INCOMING INVOICES
EDEKA

Challenge:

» Full control over all invoices in circulation for the largest EDEKA regional company Minden-Hannover
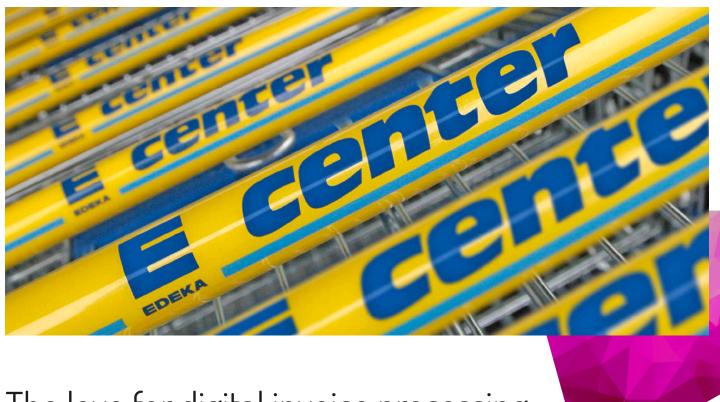» Integration SER® archive and Lotus Notes® mail system

Solution:

» Uniform, comprehensible and binding process standard
» Modification-free connection to existing SAP infrastructure due to the modular solution structure and standard interfaces of AFI Invoice

Benefits:

» Faster processing saves time and manpower
» Ensured cash discounts
» Transparent release also for non-SAP users
» Invoice original available at any time

AFI
SOLUTIONS

The love for digital invoice processing is sustainable

Invoices inevitably arrive in every company - day after day. Financial accountants who process hundreds of invoices every day are therefore often preceded by a reputation for strength of character. Over the years, they have also developed a special relationship with the bulky medium of paper, as Stephan Kaup, project manager for optimizations in the SAP-FI area at EDEKA Minden-Hannover, noted when he presented solution approaches for process optimization in accounting:

„They have grown fond of paper of course. That's why a large number of employees were also skeptical whether electronic processing would bring any benefits at all."

Especially the skeptics could be convinced of the advantages of the solution AFI Invoice of AFI Solutions. In the first test run, the invoices were scanned in parallel to the usual paper-based daily processes, the recognized data was transferred to SAP-FI in a test system and processed and posted on a trial basis.

An eight-week test phase was terminated by the department after half of the time with a request to go live. The team around Stephan Kaup had not expected such positive feedback and the desire to change previous work processes so quickly. Accordingly, the system was finally integrated and has since been running in the first selected companies and departments.

Optimization of business processes

Due to tough competition and further expansion efforts, EDEKA Minden-Hannover always sees the need to optimize existing business processes. When Stephan Kaup was entrusted with a finance project in 2005, he was faced with the task of checking improvements in the handling of vendor invoices for 440,000 invoices and 3,700 cost center responsibles annually.

Initial analysis: stacks of paper and tedious processes

In view of this order of magnitude, little consideration could be given to individual working methods that have been adapted over many years and which oriented on how to handle paper anyway. Instead, a binding, uniform and comprehensible process standard was to be implemented. During the process analysis, some shortcomings quickly became apparent.

Many slow processes by mail made processing difficult. Some paper invoices or workbooks were simply lost. Invoices were also processed twice due to lack of transparency. The processing time for an invoice was at least one week and, in some cases, up to five months. An IT solution was now to bring significant improvements.

High standards, skepticism and a convincing project

In early 2006, the leading solution providers for invoice processing were invited to present their solutions. In the end, the product of AFI Solutions, AFI Invoice with the partner 4brands Reply could convince the pre-selection by SAP know-how and profound knowledge of the trade's business processes.

At the start of the project, the time requirements were ambitiously specified. Within four weeks, the SER® scanning environment, the SER® recognition solution and, finally, the SAP and Windows® servers were set up and adapted before test operations were started. Only five weeks later, the system went live as requested by the specialist department.

Due to the modular solution structure and the standard interfaces, the solution AFI Invoice was integrated into the existing infrastructure to SAP-ERP, with SER® archive and Lotus Notes® mail system without modifications. This was of benefit to the low consumption of time and resources in the project.

New process improvements pay off immediately

Invoices are now only processed electronically. All pending volumes are visible at a glance, expiring discount periods can be identified at an early stage and are always maintained.

Workflows for approval are conveniently initiated and the communication between the parties involved runs smoothly if queries should arise during invoice verification. Responsibilities are clearly visible, which avoids double processing. A workflow log is created for each process, which guarantees traceability - even long after posting. An immediately noticeable acceleration with increased clarity was achieved in this way with less personnel expenses.

Due to AFI's dedication to invoice processing, EDEKA can now dedicate itself even more to the love of food, as the free resources will now be used for further expansion in the Minden-Hannover regional area.

EDEKA

EDEKA Minden-Hannover, with a turnover of 8.72 billion euros and around 73,061 employees (including independent retailers), is one of seven regional companies in Germany. The business area stretches from the Dutch to the Polish border, it includes part of East Westphalia-Lippe and almost completely Lower Saxony, Bremen, Saxony-Anhalt, Berlin and Brandenburg.

Two thirds of the 1,521 stores are in the hands of independent retailers. The quality of the products is ensured by five of the company's own bakery production plants and two meat plants.

www.edeka-verbund.de

AFI SOLUTIONS

AFI Solutions GmbH is a leading solution provider for the digitization and optimization of document processes around SAP. The solutions cover the entire purchase-to-pay and order-to-cash process.

AFI is the only software manufacturer on the market that offers everything from a single source: With the RedPaperCenter as a managed service, companies can easily outsource the digitization of a wide variety of paper documents. In process optimization, AFI scores with SAP-integrated software solutions. The cloud-based DocumentHub as software as a service (= SaaS) completes the unique product portfolio.

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