Tips & Tricks for Practice Managers

Use these tips and tricks to increase firm efficiency and save time in OneLaw V4.2.

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Expenses on Invoices

NZLS inspectors are currently educating firms about a recent LCRO finding relating to using the word "Expenses" on invoices.

Any items that are not paid to a third party, such as an office service fee or overhead, should be separately disclosed in your terms of engagement and included on your invoice under heading, such as Sundry Fees.

Refer to https://www.lawsociety.org.nz/professional-practice/practice-briefings/open-and-transparent-billing/ for more information.

You can update your invoice templates with the new heading easily. Your firm will either have customised templates in place or you will be using the standard invoice report. Check this under the Administration ribbon / Practice Settings / Invoice Settings.

Standard Invoice Report
Edit the Expense Recoveries heading in the Invoice Settings screen.

Invoice and Reporting Statement Templating
Edit each invoice under Document Templates.

- Double-click on the first template to be edited
- Click View – this will launch the template in Word
- Edit the Expenses section heading
- Save the template to your desktop and close it
- Back in OnePractice click Browse (in the screen where you clicked View)
- Locate the amended template on your desktop, select it and then click Save to upload the new template into your OnePractice system
- Repeat these steps for each invoice template that you would like to change

While you are in the Invoice Settings screen, also check the naming format used for the PDF document that gets created. OneLaw V4.2 introduces the new reporting statement, ensure that the format for the combined invoice and statement is set to how you want it.

You can find webinars, videos and manuals covering the new reporting statement in OneLaw V4.2 via OneCommunity.

CDD Warning Trigger on Client Name or Address Change

OneLaw V4.2 introduced a new optional setting for each firm, relating to automatically triggering the CDD warning on a client when the client's name or address is changed. As a firm, you can decide if you want to enable this new option.

When a change is made to the client's name or address a CDD note is added, and if the client has previously had CDD completed then they are triggered again that CDD is due.

Update your settings under the Administration Tab / Practice Settings / AML/CFT Compliance.

Updating the Wording on AR Statements

The payment section on the AR Statement could be out of date regarding returning the slip with your payment and also completing your credit card details and posting it back.

Consider changing the text to Payment details, Payment instructions or similar.

Do this by going to the Administration ribbon / Practice Settings / Accounts Rendered settings / Payment slip instructions.

User Screen Update

OneLaw V4.2 has changed the display of the Users screen. Additional user details are now easily seen at a glance on the front screen including the current month's fee budget for each user, if loaded.

There is now also a Print button. The details as displayed on the Users front screen will be pushed out to Excel.

New User Permissions to Restrict Creating Clients and Matters

OneLaw V4.2 introduced the ability to restrict the creation of new clients and matters, as well as the editing of existing clients and matters.

In the update, all users will automatically be given full permission to create and edit clients and matters because they already had this permission in the previous OneLaw version. This new role is Clients & Matter Maintenance.

To restrict access for creating new clients and matters you can remove this new role from individual users, however, this will also remove the ability to edit existing clients and matters. This means you will need to create a role with the required permissions for Edit Clients and Edit Matters only and then assign this new role to those users who are only able to edit and not create.

Transaction Requisitions

Journal Authorisation
Consider changing the requirement for inter-entity journals to not require authorisation. A journal within a client from one matter to another doesn't need to have the same level of authorisation as a journal between clients.

Do this by going to the Administration ribbon / Practice Settings / Transaction Requisitions. You can set the level of authorisation required for journals – all journals or only journals moving between parties.

Changing PIN Code
If a journal authoriser forgets their PIN Code it can be reset.

Do this by going to the Administration ribbon / Users / right-clicking on the user required and clicking Reset PIN Code. The user can then reset their PIN Code from their OnePractice session under File (top left) / Account / Change PIN Code.

Stored Narrations for Receipts and Payments

The feature to add pre-saved narrations (including payees and payers) to receipts and payments has been available on OnePractice for a while. However, it's a bit hidden as it's not directly accessible from the Posting screen. For firms that have migrated from LAWbase, OnePractice uses the same function key option.

