

BÜHLER AG TRIUMPHS OVER MANUAL INVOICE PROCESSING WITH ANYDOC® INVOICE

At A Glance



Industry

Manufacturing

Customer Profile

The Bühler Group employs more than 6,100 people and manufactures plant equipment for the food processing, die casting, laminate and paint industries. Bühler also offers financial services, training, research and development, analysis and customer service.

Challenge

Most of the 600 invoices that arrive daily by mail are not in a standardized format. The manual process to check and capture invoice information was lengthy, slowing data from being entered into the SAP system. Because Bühler uses more than one accounting application, they needed a solution that would easily integrate with each of them. The automated solution needed the capability to handle multiple languages, check sales tax conformity and recognize intra-community invoices with corresponding tax rates and charges.

Solution

Bühler selected AnyDocINVOICE to capture invoice data and automate checking for sales tax conformity. Bühler has been able to alleviate tedious work and increase the value of its SAP Business Workflow system by getting accurate invoice data into it faster.

Benefits

- Data entry errors prevented by eliminating manual data entry.
- Accounting journal entries made automatically when invoice line items match the corresponding purchase order.
- Sales tax charges can be automatically checked to ensure accuracy and lighten staff workload.
- As a result, manual verification and plausibility checks are no longer necessary. This lightens the staff's workload, speeds incoming invoice processing, and raises quality levels.
- The incoming invoice journal within SAP gives Bühler AG a timely overview of its financial commitments and increased control of SAP Business Workflow.

At the Bühler AG Technology Group, invoice data goes straight into the SAP system thanks to AnyDocINVOICE.

There's just so many of them—far too many to be able to key them all in manually. Every day, the technology company Bühler AG, headquartered in the Swiss town of Uzwil, receives between 550 and 600 invoices. Since mid-February 2006 the accounts payable and accounts receivable department, managed by Armando Müller, has been working with AnyDocINVOICE. Now, both the manual keying of the data and the time-intensive validation processes—including checking the sales tax conformity—is a thing of the past. “We can't stop the invoices coming,” laughs Müller. “But at least we're saving loads of time and money processing them.”


In his department, six to seven people work with pretty complex incoming invoices. To support them, Bühler AG had spent some time looking for a more modern solution. The company already had SAP R/3 in place together with its Business Workflow system. The SAP Business Workflow was set up by the Swiss company itelligence AG, a contractor who was also involved in the search for a suitable invoice data capture system and its subsequent integration with SAP.

Imaginative Invoice Design

The project team at Bühler AG took a close look at three OCR solutions and saw them in action at the offices of each vendor's reference customers. After analyzing all relevant points, the team decided unanimously on AnyDocINVOICE. The decision was based on a wide range of criteria, all of which AnyDocINVOICE fulfilled, without exception. One of these was AnyDocINVOICE's system architecture, which offered top-flight data and document security as well as a high level of flexibility for the integration with SAP and SAP Business Workflow. Another reason for the decision was the product's versatility in being able to automatically capture header data and line items in different languages with its free-form capture capability, and check them against purchase order data.

“With template-based solutions you have to spend a lot of time defining document formats, whereas AnyDoc's freeform capability more or less adapts itself,” says Armando Müller of Bühler AG.

This is a decisive advantage for the group, which makes production machinery for the food, paint, laminates, and high-pressure die-casting industries and supplies them all over the world. Although the head office receives a lot of standardized invoices from the largest suppliers, Müller says there are a huge number that are all different from one another. Some arrive by fax, but most come in the mail. “We want to introduce electronic invoices too,” he confides.



“AnyDocINVOICE can run plausibility tests to calculate differing rates and amounts of sales tax and to check for sales tax conformity. . .”

Müller adds that the optical character recognition and formatting of the information for accounting was already a big step forward in automating the work. For example, AnyDocINVOICE can autonomously recognize additional expenses, such as hazard bonus charges and express shipping, and hand them off to the SAP system as a separate accounting entry. In addition, AnyDocINVOICE can run plausibility tests to calculate differing rates and amounts of sales tax and to check for sales tax conformity. Bühler AG has offices in several European countries, each of which is registered within the corresponding country, where they are able to charge sales tax.

Among its acquisitions, Bühler AG acquired the German company Miag Mühlenbau und Industrie GmbH in Braunschweig in 1972, together with its eleven subsidiaries. Richard Frisse GmbH in Bad Salzufflen was added in 1989 along with Bindler & Co. KG in Bergneustadt in 2001. In 2003 Bühler acquired the dispersion and micro wet grinding technology division of Draiswerke GmbH in Mannheim, and in 2004 the twin-screw extruder unit of Theyson Maschinenbau GmbH in Salzgitter.

It used to be a real struggle to capture the so-called tax-free intra-community delivery invoices (between companies in different European Union countries) together with their business rules and records and the parties involved. Now, AnyDocINVOICE makes light work of it all.

Putting an End to Manual Checks

Bühler AG makes a distinction between materials procurement invoices (MM invoices in SAP jargon) which are verified against purchase orders before being entered in the accounting system, and invoices without a corresponding purchase order that are entered in the SAP system by financial accounting staff. Describing the process, Müller says, “Now the invoices are already pre-captured and pre-registered before they arrive in the SAP system.” This is because the validation against purchase orders and sales tax conformity checks are executed automatically with AnyDocINVOICE. Müller’s staff only needs to intervene in the workflow for particularly difficult invoice checks. The invoices themselves are then archived automatically in SAP and linked with the corresponding transaction.

Bühler staff found it easy to get used to the new processes. One reason for this was the competence of the teams from itelligence and AnyDoc who helped staff create an invoice entry journal within SAP. Another reason was that the project partners adopted a learning-by-doing approach, making it unnecessary for staff to attend a training course. As Müller puts it, “I’m convinced this was the right way of doing things.”

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