

InvoiceCloud®

The value of e-adoption for tax organizations



How to evaluate an EBPP platform

When it comes to selecting an Electronic Bill Presentment and Payment (EBPP) platform for your tax organization, the list of criteria you can use to evaluate your options is seemingly endless. From ease of integration with your core software, to product features, to customer registration, experience and ease of use – there are countless categories on which to base your decision.

Most EBPP solutions look very attractive on paper and in a demo. At the end of the day, however, the true benefits of an EBPP platform should be measured in terms of how well it drives customers to self-service. The platform that is most engaging for customers will move more customers to serve themselves through making online payments, utilizing paperless billing, and more. Those self-service routes create time and cost efficiencies for your organization with shorter lines, fewer calls related to payments, and collections spread out evenly over the course of a tax event.

So, what is the best way to select an EBPP? By evaluating adoption compared to the alternatives.

But what is adoption? And how does it drive real business results for organizations like yours? This e-book offers an overview of adoption – what it is, why it matters, and how to drive higher adoption rates for your organization.





What is adoption?

When we talk about adoption, we are generally referring to 'e-adoption' or electronic billing and payment adoption. For an EBPP solution to drive results for an organization (biller), customers (payers) have to use the platform to pay (and/or receive) their bills. And while this might sound simple and straightforward, it's anything but. Many online payment platforms offer clunky or difficult to use customer interfaces that deter customers from paying their bills online. This often creates added work and headaches for the staff members responsible for customer service.

Customer adoption isn't limited to online or mobile payments, however, as adoption can also refer to any kind of customer self-service, such as enrolling in services like paperless billing or digital payment reminders.

Ultimately, the key to driving higher adoption rates is improving customer engagement and the overall customer experience. The highest engagement generally comes from the simplest user interface, because many customers are reluctant to use online user interfaces until proven to be secure, effective and easy to use.



Why is adoption important for tax organizations?

The more customers who use your organization’s online platform to pay their bills, the less time your staff needs to spend on each of these items. This means there is more time available to spend on higher value projects and opportunities. It also means a reduction in costs associated with manual processes such as paper billing and customer support.

Increased online payment adoption translates to positive business results, such as:

Earlier collections during tax events

When customers use online payment channels to pay their bills, the amount of time that needs to be spent manually collecting and processing payments is greatly reduced. And when your online payment channel is easy to use, customers are more likely to make their tax payments earlier, preventing a massive influx of payments on the due date and reducing delinquent payments.

Cost savings

Increased enrollment in services like paperless billing translates to real cost savings in the form of decreased print and mailing costs.

Decreased call volumes & staff workloads

For those who mail their own bills, fewer paper bills also means less time spent stuffing and mailing envelopes. With online bill payment, your staff also spends significantly less time processing manual checks. This means your staff can spend more time on higher priority projects, and more time communicating with customers to improve satisfaction and service levels. Plus, an easy enrollment and payment process means less time that your customer service staff needs to spend resolving customer payment issues, significantly reducing your organization’s call volumes.

Increased customer satisfaction

When an EBPP platform makes it simple for customers to adopt online payments and enroll in services like paperless billing, it removes many friction points for your customer. This increased ability for customers to self-serve ultimately improves the customer experience and leaves your organization with happier constituents.

How to drive higher online payment adoption for tax events

Once you understand the importance of adoption in considering an EBPP platform, how can you tell if a platform is actually designed to engage customers? Features aside, the true value in this kind of solution comes from its ability to engage customers at the right time and place to make payments as convenient as possible.

A great EBPP platform naturally moves customers to use it due to its simplicity and pleasant experience, but customers need to know that the opportunity to pay through an EBPP platform exists. By maximizing customer touchpoints and providing a variety of easy-to-use options, a well-designed EBPP platform significantly increases the chance that a customer will pay online or enroll in time-saving services such as paperless billing or payment reminders.



What does a well-designed EBPP platform look like?

Here are the factors that contribute to increased customer engagement and e-adoption.

Simple processes

It shouldn't be difficult for your customers to use electronic services or enroll in paperless billing. For example, registration for electronic services shouldn't be required, as many customers are reluctant to create usernames and passwords, at least until those services are proven through experience. Many customers gain confidence in a service by paying online a few times before registering and enrolling in services like paperless billing.

Beyond that, it should be simple and easy to make a payment – regardless of whether someone has registered or set up a payment profile. Creating gates like login screens or registration pages impedes the payment process and makes for a poor customer experience. The easier it is for your customers to make a payment online, the higher your adoption rates will be.



Mirroring the paper bill experience

One issue that customers often have when it comes to enrolling in services like paperless billing is that they don't want the experience to differ from receiving a paper bill. That's why bill presentment is such an important part of a good EBPP platform. Customers should be able to easily see a replica of their paper bill without logging in, registering, or having to download a file. This goes a long way toward encouraging higher levels of adoption.

Payment options

Your customers are constantly on the go and want to be able to make bill payments the same way they make other purchases – anytime, anywhere. That's why the customer payment experience needs to be available across all channels, whether that's a web payment portal, a mobile payment option, an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system, or a pay by text functionality. The more e-payment options you provide to your customers, the higher the adoption will be. For example, many customers who are reluctant to pay online are perfectly happy to pay by phone using an IVR option.

Most importantly, the customer experience should be the same across all payment channels – meaning that a customer can interact with any channel you have in place and expect the same level of simplicity and ease of use.

Security

When it comes to making payments online, your customers want to know that their data and payment information is secure. That's why, when choosing an EBPP platform, you'll want to confirm that your potential software providers follow the applicable requirements set forth in PCI-DSS for security tests, which are typically conducted by an outside testing firm. Make sure any considered providers maintain annual security certifications, like SOC 1 and SOC 2 Type 2, and PCI-DSS Level 1 Service Provider certifications. These verify that the payment platform has implemented effective controls around data security.



How to evaluate an EBPP platform

When evaluating an EBPP platform for your organization, arguably the most important consideration is whether the solution is designed to drive customer engagement and increase e-adoption. If the platform you select isn't effective at encouraging adoption, then it will be difficult to realize the real benefits of this kind of solution.

As you consider your options, ask yourself a series of questions to determine the likelihood that a solution will successfully achieve the adoption rates you're looking for:

- ✓ Do customers have to jump through hoops to pay or see their bill?
- ✓ Is it easy for customers to make an online or mobile payment?
- ✓ Can customers easily and simply enroll in paperless billing or bill pay reminders?
- ✓ What options are customers given to pay their bill?
- ✓ Are customers engaged at every available contact point?

It's important to select an EBPP provider that can successfully increase your organization's adoption rates, so that you can begin realizing real business benefits such as accelerated collections, decreased costs, reduced staff workloads and improved customer satisfaction.

To learn more about how Invoice Cloud's platform can help drive 2-3x higher online adoption than any other online payment solution, [schedule a no obligation demo](#) today.





Invoice Cloud is the leading provider of online bill payment services.

Founded in 2009, the company has grown to be one of the leading disruptors in the electronic bill presentment and payment (EBPP) space, helping institutions put customer experience first.

By switching to Invoice Cloud, clients improve customer engagement, loyalty, and efficiency while reducing costs, churn, defaults in the process. With over 2,100 clients across the US and over 50 million payments processed annually, the Invoice Cloud solution is one of the most secure, innovative, and inclusive fintech solutions in the market.

To learn more, visit
www.invoicecloud.com