When in the Receipt From, Payment To and Narration fields, press F4 for the list of pre-stored narrations. Select the narration from the list.

Stored narrations are loaded into OnePractice under the Administration ribbon / Manage Codes / Stored Narrations.

If you want to use stored narrations in the receipt from and payment to fields you will need to have a party in your database that closely matches that narration loaded in. This is so you can pick the correct party from the list of parties that are displayed, however, it is probably quicker just to type straight into the field and not use the F4 option.

Bank Reconciliations

OneLaw V4.2 introduced a couple of awesome features into the Bank Reconciliation screen. You can set your screen to display the OnePractice transactions on the right side with the bank transactions on the left (see Figure 1 below). This display option can be clearer and easier to read. If both sides are set to display in the same order i.e. by amount, each transaction may be in line on both sides.

Each transaction you select is now highlighted in blue, this is a great visual cue to assist with matching transactions.

The option to edit or delete your firm's float transactions is also now available in the Bank Reconciliation screen, just double-click the transaction (you can double-click any transaction to get the edit screen).

For firms that did not previously update to OneLaw V4.1, there are also two additional improvements. There is the ability to delete a committed bank reconciliation, which is a user permission. We also introduced the ability to create a bank reconciliation when there are no transactions by simply clicking on the Create button (instead of importing the blank bank rec file). The Create button will highlight when there is no difference between the opening and the closing balances.

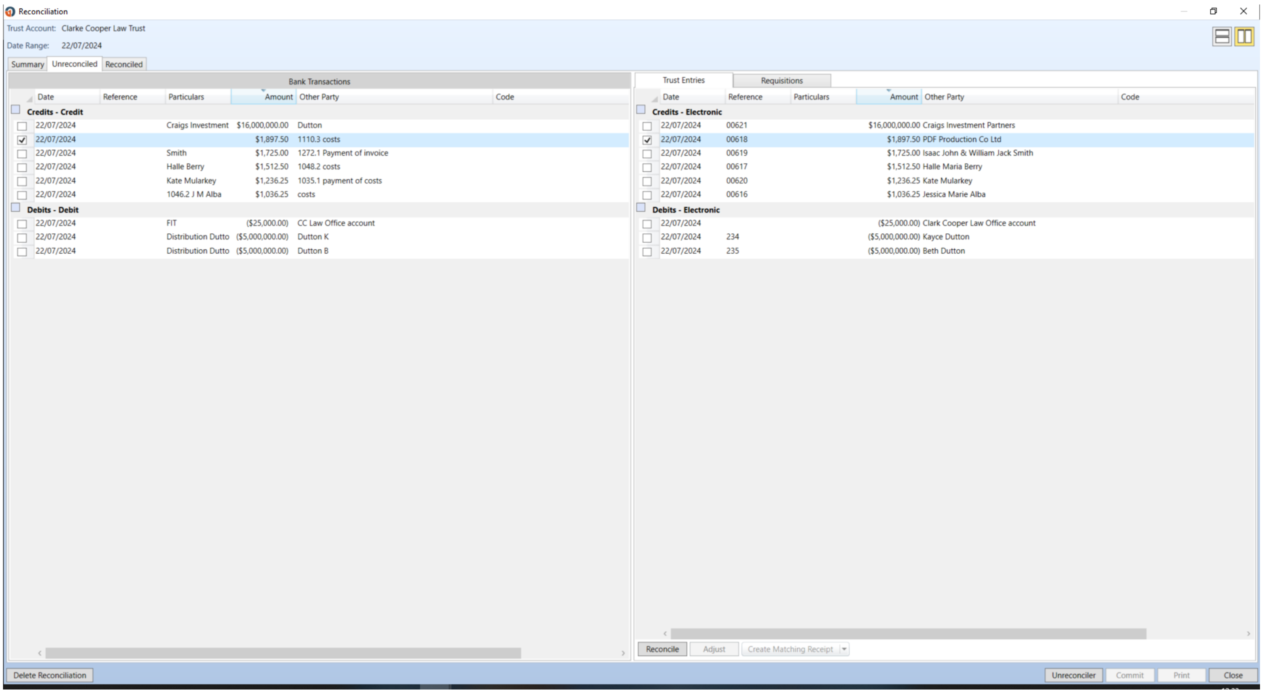

Figure 1.

