

Document and information management
Canon CEE



AUTOMATION HELPS CANON CEE ACHIEVE BUSINESS PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS

Canon CEE initiated organizational process enhancements in order to fully automate and gain control and achieve business process improvements.

Canon CEE is an organization managing 25 countries, that is why fast information exchange is crucial to keep productivity and efficiency of administrative processes high. The challenge was to make business processes in finance and marketing more streamlined, transparent, and aligned with modern office requirements. The goal was to implement an automated workflow by using Canon's own solution Therefore, which would help gain greater control over marketing and advertising spending through an automated authorization process.

Company name: Canon CEE

Activity: Imaging solutions

Established: 1994

Location: Vienna, Austria

Services: Consumer and professional imaging products and print and document imaging solutions for small and medium businesses.

Website: www.canon-cee.com

Objectives

Improvement of business processes to gain better control over marketing spend through fully standardized and automated document authorization process.

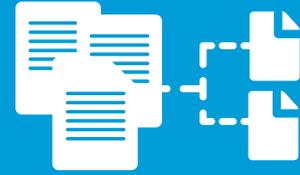
Challenges

- Overcome manual and time-consuming document approval processes
- Enable invoicing with audit trail and status overview
- Fast, monitorable processing
- Traceability of documents and search capabilities

Approach

To enable automated processes and gain better control over document processing, Canon CEE implemented the Therefore Information Management software.

Canon



Digital workflow enables complete overview of business processes.

Overview

Canon CEE is the regional sales organization of Canon Europe for Central and South East Europe, Central Asia, and the Caucasus, employing more than 130 people across the region. It is responsible for twenty-five countries in which Canon's operations are mostly supported by subsidiaries or representative offices.

Because most of their marketing activities are approved centrally but managed and implemented locally, the processes of paper-based authorization and invoicing had become more and more challenging – mostly with delays in processing tasks, mistakes, document loss and lack of status overview.

“At Canon CEE more than 1,300 invoices and more than 200 Requests for Authorization (RFAs) are processed per year,” explained Stephan Adametz, financial controller at Canon CEE. “The manual approval process kept us from having a quick overview of paid, unpaid, and booked invoices, as well as approved authorizations and those still in progress.”

Managing twenty-five countries means that a lot of requests for services from vendors are generated. The subsidiaries used to send these to the Canon CEE marketing and finance department by e-mail, and then they were signed by various approvers in marketing before being passed on to the finance department. The number of documents was enormous, prioritizing tasks was difficult, and tracking paid invoices was even more challenging.

This process involved multiple documents as evidence of marketing activity, usually sent by e-mail but bound to the same request by a Request for Approval (RFA) number that was used to justify the expense. To prevent documents from being stored in dispersed locations, Canon CEE would benefit from a central repository storage allocated exclusively for this kind of material. It would be used foremost as proof of compliance with marketing guidelines, and furthermore also for taxation authorities.



Therefore has helped the finance department to significantly reduce paperwork, and gives us an instant overview over the status of invoices.

Stephan Adametz, financial controller at Canon CEE





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Therefore saves time, it's very reliable and it's fully transparent. It just helps us to keep our things organized.

Pawel Kita, Marketing Communications Manager B2B at Canon CEE

“Having control over all these documents had become complicated, because they were sometimes overlooked, some approval processes had to be repeated, and it was simply time consuming. Ten to fifteen percent of employees' time was spent on manual sign-off, identifying payment status, and looking for evidence. It was imperative to avoid late payments to suppliers that could lead to incidental expenses and complaints,”



explained Pawel Kita, Marketing Communications Manager B2B at Canon CEE. “For regional headquarters, it is crucial that communication between the HQ, local Canon offices and suppliers is straightforward and reliable, however managing it all through e-mail has proved inadequate.”

As for the RFA, which is a form that must be completed to gain authorization for various types of external spending, status tracking was challenging because the process required approval from multiple people and copies were shared by e-mail. An automated, centrally-managed solution seemed to be the only option.

