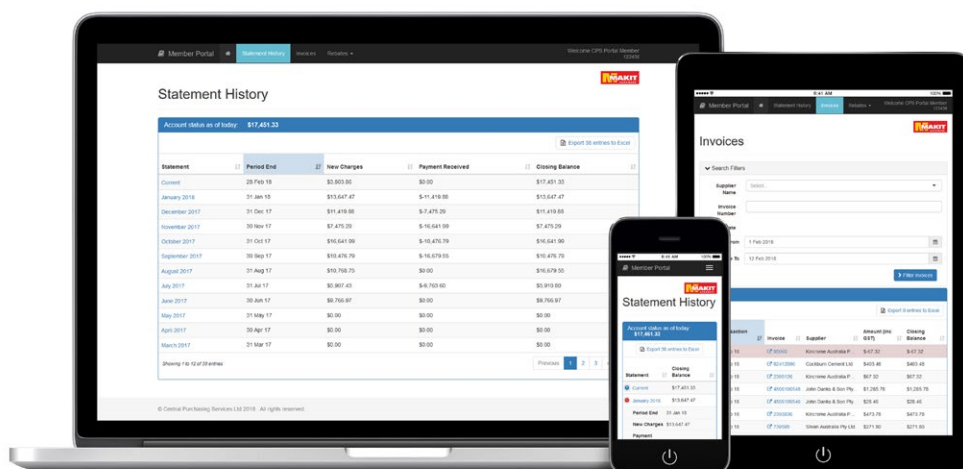


CASE STUDY

Easy-to-use member portal

Empired helps Central Purchasing Services deliver an easy-to-use member portal with real-time data



Needing to streamline its rebate program and provide a portal for users that was intuitive and responsive, CPS engaged Empired to deliver a solution that will pay for itself within three years.

About Central Purchasing Services

Central Purchasing Services (CPS) is a buying group that brings together members and suppliers to deliver better business outcomes for all. This member-owned organisation helps its members access competitive deals from a diverse range of suppliers with central billing through CPS. It offers a chargeback facility so a single credit application unlocks more than 200 supplier accounts. CPS also provides marketing services to its members. For suppliers, CPS offers a debt guarantee, increased sales opportunities, and innovative business and marketing solutions.

Member portal was hard to use and potentially unstable

CPS generates revenue by administering rebates that are paid by suppliers. It offers members a single, consolidated bill, which they access, along with their rebates, via a member portal. However, members found the portal difficult to use, it wasn't responsive so it didn't work on mobile devices and there was no single sign-on capability.

Stephen Wren, general manager, Central Purchasing Services, said, "CPS provides a digital, paperless invoice process. It's therefore essential that the portal be easy to use and completely reliable, since CPS members depend on it for their business success. If any of the software underpinning the portal solution became unstable or stopped working, the entire solution would collapse, leaving CPS members unable to transact.

"The portal used a version of software that was no longer supported, and the rebate system was supported out of Canada. This created a risky situation for the business and it was important to move to a new solution that would be well-supported in Australia."

Longevity and support were key

CPS scoured the world looking for a solution and considered developing its own bespoke software solution, working with other buying groups to create a solution, and purchasing a commercial platform from a recognised vendor. After 18 months of searching, CPS chose Empired to develop the Portal solution coupled with Microsoft Dynamics NAV.

Stephen said, "We did some background checking with other customers and, consequently, we had faith in Empired and in Microsoft Dynamics NAV. We were confident that it was a modern platform supported by one of the largest software companies in the world, and that we'd receive outstanding support from both Empired and Microsoft for the foreseeable future."

Dynamics NAV was recognised as being able to deliver business advantage by automating the supplier invoice processes; member on-charge invoicing processes; intercompany and consolidations as well as management and financial reporting outputs.

User-friendly portal delivers real-time information reliably

The new member portal provides real-time information so members can track their rebates, see their latest deals, check their account balances, and view and pay invoices. The portal is easy to use and delivers the single source of truth that the business required. It's secure with a single sign-on to the member's area and the clean, efficient interface is responsive for use on mobile devices.

The immediate savings have been in the reduction in staff hours required to process invoices and rebates. The solution has also given CPS greater visibility into and control over its business.

Stephen said, "The previous portal was convoluted and hard to navigate. As our main point of contact with customers, it was essential to turn that experience around, making the portal a positive value-added experience. That objective was achieved and there were zero faults when it went live. Members have found it easy to use and we haven't had to provide support beyond a few phone calls, which is great."

The portal provides data directly from Dynamics NAV for users so they can see the information they need – track their rebates, see their latest deals, check their account balances and view and pay invoices – in real time. This has let CPS offer a far more transparent view into activities than any other buying group. At the same time, that information isn't editable, so the integrity remains assured.

CPS now has a solution that is fully supported and integrated, and will remain supported well into the future, minimising business risk. Empired designed the solution so that it can integrate simply and easily with other products without requiring a whole new slew of coding.

This means CPS can plan for the future as it continues to focus on growth by acquisition. The scalability of the Dynamics NAV solution will be critical to this growth, since the business can simply continue to expand its use of Dynamics NAV at a very low cost.

Working with Empired

CPS and Empired worked together collaboratively, which resulted in a successful project. The exceptional quality of the Empired team was a key ingredient in that success, according to CPS.

Stephen said, "I'd find it hard to work with any partner other than Empired at this point. The team is technically competent and responsive, always getting back to us and keeping us in the loop. Having a partner that answers the phone and gets right back to you is incredibly important and having Empired on our doorstep was great."

"This project also brought home the importance of planning. All the upfront work Empired did meant that, when it was time to code, test, and deploy the Dynamics NAV-based solution, it all worked seamlessly and according to our expectations. Businesses can get Dynamics NAV from anywhere; it's the implementation partner that makes the difference.

"We worked with people with different skill sets in the Empired team and each of them was impressive and easy to work with. That's what helped us achieve a successful project."

For more information contact us today:

Empired: contact@empired.com

Intergen: enquiry@intergen.co.nz

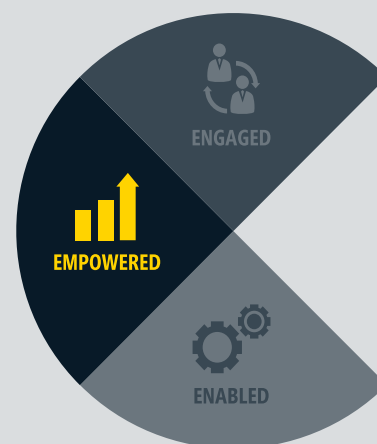
"In the early stages of the project we were slightly concerned about all the work that was going into documentation and information-gathering. However, that provided an excellent foundation as we stepped through the implementation process. As a result of that upfront work, Empired was able to deliver on this complex and time-critical project with virtually no issues. The project went live on the agreed date and the budget balanced to the cent."

Stephen Wren

GM – Central Purchasing Services

SNAPSHOT

- Member portal was hard to use and relied on unsupported software
- CPS had to provide extra member support to keep members up and running
- After extensive research, CPS requested Empired to develop a solution to deliver real-time information reliably through the portal
- Empired created a Dynamics NAV solution that has made it simple for members to see the commercial information they need in real time, delivering a better member experience
- Members' main point of contact with CPS is now user-friendly, reliable, and risk-free



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