Bulk Billing – Draft Bills Screen

This screen now includes totals along the bottom to provide fee figures at a glance for drafted and/or authorised invoices (see Figure 2 below). This is great at month end when you need to get a handle on the value of draft fees still out there with the team that haven't been finalised yet.

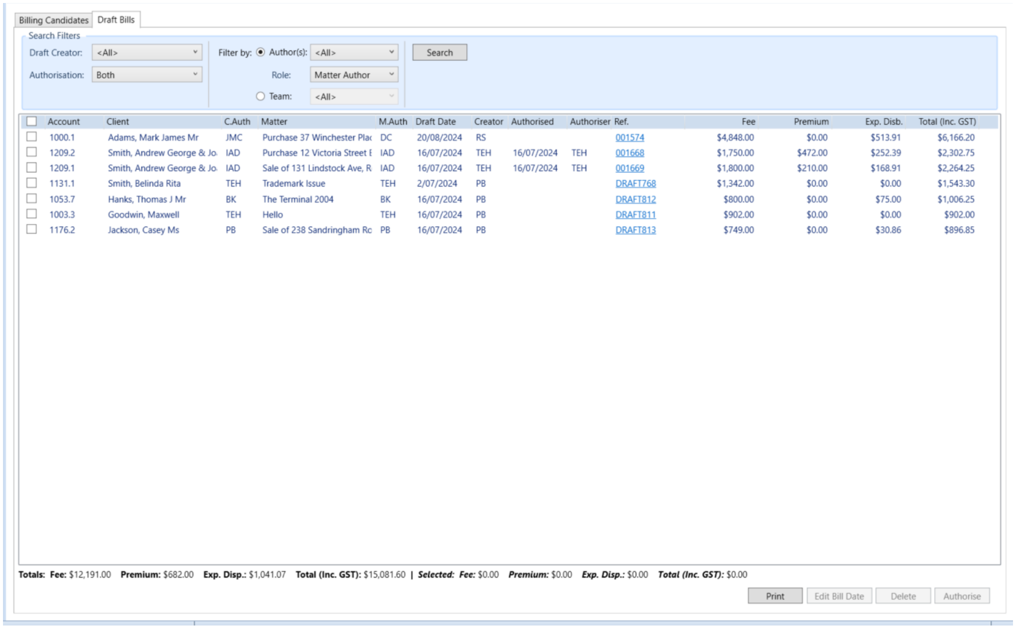

Figure 2.

Also added to this screen is the ability to print out the list of displayed draft invoices. Set your search filter to display what you require and then you can print off the results to allow easier discussion and review.

Matter Level Advancing

OnePractice provides the option to change your firm's advancing level from client level advancing to matter level advancing. The change to matter level advancing is enabled under Administration / Manage Ledgers / Select the trust account (see Figure 3 below).

There is the ability to trial the change and see the effect on your firm's float account before committing the change. It is possible, depending on the value of the funds that need to move back from your firm's float account, that the firm's float account may not have sufficient funds for the change to be committed. You would then need to wait until your firm's float either has more funds or the balances on your client's ledgers change.

Set your trust account ledger to matter level advancing and click Save. (NOTE: make sure you do this after completing your daily processing and updating your batch so that there will be no other items in the batch). To check the change to your firm's float account go to / Batch Update / click Prepare Batch. You will be able to view the net effect of the change under the float account summary.

If you are happy with the change to your firm's float account, update the batch created from the change to matter level advancing and your OnePractice will now be set at matter level advancing.

If you do not want to proceed, click Close from the Batch Update, go back to Manage Ledgers and set the trust account ledger back to client level advancing.

