

**KENDOX**



**chicco di caffè**

**CHICCO DI CAFFÈ GESELLSCHAFT FÜR  
KAFFEEDIENSTLEISTUNGEN GMBH**

**CASE STUDY**

Date

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## chicco di caffè Gesellschaft für Kaffeedienstleistungen GmbH

### Digital invoicing workflow supports rapid growth

Chicco di caffè Gesellschaft für Kaffeedienstleistungen mbH, based in Munich, is a leading provider of speciality coffee shops for large companies, clinics and universities. To support its rapid annual growth rate of over 20 per cent, the company has fully digitised and automated its invoice receipt and approval process. This has resulted in a significant streamlining of administrative processes for its 170+ branches across Germany.

- Customer**
- chicco di caffè Gesellschaft für Kaffeedienstleistungen mbH
  - 600 employees
  - Annual turnover €30 million,
  - Over 170 coffee shops across Germany
  - House roastery

**Industry** Catering

- Project**
- Automate invoices-received process
  - Extract document data
  - Approval process including compliance checks
  - Hand over to accounting solution DATEV
  - Private cloud operation



Chicco di caffè offers employees of large companies the same thing in their workplaces that they appreciate in city-centre coffee shops: the chance for a short break with a good coffee. That means aromatic espressos with a perfect crema and silky-smooth cappuccinos, all freshly made and served with a friendly smile. The hand-roasted coffee from the company's own roastery meets high standards in terms of quality, fair trade, sustainability, health and transparency. By winning large customers, the company has achieved rapid, healthy growth, operating around 170 coffee shops with its own staff in a wide range of locations all across Germany. With over 30 newly opened branches in 2018, this young company is currently Germany's fastest-growing coffee shop chain. Measured by the number of branches, it is also currently the third largest in the country.

## **STRONG GROWTH REQUIRES STREAMLINING PROCESSES**

"We introduced our project, chicco RechnungsCheck, at over 170 coffee shops across Germany. Each of these coffee shops is like its own separate company. No two are quite the same. Because of our extremely rapid annual growth of over 20 per cent, we needed to streamline and digitise our administrative processes. With this objective in mind, we started looking for a partner who could digitise the invoices-received process in particular, as well as other processes in future. After drawing up a shortlist and completing exploratory talks involving workshops with multiple candidates, we settled on Kendox," explained Manuel Sawalle-Müller, Director of Finance at chicco di caffè Gesellschaft für Kaffeedienstleistungen mbH. In digitising its invoices-received process, chicco di caffè's goal was to do away entirely with paper documents, speeding up overall processing times from receipt to approval. It also needed a better overview of all documents, and for individual documents to be easier to find.

**"Given our record annual growth rate of 20 per cent, we needed to digitise our administrative processes."**



## SIX MONTHS FROM BIDDING TO GO-LIVE

Chicco di caffè took a closer look at three possible providers for its project. “We excluded one provider early on for cost reasons; another was unable to map the needs of our complex workflow during the initial workshop phase. As a result, we settled relatively quickly on Kendox. One of the key deciding factors was Kendox’s ability to hand over posting data through an interface to DATEV,” said Sawalle-Müller.

The entire process of choosing a final provider was complete within four months. The next step was to develop the precise concept, in which all tasks, technical details and individual steps of the project would be defined. In order to guarantee trouble-free operations later on, it was also necessary to discuss certain details with the company’s data centre. Once all adjustments had been made and the complete solution implemented, chicco’s project team put the new process through its paces. After a little more fine-tuning and a final test phase, the project went live just six months after the start of the selection process.

“Our project plan predicted that we could go live within half a year of the call for bids. That went just as expected and included the fact that we took plenty of time to test and document everything, and to ensure internally that everything worked as expected,” said Sawalle-Müller.

“One of the key deciding factors was Kendox’s ability to hand over posting data through an interface to DATEV.”

## INVOICE DIGITISATION, ASSIGNMENT AND APPROVAL

Before the chicco RechnungsCheck project was implemented, chicco di caffè had previously started by scanning incoming invoices with an MFP. A manual process then determined who was actually responsible for approving the invoice. The invoice was then emailed to the relevant person at the cost centre with a request for approval – or in some cases, it was actually printed out and physically handed over. The administrator would then manually record all accounting details on the document or email them to the accounting department.

By digitising the invoice checking process and associated approvals, the coffee shop chain has drastically altered its approach. “This doesn’t just mean that all paper documents are digitised. In order to get the most we possibly can out of automation,” said Sawalle-Müller, “we are also motivating our suppliers to send us invoices by email.”

Receiving invoices as email attachments significantly helps the automated processing system. Digital input channels and email addresses are constantly monitored. Incoming invoices are analysed with the help of an OCR (text recognition) component, then their data is extracted and assigned to the invoice in question. Each invoice is then automatically sent to the head of its respective cost centre for validation.

