OZV GMBH & CO. KG

CASE STUDY

KENDOX

OZV GmbH & Co. KG

Paperless processing for incoming invoices and credit notes

The Offergeld Logistik group (OL for short) provides transport and logistics services across Europe. OL offers its customers a single source for modern transport, warehousing and value-added services. OL has used Kendox InfoShare as an archiving and document management solution for many years. Working together with Kendox, it has now expanded the existing system to enable digital invoice validation, document recognition and archiving. The system is integrated with OL's established accounting software from FiManS GmbH, with additional interfaces to its vehicle management software (Sauer) and ExchangeOnline.

Customer	– Head office in Würselen/Aachen (Germany) – 13 offices total, of which 8 in Germany. Others in Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Switzerland and the UK – Approx. 1,800 employees
Industry	Transport, logistics and value-added services
Project	– Digitally processing invoices received – Revision-safe storage in the Kendox InfoShare archive – Kendox InfoShare P2P: Automated OCR analysis, document recognition, account assignment and approval – Posting interface (FiMans)
Requirements	– API connection to existing accounting (FiManS) and IT (Sauer vehicle management software) systems, as well as ExchangeOnline – Implement mobile web client

With around 1,800 employees across 13 offices in Germany and other European countries, the Offergeld group offers what it calls combined logistics services. Its service range covers a broad, modular portfolio, with increasing levels of interconnectivity up to and including assuming total responsibility for all logistical processes – from delivering raw materials for finishing, to managing intralogistics, to warehouse management and shipping finished products to end customers or retailers. Each year, its head office receives around 40,000 invoices for processing.

STARTING POINT: DIGITALLY PROCESSING INVOICES RECEIVED

Before a digital invoice processing solution was implemented, invoices and accounting documents were processed entirely on paper. All incoming invoices and credit notes were processed, approved and posted "classically" using paper printouts and account assignments. This meant that each document had to be sent from branch offices to the central accounting department in the town of Würselen, either using the company's internal transport system or by post. Needless to say, this led to long processing times. This approach also lacked transparency and speed in terms of things like identifying discounts.

The digitisation plan therefore aimed to modernise these processes, making them essentially paperless. By implementing a business-wide solution for digitally processing invoices received, OL needed to enable maximum transparency during processing and reduce throughput times. Its other goals included reducing the costs of processing, delivering and printing documents. OL also sought to comply with processing regulations, retention guidelines and data protection ordinances.

PROVIDER SELECTION; ARGUMENTS FOR KENDOX

In the course of choosing a provider, OL initially inspected numerous providers' solutions. Its positive experiences with Kendox InfoShare, which it had used as its business-wide archiving solution since 2006, were just one reason why Offergeld ultimately settled on Kendox's P2P workflow solution.

"Of the three providers that came in for closer examination, we got into detail with two. After that, however, we settled relatively quickly on Kendox, as it soon became clear that Kendox could fulfil all of our requirements," said Christoph Planker, head of quality and process management projects at Offergeld Logistik.

API CONNECTION WITH ACCOUNTING AND IT SYSTEMS

Together with Kendox, Offergeld defined the roles and responsibilities of all departments and divisions involved with invoice processing across the entire business. Based on the customer's requirements, the Kendox project team then developed a test environment. Several interfaces with other IT systems needed to be planned and set up in order to ensure that the automated invoice processing workflow would later run smoothly.

Invoices received by post first needed to be digitised, and when collecting the invoices received by email, there were associated interfaces with Microsoft ExchangeOnline and SQL Server to take account of. One key focus was on the interface for transferring documents to the accounting software. Here, Offergeld works with a solution based on AS-400 from FiManS which supports further processing for accounting purposes. As well as the InfoShare Mobile Web Client, Kendox created a browser interface so that users could easily work with the application on their Windows computers.

STANDARDISED WORKFLOW

The workflow steps for processing incoming invoices using Kendox's P2P solution include receiving documents via email or scanner, OCR recognition with digital data extraction, and assigning incoming documents to an account. Once a document is identified, it is then passed on to the appropriate office. After being assigned to the relevant department, the first stage of approval comes by checking the data extracted from the document as well as the calculations and details on it. Employees are informed of outstanding tasks via a queue and via email notifications. When they open a task, they are supported by specific processing options, rules for approval and role assignments. Additional validation templates allow potential scanning errors and duplicates to be identified. Once

a document is approved, it is sent to the next approval stage, which depends on its sum. There, it is finally approved by the relevant manager(s) and handed over to the central accounting department. At the end of the workflow comes the final inspection and account assignment by accounting staff, after which it is automatically handed over through an interface to the accounting software. Here, another systemic validation template is used. Standardised sub-processes, such as document tracking and payment notifications, also support later validation of paid invoices and their workflow history.