Matter advancing will help with false gains to the firm's float account across a client, however bear in mind that you can still get false gains from within a matter.

We recommend contacting our OneLaw support desk for assistance.

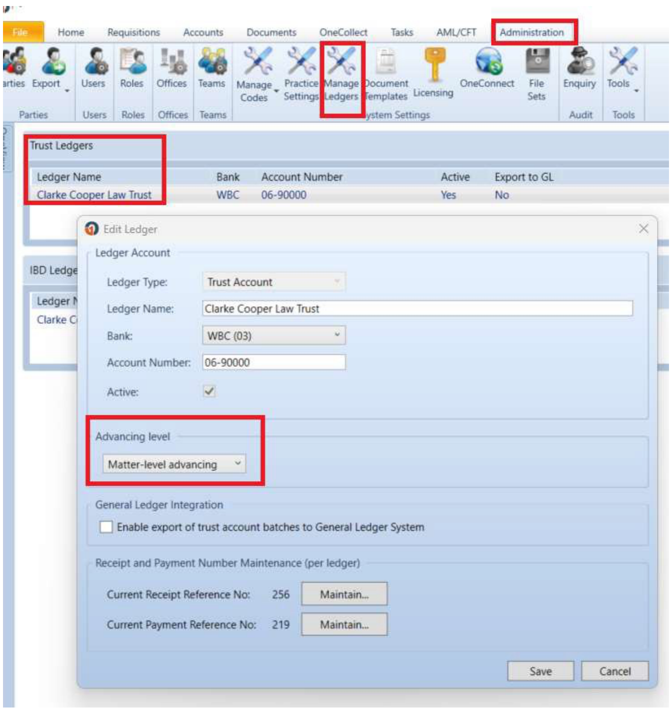

Figure 3.

Enhanced Reporting on WIP Write-Offs

You are most likely aware that WIP can be written off by processing a $0 fee (and also at the time of posting an actual fee) but other than the ability to see a dollar figure of WIP written off (for the firm as a whole or against the matter author or the working author) what about taking it a step further to allow for more accurate reporting on why WIP was written off.

Currently, OnePractice doesn't capture a WIP Write Off Reason for $0 fees.

$0 fees are often used to close the file, used to clear the WIP on a staff matter say for conveyancing of their personal home, used on Pro-Bono matters – the list goes on.

If your authors have fee KPI's they may be less motivated to work on matters where they could miss out on the fee credit because the work is not invoiced.

An option that could be used to allow:

+ More accurate time recording on the matter (have you seen staff matters have less time recorded on them?)
+ Authors to receive their fee credit share for the work completed
+ Firms to report on the value of WIP not invoiced, for a variety of reasons

The process:

+ Record the WIP as chargeable, as normal
+ Process an invoice, as normal, giving the authors their fee credit – again just as 'normal'
+ Then Write Off the fee (using the Fee Write Off function). On the fee write off remove the authors that received the original fee on the initial fee and assign the fee write-off to another author
    + The fee write-off author could be generic i.e. 'Fee Write-Off Author' or there could be several authors titled accordingly to meet your firm's needs. You will need to create these authors as users under the Administration ribbon
+ Select the required write-off reason from the drop-down menu
    + These write-off reasons are your best reporting option so you may decide to create several e.g.:
        + Staff discount
        + Closing file
        + Pro bono
        + Directorship fees

Use the *Author Write-offs By Reason Report* to report on all fee write-offs in a given period (see Figure 4 below). This report will include a breakdown under each fee write-off Reason that is in place

