J. Schneider Elektrotechnik GmbH, located in Offenburg in Germany's Southwest, is a powerful high-tech producer of industrial power supplies. The company, one of Germany’s 100 most innovative, provides the ideal power supply for each application case. The range of services includes solutions that are designed for serial production as well as for customers. The Offenburg company now relies on enterprise content management and has jump-started their accounting system with ELO professional.

J. Schneider Elektrotechnik GmbH has been family-owned since its founding and proudly looks back at 70 years of company history. The small trade company developed into a global industrial company that today employs 300 staff at two locations in Offenburg. The company management and staff are a large family that is distinguished by a cooperative partnership. This is a philosophy that Karl Schneider anchored firmly in the company many years ago. With 30 trainees, the company also takes on responsibility and guarantees the future.

“In ELO, we have a future-proof solution that saves us and our environment a large amount of paper.”

Dipl.-Ing. (FH) Werner Fraas, Head IT/Organization, J. Schneider Elektrotechnik GmbH
Overview

Country: Germany
Sector: Electrical engineering

Company

J. Schneider Elektrotechnik GmbH, based in Offenburg, is a high-performance industrial power supply manufacturer. The company is active worldwide with around 300 employees.

Challenge

The accounting and purchasing departments are housed in two separate locations. This results in large amounts of paper, work and cost overhead with long processing times.

Solution

Networking of the locations with a dedicated fiber glass line (Ethernet Connect) and introduction of the ELOprofessional ECM system from ELO Digital Office GmbH.

Benefits

- Location-independent data access
- Accelerated invoice processing
- No more extensive control system, to avoid cash discount losses
- Cost, time and work savings
- No unnecessary paper copies

Quality as a benchmark and company philosophy

The company was founded in 1939 by Johann Schneider as a repair factory for electric machines. The trade-oriented company initially only employed a handful of employees; today, the repair factory is one of the market leaders in Baden-Wurttemberg.

Today’s senior director Karl Schneider joined the company in 1957 and expanded the range of products little by little: 1965 manufacturing of switchboards and controls, 1968 transformer manufacturing, 1976 devices for secure and constant power supply, 1982 established a development department, 1992 developments in the area of high voltage power supply, and finally founding of a subsidiary in the USA in the year 2012.

Today, J. Schneider Elektrotechnik GmbH – with locations in Offenburg and its subsidiary – is a specialist for industrial power supplies. The company’s development has been influenced significantly by the willingness to pursue new developments, high-tech know-how and forward-thinking acting in changing markets.

Together with customers into the future

The constant and consistent orientation towards the needs of its customers all over the world is a guarantor for the future for J. Schneider Elektrotechnik GmbH. The company was split into three business areas to be closer to the customers:

- Transformers
- Service centers for electric drives
- Interruption-free power supplies and high voltage power supplies

J. Schneider Elektrotechnik GmbH places great emphasis on continuously high quality standards for its products. To guarantee this level, a quality assurance system is used that provides for consistent quality for the development, construction, procurement, manufacturing/testing, sales and service. No Schneider product leaves the company without an incoming check and documentation.
Paper en masse
The three business areas of J. Schneider Elektrotechnik GmbH each have a separate purchasing department due to the highly differentiated materials needed. In addition, there is also strategic purchasing for coordination purposes.

The problem: The purchasing departments and accounting departments are not at the same location. In 2012 alone, about 20,000 multipage incoming invoices were checked by hand (for § 14 UStG (German sales tax law) and comparison of data from the ERP system). The allocation to an account/approval had to be entered in the stamp field of the original invoice.

The purchasing departments created invoice copies for internal filing since accessing the originals was difficult due to the physical separation. Additional copies were created for the project folder for components that were used in projects. Technical experts often made copies for their own archive in addition.

Long invoice throughput times
Both the copies and filing resulted in an extremely high paper, cost and work overhead. Long throughput times and long paths led to delayed booking and payment. Therefore, an extensive control system was in place to avoid cash discount losses. Incoming invoices without an order reference had to also be approved by the particular department or management in addition to the purchasing department, with corresponding delays.

The solution: J. Schneider Elektrotechnik GmbH linked both locations with a dedicated fiber glass line and introduced the ELOprofessional enterprise content management system.

ELO highly adjustable
The decision for ELOprofessional was made, according to the Head of IT/Organization, Dipl.-Ing. (FH) Werner Fraas, since "ELO is an out-of-the-box solution that can be adjusted flexibly thanks to script programming."

An IT specialist and ELO Business Partner first created a technical specification in November 2011 and then held a workshop. ELOprofessional was installed in December 2011 and the test phase was already completed at the beginning of January 2013.

Future-proof solution
Mr. Fraas is excited: "We quickly achieved a high degree of automation for processing incoming invoices and the open interfaces make it possible to quickly adjust to changed processes. In ELO, we have a future-proof solution that saves us and our environment a large amount of paper."

All paper invoices are now scanned in the mailbox and forwarded directly to the accounting department via DocXtractor. The same goes for invoices that arrive by e-mail or fax. The DocXtractor Analyser automatically checks the invoices according to §14 UStG (German sales tax law) and compares everything with data from the Baan ERP system (Infor ERP LN), therefore, creditor master data, order dates, receipts of goods, etc. DocXtractor also assigns the business areas for later workflow control and initial account assignment according to the item data and account assignment rules. These rules were implemented with script programming in DocXtractor.

In the accounting department, the automatically recognized information is confirmed by an employee and corrected, if necessary, using the DocXtractor Verifier.
Automatically back and forth
Going from the inbox to accounting to the purchasing departments and back. Fully automatic.

“The ELO workflow has significantly sped up incoming invoice processing and has made it more transparent.”

Dipl.-Ing. (FH) Werner Fraas, Head IT/Organization, J. Schneider Elektrotechnik GmbH

The workflow controls the filing process
Then, the invoices are forwarded to the purchasing departments of the business areas by ELO Workflow and DocXtractor export. In the purchasing departments, only the initial account assignment must be confirmed and corrected in individual cases. Then, the invoices return to the accounting department via a workflow to create booking entries and then for final filing with a booking number in the keywording fields.

Summary and outlook
Thanks to ELOprofessional ECM, J. Schneider Elektrotechnik GmbH has paperless processing of incoming invoices. Paper filing was basically ended and the individual departments no longer make copies. Thanks to the automation, invoices are checked faster and more accurately and price differences can therefore be recognized reliably.

Accessing documents filed revision-controlled is possible independent of location and at the press of a button. This significantly reduces the work, time and cost effort while improving customer service and employee motivation.

Due to uncertainty in tax law, the original invoices are still archived in boxes after scanning for now, but they will be destroyed in the near future.