Once the invoice is approved, the document and its accounting data are automatically handed over to the company’s accounting solution DATEV, where the invoice details are entered and downstream processes can be triggered.

“We are motivating our suppliers to send us invoices by email.”

## MODULES IN THE “CHICCO RECHNUNGSHECK” SOLUTION

chicco RechnungsCheck is closely integrated with Kendox InfoShare as well as document recognition technology from smartFix (Insiders Technologies) and the process management platform AxonIvy. Kendox InfoShare is responsible for digitising documents and legally compliant archiving, while smartFix extracts and validates data from the digitised invoices. Once the data is extracted and verified by the user (if required), both the document itself (as a scanned image) and the extracted data are handed over for approval. The extracted data is one of

several factors that determine exactly how the process functions from this point on. For example, the cost centre is used to decide which employee will receive the invoice for approval, and the invoice total determines whether a multi-stage approval process is required. Once the invoice has passed through all required steps in the approval workflow, the accounting data (consisting primarily of the extracted document data) is handed over to chicco di caffè's accounting solution, DATEV. There, the invoice is processed with the greatest level of automation possible and assigned to an individual cost centre within the company.

One feature of the implementation is its connection to all applications within the company's private cloud. Kendox project manager Jörg Schönfish explains: "In order to ensure all users can easily access data wherever they may be, it was essential to enable mobile access to all systems via tablet. The user interface and all actions also needed to be as simple and intuitive as possible. One very complex aspect of implementation was therefore our negotiations with the customer's cloud provider, particularly in terms of access rights. Together, we were able to provide a prompt, flexible response and develop a secure solution."

*"It's easy to see how long a payment run would last if we had to manually determine who emailed which invoice to who and whether the invoice had actually then been approved."*



## **MORE EFFICIENCY AND TRANSPARENCY FOR FINANCIAL PLANNING**

By digitising its invoices-received process, chicco di caffè has achieved rapid processing and initial account assignment for the documents it receives. Because the digital process is fully tracked and documents are stored in a revision-safe format in Kendox InfoShare, the company also ensures compliance with digital document storage regulations. As a result, the integration enables maximum transparency. Document searching is available any time, anywhere. As the finance department has an overview of all relevant documents and approval stages throughout the process, liquidity is now much easier to manage and control. Financial benefits like cash discount deductions are also now much easier to realise.

“Today we have a much better overview of where we stand and what's coming in. That was definitely not the case before.”

Sawalle-Müller sees one other benefit to liquidity planning: “Our business moves extremely quickly, so solid liquidity planning is very important. With a turnover of around 30 million euros, we sometimes have up to 200 open items per payment run. It's easy to see how long a payment run would take if we had to manually determine who emailed which invoice to who and whether the invoice had actually then been approved. Today we have a much better overview of where we stand and what's coming in. That was definitely not the case before.”

Another benefit comes from easing the load on accounting staff. “Before we implemented the digital process, they had to do a lot of work to capture invoice details,” said Sawalle-Müller. “Now their job starts with controlling, tracking and validating invoices.”

## **NEXT STAGE OF EXPANSION**

The coffee experts at chicco are planning to take further steps with Kendox InfoShare. These include implementing an approval process for investment requests and requisitions, as well as business-wide contract management incorporating baristas at over 170 sites across Germany.

Sawalle-Müller describes the future plans as follows: “We want to digitise other processes with Kendox in future, including investment requests and requisitions. It's important to us to have approval in advance – before any invoice even exists. This way, we can ensure that there are no surprises later on when the invoice is received and needs to be paid. Also, with over 170 branches, we want to implement a single business-wide contract management system. We have many contracts, not just in our head office but also at the individual shops. As a result, a comprehensive contract management system giving an overview of where a given contract is going, when it ends or when it needs to be ended, is essential.

The head of finance also has a few ideas about how the solution could be used in future. His vision is for a link between archived documents and a BI tool that would massively increase transparency for payments. It would be a kind of “self-service BI” for staff, where they would not just see which costs are occurring at their cost centre, but also which documents are associated with these costs.

## ABOUT KENDOX

Kendox are the experts in digital document management and process automation for offices and administrative bureaus. With years of experience providing solutions using its own in-house technology, Kendox works in particular with customers in industry and manufacturing, trade and e-commerce, services, and logistics as well as with public institutions, schools and universities.

Kendox's applications are supplied and operated in the cloud from the company's own virtual data centres in Germany and Switzerland. Its software solutions are based on forward-looking technologies and meet today's security and data protection requirements.

Kendox's document and process automation solutions integrate with Microsoft 365, leading ERP solutions and many other specialist applications. Thanks to Kendox's collaboration with other solution providers and integration partners, the Kendox software platform works in any number of diverse use cases.

Kendox AG is based in Oberriet, Switzerland. Branch offices, as well as sales and consultancy offices, are located in Oberhausen, Germany; Vienna, Austria; and other locations in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. Together with its partner network, Kendox provides ongoing support to over one thousand customers.

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