SPECIFICS FOR PROCESS AUTOMATION

Once the system had passed initial testing, Kendox worked with Offergeld on important optimisations to the process. For example, given the high number of inter-company invoices for repairs, the planned integration with the logistics software WinSped was pushed back by Offergeld's project managers, who instead prioritised the interface with vehicle management software Sauer.

"Given the size of our vehicle fleet, there is a certain volume of repair claims, particularly coming from the group's own workshops. This influences the number of inter-company invoices, which can peak at around a third of our total volume. We therefore placed particular value on OCRing these documents. Now that we have implemented an additional interface, all information can be handed directly over to the workflow. This saved manual handling time and made our processes 'cleaner'," explained project manager Planker.

When it comes to inter-company invoices, many parameters, including the assigned account, are known in advance. The optimisation came from eliminating the OCR step for inter-company invoices, and instead feeding them directly into the workflow through the interface. This allowed additional data to be handed over in the form of metadata, including the account details, cost centres, nominal accounts, and more.

AGILE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

The duration of the implementation phase was consciously planned to allow all clients to be onboarded one after the other. The project started in May 2021, and the first pilot location went live with two clients in February 2022. All offices within Germany then went live one by one. In the end, 38 clients were gradually brought online.

Kendox project manager Andreas Siegesmund explained: "This gradual approach let us ensure that the document recognition system worked as well as possible and gave plenty of room for optimisations. Making document recognition work perfectly to minimise post-processing is a key challenge in any project. Here, it was important to the customer to invest the necessary time for it. They also wanted to know as early as possible in the project how the processes would function and how much work would be involved for the accounting department. Together, we were able to use the fine-tuning phase to resolve special cases to do with recognising specific document types."

"We are very pleased with the implementation," said Christoph Planker. Kendox gave us practically everything we wanted. Our collaboration with their project team went smoothly from the word go. They were able to offer working solutions to a wide range of challenges. We also looked at alternatives together whenever the desired setup couldn't quite be achieved. In such cases, Kendox's team were always very creative, supporting us with both advice and action."

THE PRIMARY BENEFITS: TRANSPARENCY AND FAST THROUGHPUT

Today, by digitally processing the invoices it receives, OL has achieved significant time and cost savings, enabling much faster reaction times. With a wide range of search and notification options, all users have visibility into the state of processing at all times, allowing them to meet key deadlines. Central document storage in the Kendox InfoShare archive ensures compliance with processing regulations, storage guidelines and data protection rules. This user-friendly system is seeing high satisfaction rates, and not just among OL's own employees:

"The primary benefit with Kendox's solution is transparency, closely followed by the fast throughput rates," said Offergeld Logistik's project manager.

"As our offices are spread far and wide, transparency is obviously one of the key features for us. Everyone can always see which documents are moving through the process and where they are right now. The whole thing is properly documented, so there are no 'black holes' in the process. This has allowed us to reach a whole new level of process security. As soon as the document arrives, we know where it is, where someone might need to follow up, and so on. It's quite simply a new standard of quality."

"Digitising the processing of incoming invoices provides a key lever for us that puts us in a much better position going forwards. From receipt of an invoice to the final processing step, all the way to completion, we have maximum transparency and can comply with all relevant guidelines. It used to be that we would have something of an end-of-month rush in sending mail," the project manager explained. "Now, a document from Berlin reaches Würselen in a matter of seconds and is ready for processing right away. Compare that with the old system, where documents would effectively get stuck – sometimes for days."

NEXT STEP

Offergeld quality and process manager Christoph Planker is now looking to push digitisation further across all departments and all levels of the business. The next step, therefore, is to integrate the digital invoicing workflow across the group's international offices.

"The preliminary work is already underway," Planker confirms. "The user interface is available in German and English by default, and French would be desirable for us too."

KENDOX

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. It has branches and sales and consulting offices in Oberhausen (Germany), Puchheim (Germany), Vienna (Austria), and Serbia, as well as other locations in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. Together with its partner network, Kendox provides ongoing support to over one thousand customers.

KENDOX

Kendox AG

Bahnhof-Strasse 7
9463 Oberriet SG
Switzerland
T +41 (71) 552 34 00

www.kendox.com | info@kendox.com