Expandable and Internationally Tested: The Invoice Workflow at Hansgrohe

hansgrohe

Hansgrohe AG from Schiltach, Germany has long been recognized as an international leader in innovation in the sanitary sector. Founded in 1901 in the Black Forest by Hans Grohe, the mixer and shower specialist is represented today with ten production facilities on three different continents and branches in 37 countries, making it one of the few global players in the sanitary industry. The sanitary specialist has achieved an IT system that is highly standardized and works to ensure a consistent international software landscape. The ERP system used by Hansgrohe relies on SAP (ECC 6.0). The system is run in 25 countries and in 20 languages, from Atlanta to Shanghai, from Malmö to Cape Town.

International references
Experience in international implementation was among the decisive criteria for the company when deciding which new software vendor to use for the setup of automated incoming invoice processing. Before this point in time, Hansgrohe had already had the practice of scanning invoices and entering them into an electronic release workflow, though a third-party solution outside of the SAP standard was used for this.

"This was not an ideal state," says Natalja Herdt, SAP FI consultant in the Hansgrohe IT team. "First and foremost, we wanted a more generic, expandable solution with OCR recognition that is 100% SAP-integrated. xSuite offered the solution that matched our needs best and was able to produce international references, a factor that was especially important for us."

Furthermore, as the four-eye principle is ensured through the system, the xSuite workflow fulfills compliance requirements in invoice processing. The system has been in operational use since the beginning of June 2011. The first rollout location was the headquarters of the mixer and shower specialist, where installation was performed for company codes that already existed in Germany. In the first two months, just under 20,000 invoices were processed digitally; Hansgrohe projects a total of 160,000 documents a year with a rising tendency considering the growth of business.

Company:
Web: www.hansgrohe.de
Sector: Industry
Headquarters: Schiltach, Germany

xSuite® solution
• SAP-integrated invoice processing

Decisive Arguments for xSuite
• Generic, SAP-certified, and expandable solution
• OCR recognition 100% SAP-integrated
• International customer references
• The workflow fulfills compliance requirements in invoice processing

Systems integration
• SAP ERP and existing optical archive system

xSuite
It's simple. It's digital.

The complete xSuite with the components Capture, Interface, and Invoice are all in use for Hansgrohe's scanning, document capture, data transfer, and invoice workflow processes, as well as for the connection to the existing optical archive.

Company codes

The invoices are centrally scanned into the inbox; during this process, all information relevant to the invoice, including the company code, is captured. The advantages offered by data capture components represent a significant benefit to Hansgrohe Accounting, which previously had to sort the invoices according to company code by hand as their OCR components did not recognize these items automatically. xSuite Capture validates the captured data within SAP along with the master and transaction data, thus guaranteeing high recognition quality. Invoice information is brought out in color on the invoice image and can be transferred to the SAP document. The SAP NetWeaver-certified xSuite Interface then directs the invoice images and data to SAP, checking them for completeness as well.

"For us as SAP application consultants, an SAP-integrated solution is helpful because release changes of the ERP system are so much easier. Third-party tools always require time-consuming adaptation to a new SAP version – for this, we always need allocate a large number of consulting days. This is not necessary with a solution that is directly integrated into SAP", says Natalja Herdt, SAP FI Consultant in the Hansgrohe IT team

Visibility in SAP from the beginning

The system files a tamper-proof version of the invoice image via SAP ArchiveLink in the electronic archive it is connected to, ultimately initiating the approval and release process in xSuite Invoice. The xSuite solution works with technical and parked documents. While in the past the approved document was not transferred to SAP until completion of the workflow, the invoices are now visible in the vendor accounts as soon as they have been created, though they have not yet been released. The level of transparency relating to liabilities has been raised significantly, and there is no longer a need for anyone to search different locations for an invoice that is already circulating in-house.

"This is one of the great advantages of the SAP-integrated xSuite solution," says Rolf Baumann, Head of Business Processes at Hansgrohe AG. "The AP clerks from the accounting department remain in a single environment from the beginning. Unnecessary data transfers have been discontinued, and the accountants have a single point of orientation. They only need to search for invoices in one application – in SAP." xSuite provides this user convenience in the form of an invoice overview with a functionality that is both efficient and easy to use.

386 approvers and releasers are now connected to the workflow of the company codes in Germany. All incoming invoices for these company codes go to the headquarters in Schiltach and from there are fed into the workflows of the respective departments.

Release workflow via Web portal or SAP

The releasers have the freedom to work either directly in SAP when examining and releasing invoices, or via the Hansgrohe Web portal. This parallel access offers flexibility. Managers especially prefer to access the portal. Along with vendor invoices, customer documents are also processed through xSuite Invoice. This requirement of Hansgrohe, not encountered on a daily basis, has also been covered with the xSuite solution.

xsuite.com

xSuite
It's simple. It's digital.