In-house solution

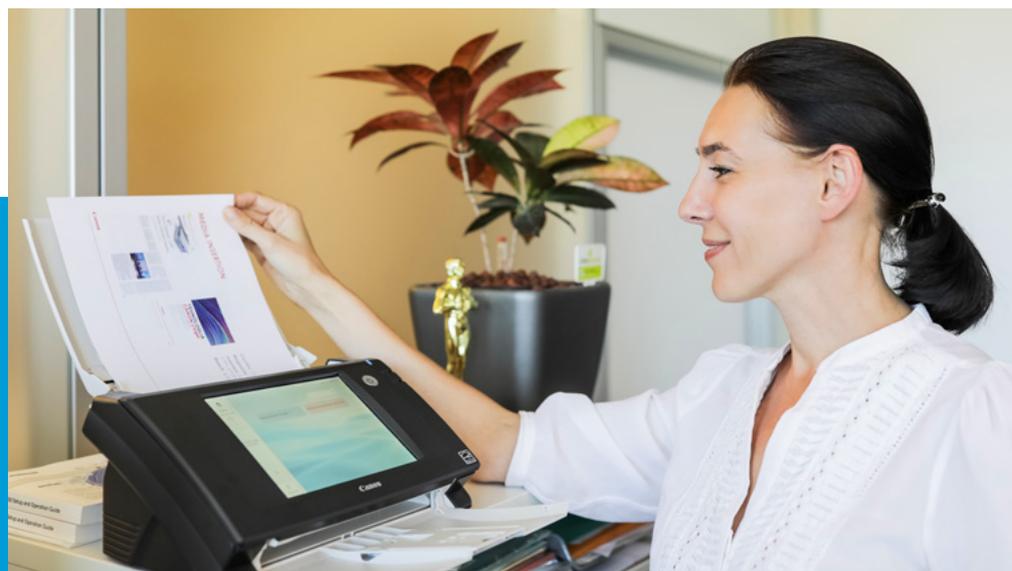
The idea to implement an automated digital workflow solution was initiated by Hermann Anderl, Managing Director of Canon CEE, with the goal of improving efficiency and productivity of the departments that would most likely benefit from such a solution.

The Therefore Information Management software was selected because it comes from a Canon company and offers features that help achieve higher productivity, lower document-related operating costs, real-time and secure web access to company information, and enhanced business process management. Its purpose is to simplify the way employees work.

After the initial brief a work group was put together, led by Saso Bende, Solution Business Consultant at Canon CEE: “When implementing a workflow solution. This initial preparation took time, but the manual and paper-based processes were replaced by an automated workflow in a matter of months.” The solution was fully operational by December 2015.

The implementation involved close cooperation between three Canon CEE departments: IT, finance, and marketing. IT provided much-needed expertise and access to back-office systems, without which the process automation would not have been possible.

“Our employees are helping to grow and develop our business through innovation. We are constantly encouraging them to collaborate



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Therefore's automated workflows changed and simplified the way we do business. We already plan to expand it to other departments and pursue the ultimate goal of digitizing all business processes.

Hermann Anderl, Managing Director of Canon CEE

more actively across functions and teams by sharing knowledge and promoting engagement. Although it was a small step, implementing Therefore led to changing the way we do business," explained Hermann Anderl, Managing Director of Canon CEE.

Faster, efficient invoice processing

Finance department paperwork has been reduced considerably, and documents are now digitally accessible to everybody from everywhere. The flexibility of Therefore is useful for very specific financial procedures that can be initiated and automated within the tool, such as splitting invoice amounts by country.

All digital invoices and proofs are received through a unique e-mail address, and are then put into Therefore to initiate processing. The system tracks every activity from the document creation stage up to final approval and possible reopening at later stages.

"The adoption of Therefore is very fast, because it provides instant results and benefits for the users. It saves time, it's transparent and reliable. It helps us keep things organized," commented Pawel Kita.

Benefits

- Standardized automated document processing across Canon CEE
- Increased employee productivity and reduced processing time by 15%
- The reviewing status can be tracked at all times
- Easy access to payment status
- Pre-defined approvers ensure the document is always reviewed by the correct people
- Mandatory fields in forms ensure all required information is provided
- Full audit trail and archiving



A system that grows with company needs

Their excellent results with Therefore have prompted Canon CEE to extend the solution to other business departments. In order to go paperless and reduce processing time, they plan to automate the process of regular invoices and expenses.

Purchase order automation would also benefit supply chain managers because it would free them from manual processes and improve efficiency.

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