

SCHÄFER SHOP AND SCHÄFER WERKE CREATE EFFICIENCIES IN DOCUMENT PROCESSING

Two Schäfer companies are now using the smart INVOICE and smart ORDER products, which deliver AI-based processing of incoming mail and technical documentation – creating outstanding efficiencies in document processing.



SCHÄFER SHOP.

CUSTOMER

Schäfer Werke | Schäfer Shop

COUNTRY

Deutschland

HIGHLIGHT

Significant gains in efficiency and quality in the purchase-to-pay process

PRODUCTS

smart INVOICE | smart ORDER

CHALLENGES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF INCOMING MAIL AND DOCUMENTATION

The companies Schäfer Werke and Schäfer Shop operate independently of each other in diversified businesses worldwide.

While Schäfer Werke is a leading steel processing company with state-of-the-art production sites in Germany and the Czech Republic, Schäfer Shop offers its customers high-quality furniture and equipment for offices, warehouses, and plants in seven different countries. Both companies use a common technology platform delivering synergies.

Just as diverse as the products and services of both companies, are the information and documents they process. The IT team face a wide range of requirements from both the manufacturing industry and the retail business, so the solutions need to be as universal as possible and suitable for SMEs. The digitization of their business processes has delivered clear benefits for both customers and employees.

CHALLENGES

- ✓ Different applications require a flexible and universal platform
- ✓ Wide range of processes and document classes
- ✓ General mail inbox with more than 20 document classes
- ✓ Order acceptance is particularly time-critical for the retail business
- ✓ A high volume of documents: More than 330,000 incoming invoices and 150,000 orders per year
- ✓ A mix of technical, commercial, and administrative documents
- ✓ International documents with different languages and currencies
- ✓ Integration into the SAP system landscape with around 2 million customer master records

FROM INCOMING INVOICES TO ORDERS AND MATERIAL INSPECTION CERTIFICATES

The processing of incoming documents and receipts plays a central role in both businesses. The first area to be identified was the processing of numerous incoming invoices in the purchase-to-pay process. Later in the project, the team planned to extend the processing to Schäfer Shop's entire incoming paper mail. Order acceptance documents in the order-to-cash process also offered an opportunity to improve the speed and quality of processing.

Later, Schäfer Werke added technical document classes such as material inspection certificates. On the system requirements side, it was clear that a connection to SAP as the leading system for the core processes was also required.

A UNIVERSAL PLATFORM

To create synergies, Schäfer's IT team looked specifically for a universal platform that could potentially solve all the challenges around managing documents. It was essential it had excellent capabilities in actual document capture and reading - and that all subsequent steps in the process, such as plausibility checks, validation, and individual processing - were adequately supported.

Where possible, an incoming document should only be touched once, if it cannot be processed immediately by machine. Schäfer always wanted to focus on process improvements and optimize the interaction with the SAP system.

After exploring the market, Schäfer found an optimal fit for all cognitive process automation tasks in the smart INVOICE and smart ORDER products from Insiders Technologies.

MULTI-CHANNEL INBOX PROCESSING, ORDER-TO-CASH AND PURCHASE-TO-PAY AUTOMATION

Today, for the entire incoming mail of Schäfer Shop in Germany and Switzerland - across all channels such as e-mails, fax, and paper - the smart components from Insiders Technologies recognize each individual business transaction



"It was important to us to obtain a flexible platform that would enable us to cover all current and future document handling requirements. With Insiders Technologies' product range, we feel perfectly equipped: in both purchase-to-pay and order management, we have excellent solutions - the best of both worlds, so to speak. So far, we have not reached the platform's limits and do not expect to."

PATRICK SCHUSTER

SOLUTION ARCHITEKT
DIGITAL PROCESS INTEGRATION,
SCHÄFER SHOP GROUP GMBH & CO.KG

BENEFITS FOR THE CUSTOMER

- ✓ New digital support channel opened quickly
- ✓ Flexible solution for digital communication and service
- ✓ Reduction of postage and printing costs
- ✓ Digitizing documents saves paper handling and scanning
- ✓ Modern image as an innovative partner

and route them accordingly. Approximately 150,000 orders per year are processed directly with smart ORDER.

smart INVOICE now captures and validates around 250,000 incoming invoices annually and forwards them to the approval workflow or fully automatic processing.

Approximately 120,000 further documents are distributed across twenty other document classes – such as general customer communication, enquiries, and order confirmations. They are also processed following defined policies.

