



## 6 reasons to bin paper



Many nurseries still rely heavily on paper-based solutions when it comes to administration, with everything else saved on a computer. As the business grows, and the amount of data increases, filing systems evolve to cope, and computers start to creak and crash!

Deep down, all nursery owners know there is a better way to handle this crucial information, but its hard to find the time to do the research, and difficult to know where to start.

This document answers many of the common questions and gives 6 and a half really good reasons to take the plunge and update your Nursery Management Software.

# 1. Spend more time with children

Chances are, you didn't get into childcare to do paperwork! However the reality of childcare today is more and more requirements to prepare reports, crunch numbers and manage data.

If you'd rather be working with the children than a computer, then a good Nursery Management Software system should be the answer. The key is reducing the time spent putting information in, and increasing the amount of management information coming out.

Once you enter details into the system, every area of your business should be updated, so you'll only have to enter it once. Let's just look at the simple everyday task of changing a booking pattern.

Whilst to an outsider, this is a simple exercise, you know you have to change several different systems, and probably more that you never get around to.



# The Process



- Check availability
- Check staff are in ratio
- Schedule more cover
- Change the actual booking
- Update registers
- Change the allergy lists for the relevant days

- Check for any changes to sessions already invoiced, and credit if necessary
- Update future invoices
- Confirm the change in writing to the parent (so that they actually remember what they have changed!)

# 1. Spend more time with children



Nursery Management Software should allow you to change the booking pattern quickly and easily, and then automatically update every element of this process.

Let's not forget the old adage 'time is money'. Each time-consuming task slowly adds up, until you have spent many hours and days each month on non-productive administration tasks. What's more, every update that is made manually is open to human error, or can be missed in the busy working environment of a nursery.

Many nurseries report that they save days of staff time every month with the invoicing capability of nursery management software alone. This is often a very long and manual process, open to error, that can easily take two days to complete.

A system that enables you to produce professional looking invoices at the click of a couple of buttons can save you those 2 days, which is 24 days, or a whole working month, every year!

That alone is worth the investment for most childcare businesses.

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## 2. Keep critical data secure, by storing it “in the cloud”



While this might not be one of the most exciting reasons to switch, it could be one of the most important. Paper documents are not nearly as secure as people often think, as they can be lost, damaged or stolen, and there’s no way to prevent them being read other than locking them away.

And if the worst should happen, from theft to flood, whilst toys and equipment can be replaced, it’s almost impossible to recover all the data you’ve collected over the years about children, families, enquiries and staff appraisals.

Using a web-based nursery software system, means that every piece of information is saved online (in the “cloud”) and accessed by entering your security details, just like online banking. This ensures that everything you enter will be safe and secure, even if your computer is damaged or stolen. Data stored in the cloud can never be misplaced or have coffee spilt over it, so the impact of everyday mishaps will be minimal.

## 2. Keep critical data secure, by storing it “in the cloud”

To get the most benefit, ensure the system you are looking at is genuinely web-based, and not just a networked solution that joins two or more computers to a central server. This will ensure you save significant costs on computers and servers, and will be able to access your system from any computer with an internet connection.

The more secure software packages will be web- based and built on similar platforms to online banking systems, meaning they cannot be accessed by the wrong people. You can should even be able to lock down certain areas so they are only visible to selected members of staff.



### 3. Improve the service you offer to parents as partners



Nursery Management Software should do more than just make your life easier, it should actively improve the service you give to your parents.

To start with, your system should be delivering professional looking invoices and statements, and enable you to send letters to any group of parents you need. There should be a choice of printing these, or sending them by email, based on each parent's preferences.

The best systems should go one step further, and allow parents to access their information online. A parent portal allows them to see what sessions they have booked now and in the future, explore invoices and payments and check that all allergy and medical information is up to date.

Parent portal gives your customers 24/7 access to live information, but importantly makes it their responsibility to ensure everything, including contact details, is correct. Whilst they should never be able to change anything online, it should include a communication system that enables them to easily inform you of any changes that are required.

### 3. Improve the service you offer to parents as partners

More than this, parents love to know how their children are getting on at nursery. Great systems will allow you to strengthen that connection by recording activities during the day, along with things like meal times and nappy changes, and record them against the children that took part.

You can then email a daily report to parents at the end of each day, which they browse through at their leisure and share with family and friends.





## 4. Save money

On the face of it, nursery management software seems like a more expensive option than staying with paper-based administration. Most systems require a subscription fee, and some an initial set up fee.

However, when you look at the savings you can make, the value of that investment soon becomes clear. A web-based system allows you to keep records on children, staff and suppliers, and to send invoices by email instead of paper. You'll also be able to make use of that extra space in your office without all those folders and filing cabinets!

## 4. Save money



Successful cash flow is the key to running a successful business, and this is where the investment in a quality Nursery management system starts to pay off. By simply capturing everything that is being delivered, and billing it accurately, many settings report a 5-7% increase in turnover. Add to this a comprehensive statement and debt tracking solution and the savings start to pile up! The best systems even have an option to automatically add late payment fees, which encourages timely payments and means less of those awkward conversations with parents.

But the real benefit is the gift of your valuable time, allowing you to focus on childcare delivery, rather than a computer screen. Spending just one day a week on administration (and many of our customers were doing more) equates to well over 2 months of the year wasted on non-productive activities.

Imagine if you had 10 weeks from today to do nothing but focus on childcare delivery...



## 5. Doing your bit for the environment!

As well as all the business benefits, keeping all your information electronically means less paper and, therefore, less impact on the environment.

Whilst the quality of childcare is still the primary concern for a parent, green credentials are becoming more important and could be the deciding factor between two closely matched nurseries. Think of all the invoices, records and letters you'll no longer need to write or print ! on paper!

With an online system, you'll also never have to drive back to the office to get a piece of information!

## 6. Reach the people that matter



In the past, leaflet drops and posters have been great for drumming up interest in your nursery.

Nowadays, however, most people start their search for local businesses online. Save on the cost of paper by creating a simple website, with some well-written information about your nursery and some vibrant images.

Instead of spending money on advertising that will reach people who aren't looking for childcare, you'll only be presenting yourself to those with a genuine interest.



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