

## 20 TOP TIPS TO GET PAID QUICKER

### INVOICING

#### 1. Your business details

Make it easy for customers to contact you. Ensure that your business details are shown clearly on your invoices with the correct details for accounts queries.

If you are a limited company, ensure you include your company registration number

If you are VAT registered, include your VAT number.

#### 2. Invoice number

Give each invoice a unique invoice number. It makes it easier for your customers, especially if there is a query to discuss

#### 3. Date

Make sure the correct date is shown on the invoice. Usually, it will be the date the goods or services were supplied, or the date for a stage payment.

If you are VAT registered the date should be the correct Tax Date

#### 4. Bank details.

Make it easy for customers to pay you. Include your bank details clearly on your invoices and tell your customers that you prefer to receive payment on-line or by BACS.

It's faster than waiting for a cheque, and costs less to process for both you and your customer.

### GET PAID QUICKER

This article is written from our experience over the last 10 years.

We've encountered every one of the issues highlighted, and we have seen the delays that can arise if an invoice isn't right.

Remember, your invoice is a reflection of your business and illustrates the standard you work to. So it's important to avoid even simple mistakes.

Follow these guidelines and you'll get paid quicker.

### ADD VALUE WITH YOUR INVOICE

An invoice is a communication to your customer. You can use it as a smart marketing tool.

Make sure it has your business branding, and perhaps a simple statement like "serving our customers for 10 years" or a list of branches. Maybe "see our website for current offers".

If you follow our guidance you'll make it easier for your customers to pay you, and you'll reduce the time it takes to get paid.

## 5. Credit / Debit Card Payment

Depending on your type of business and customer, it may be an advantage to accept payment by debit or credit card, or through PayPal.

## 6. Invoice accurately and clearly

Make sure that you invoice what you have agreed to supply to your client and present the information clearly. If you use a manual system, check that the quantities and amounts are correct.

Avoid including unexpected charges that you have not agreed with your customer

## 7. Customer information

Make sure you include any special information your customer needs to see. Their reference or Purchase Order Number, their department contact, delivery/shipping/consignment information, reference to approvals or certification

Always check first with your customer what information needs to be shown

## 8. VAT

Get it right. Ensure you have calculated VAT correctly. Show clearly if some items are standard rated, and some are zero rated, exempt, or subject to lower rate VAT

If your sale is to a VAT registered business you must show your VAT number on the invoice.

## 9. Send the invoice to the right place

If you are dealing with a larger organisation, ensure you send the invoice to the correct place, and have the right details to follow up. A simple slip up in email or postal address could delay payment

## 10. Email or fax is quicker than post

Always confirm with your customer that you can email or fax invoices and statements. It's far less costly than post, as well as being quicker.

## 11. Payment Terms

Make payment terms clear on your invoice. It's clearer to say "payment due in 30 days" than to say "net 30"

Include the date payment should be made by.

However, if you are dealing with larger customer, you may have to adhere to their terms.

## 12. Invoice on the day you made your supply

Raise your invoice and send it on the day you have made your supply (the Tax Date). Don't leave invoicing to the end of the week.... Or worse still, to the end of the month.

Do it while it's fresh in everyone's mind, so that the invoice is accurate, and queries can be dealt with swiftly.

## KEEPING CONTROL

### 13. Statements

Provide your customers with a clear statement of account each month. Show all the invoices due and highlight those that are overdue

### 14. Reminders

It can be good practice to send a polite reminder by email a few days before a payment is due.

And as soon as invoices are overdue, it's good practice to send a polite reminder, or speak with your customer.

### 15. Know your customer

If your customer is a larger organisation it's important to know the payment process. Who needs to receive copy invoices, and how payment approval is given. Are there any special processes you need to go through?

Do you need to become an approved vendor? Sometimes, organisations will only mention this when payment is due. And the vendor approval process can add delay to payment

### 16. Credit check

Play safe; if you offer credit make sure you use a credit-referencing agency to confirm that the client is creditworthy.

It's just as important for larger customers. Many smaller businesses have felt the effects of a big business suddenly calling in administrators and ceasing to trade.

Be cautious if you get an unexpected order from a larger business, or someone wants to switch from another supplier to you quickly. Are they leaving another supplier with unpaid bills?

## OTHER

### 17. Deposits & stage payments

Do you really need to offer credit? Can you ask for a deposit in advance and stage payments while work is in process? Agree a final payment on completion.

### 18. Cash

If you take cash (particularly as a part payment) count it in front of your customer and issue a receipt with the amount stated in words and the date received.

It will prevent any misunderstanding later where a client claims that a part payment was for an amount greater than you actually received

### 19. Offer of payment

If you are offered payment straight away, or sooner than you expected, accept the offer. Don't be generous and waive the offer.

### 20. Deliveries & release of goods/services

If you've not offered credit to your customer, make sure funds are in place before making a deliver or releasing goods/services. Phone your customer. Check with your bank.

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