TECHNICAL DOCUMENTS CAN BE PROCESSED AUTOMATICALLY

Similarly, account payable processing for around 80,000 invoices annually was implemented for Schäfer Werke in both Germany and the Czech Republic. Enthused by the possibilities, Schäfer also started digitizing technical documents. About 40,000 factory and material inspection certificates from its suppliers reach the company every year. These must also be validated and assigned - a process that is now largely automated - thanks to the universal capabilities of the Insiders platform.



"The cooperation with Insiders is excellent. We have a defined single contact person as a sparring partner for our ideas, who reliably advises us. The project management is extremely professional. So far, all projects have exceeded expectations - on time and within budget."

PATRICK SCHUSTER

SOLUTION ARCHITEKT
DIGITAL PROCESS INTEGRATION,
SCHÄFER SHOP GROUP GMBH & CO.KG



PROCESS MONITORING MAKES TEMPORARY PEAKS AND TROUGHS EASY TO MANAGE

With the digitization of document processing, management of the processes improved significantly. For example, incoming orders can now be closely monitored by up-to-date reporting every 15 minutes. If, for example, there are load peaks due to newsletter or catalog mailings, these are detected early and can be managed more easily through the workflow. There are also better evaluation options for the response in the individual channels.

The employees at Schäfer are enthusiastic about these new solutions, as the Insiders products have taken care of tedious routine tasks such as data entry, plausibility checks, validation, and forwarding for further processing.

SUCCESSFUL COOPERATION ON PROJECTS

Schäfer regularly uses the professional services of Insiders Technologies to implement new projects. Insiders has a dedicated contact who understands the Schäfer business and has direct access to experts for detailed questions, so any new ideas can be evaluated together quickly. If an idea is agreed, Insiders Technologies calculates the expected effort and offers the implementation as a project or supports implementation by the customer.

INTERNATIONAL ROLLOUT AND FURTHER EXPANSION PLANNED

Through AI-based automation of incoming mail and document processing, Schäfer Shop and Schäfer Werke have achieved huge gains in efficiency. Schäfer IT is also planning to introduce complete incoming mail processing in Austria. It will also be possible to automate the processing of more document classes in commercial and technical areas using the Insiders platform.

KEY FACTS

- ✓ Satisfied customers due to fast and accurate order acceptance
- ✓ Up to 85% fully automated processing of fields, generates efficiency and speed
- ✓ Significant gains in efficiency and quality in the purchase-to-pay process
- ✓ Satisfied users through reduction in routine tasks
- ✓ Continuous expansion of automation leads to more agility
- ✓ Synergy benefits across diversified business areas



SMART INVOICE: OPTIMIZED AND FAST AP PROCESSES

smart INVOICE is the standard product for automated account payable processing. It captures and validates all relevant invoice data and matches it with the corresponding order and delivery information. With smart INVOICE, structured invoice data can be exported to any process automation, accounting or ERP system - all AI-based and fully automated.

<https://insiders-technologies.com/de/p2p-automation/>

SMART ORDER: BOOSTER FOR THE ORDERING SYSTEM

smart ORDER is a proven standard product for automated order processing. It immediately captures all necessary order information and forwards missing or illegible information to a post-processor ("human-in-the-loop"). Only minor system adjustments or prior training are required, thanks to intelligent learning algorithms. smart ORDER exports the extracted data from the order to any process automation, CRM or ERP system. based and fully automated.

ABOUT SCHÄFER WERKE AND SCHÄFER SHOP

Schäfer Werke is a leading steel processing company with more than 1,000 employees at its state-of-the-art manufacturing sites in Germany and the Czech Republic. The Schäfer Shop GmbH, with 650 employees, offers customers in nine countries, high-quality furniture and equipment for offices, warehouses, and factories. The companies operate independently of each other in diversified business areas, whilst taking advantage of synergies, such as in IT.

www.schaefer-werke.de | www.schaefer-shop.de



SCHÄFER SHOP.

ABOUT INSIDERS TECHNOLOGIES GMBH

Insiders Technologies is a leading technology company and market-established software provider for Cognitive Process Automation. More than 3,000 customers from various industries rely on Insiders' innovative solutions to optimize their document-centric business processes. Based in Kaiserslautern, Germany, it is the most successful spin-off of the German Research Center for Artificial Intelligence (DFKI). It has made it its mission to transform state-of-the-art AI into tangible customer benefits. Insiders Technologies use the latest deep learning technologies and software solutions to understand heterogeneous content, extract business-relevant information, automate transactions and shorten response times. In doing so, the technological pioneering spirit and agility guarantee continuous innovations and products on the pulse of time.

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