, a forward-thinking South African accounting firm that prides itself on doing things differently. When a free data capture solution appeared as part of their general ledger, it looked like an offer too good to be true. They tested it alongside Receipt Bank to measure the difference.

Luis Sanchez, Receipt Bank's General Manager in Australia, caught up with Peter Wagner, Director of Iridium, to ask about their findings.

Luis: Here in Australia, we're seeing a lot of questions in the market about how to choose your data capture solution. We loved your story of how you tested the two. Can you tell us more about how you went about it?

Peter: There are so many systems out there for everything. For every Xero, you've got QuickBooks Online; for every Microsoft 365, you have Google Suite. It's the same for data capture. The difference lies in consumer choice. For instance, I know that I prefer Google over Microsoft. Why? Because I just like it. It's no better or worse; it's just different. It's the same with choosing your cloud accounting apps. For me, the success of this experiment was always going to be whether we could save money while keeping the quality.

Essentially, we wanted to see if we could use a tool like Receipt Bank for free. I could hire three junior staff members for the price that we pay for Receipt Bank. If the free option was good enough, I would be in - no question. I would not be wasting money for no reason. I'd rather understand how to use the free alternative, see the benefits and make an informed decision.

Luis: What were you looking for in the new tool? Was there anything you wanted to prioritise?

Peter: Our clients are all at different stages of their lives. We have some who are young and tech-savvy. Others who are older and not tech-savvy at all. Then we have everyone in between. We needed a tool that would work across our client-base. The user experience was critical. We did not want to risk disrupting clients who were already confident in using Receipt Bank, and would probably have hundreds of questions around the new tool. As we've built the cost for Receipt Bank within our pricing package, they wouldn't see the benefits of a cheaper solution; all they would see is us making their lives harder. That's why we decided to keep the test internal.



Luis: Luis: Even though neither of us are science guys, how did you keep the test fair? Were there any rules you put in place at the beginning to give this tool a chance?

Peter: We started using Receipt Bank years ago. Back then, we plugged it in and rolled it out across our client-base within three months. For this new data capture tool, we wanted to trial it for a similar time period. We switched Receipt Bank off for our internal EMS accounts and turned on the competitor system. So started our testing phase. Every internal document went through this new tool.

Luis: I'd be really intrigued to hear about your experience over the next three months. Were there any significant differences?

Peter: Well, we found that the process of snapping and processing a paper document was fairly slow in the new system. The majority of our clients use the Receipt Bank mobile app to capture their expenses, and email or forward in. A handful of our clients like to log into Receipt Bank and actively process documents themselves. Yet, the majority will email and forward documents to their dedicated email address.

When we logged into the new tool, there was no email address functionality. I found it hard to get what I needed and spent a lot of time manually cleaning up information. We also found that the data extraction itself wasn't as good. I was checking things one or two times more than I would normally with Receipt Bank. We didn't calculate the change in accuracy by percentage, but Receipt Bank was close to 100% accurate for our internal records. I know this because we have a lot of repetitive work; it's easy to pick up when something goes wrong.

Receipt Bank automatically sorts these documents for me, and I can easily search its archive if I need anything."

Really, the app felt more like another Google Drive or DropBox for accounting records; you had to rename documents and drag them into folders. I was having to go in to rename JPEG pictures, when there's no need if I'm sending in my coffee slip. The dropping and sorting felt like a waste of time. Receipt Bank automatically sorts these documents for me, and I can easily search its archive if I need anything.

Another huge feature lacking in the new tool was the ability to add detail to the receipt before we push to the general ledger. Going in to edit a document on the fly is really important for us. Many of our clients have multiple people engaging with receipts per department; the central accounts team don't have time to code each receipt, so will ask teams to code on the fly. Many of our clients want to empower their team to code documents on the ground. It would be really frustrating if they could no longer do this.

Luis: I'm really curious to know what your final conclusion is. Did you continue to use the app over the three-month period?

I actually deleted the app before the three months ended. I was done. The in-app experience and web experience was very clunky. Ultimately, I didn't feel like I'd achieved the goal of saving time and lacked confidence in the system.

Here at Iridium, our account managers use Receipt Bank every day. We offer a fixed-price, value-based billing, and pride ourselves on being advisors to our clients. Receipt Bank makes our lives, and the lives of our clients, easier. We don't have to pick up documentation and I don't have to have someone in my office exclusively working on data capture. The data's just there.

Curious to find out more? Watch the video on how Iridium uses Receipt Bank to empower their team and clients [here](#).