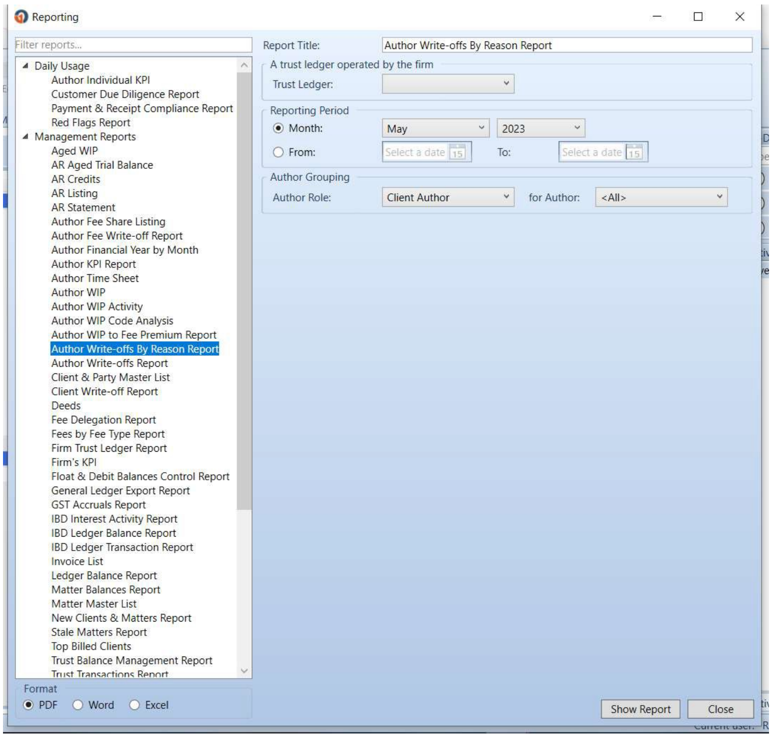

Figure 4

When a User Leaves Your Firm

When a user leaves your firm remember to set that user as inactive. Do this by going to Administration / Users / select the user and remove the tick from the Active field (see Figure 5 below).

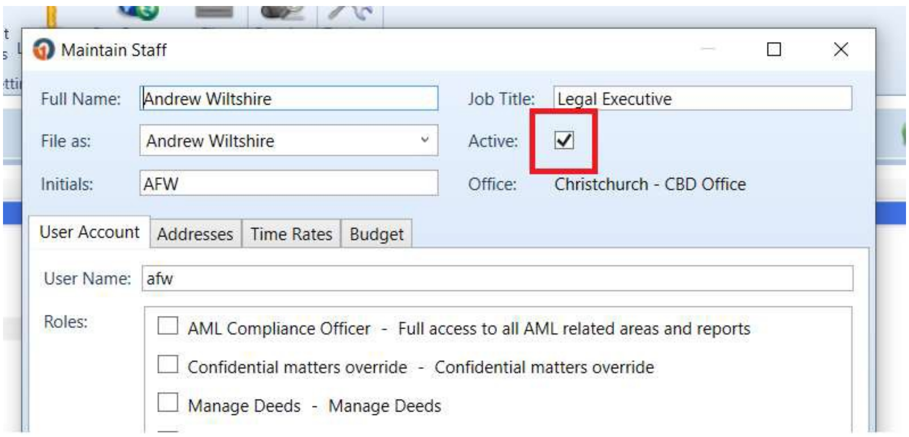

Figure 5.

This will remove that user from various drop-down fields such as Client Author (when opening or editing a client) and Matter Author (when opening or editing a matter).

That user will still be included in financial and management reporting but once there are no values for the user i.e. after a financial year end and all WIP etc is cleared then the user will stop showing on reports.

Consider creating a team to move past users into called ‘Retired’ or similar. This will group these users into that specific team on your various financial and management reports. You may decide to move a user after say 3 months from their current team into the ‘Retired’ team.

NOTE: If your OneLaw system is in the Cloud then setting users as inactive is very important as they will no longer be able to log into your OnePractice system (some staff may have had OneLaw installed on home/personal computers).

Viewing Loaded Author Time and Fee Budgets

There is currently no print option within the User maintenance area for budgets, to allow for easy review of the loaded time and fees budgets.

The best report, to allow you to double-check your figures for budgets is to print the *Author Financial Year by Month Report*.

NOTE: You will need to run the report twice, once selecting WIP to get the time budgets and again for fees to get the fee budgets.