Keeping Vital Records of the Past

Air Products uses Livelink ECM – Document Management for SAP® Solutions to record their successful legacy

Air Products and Chemicals, Inc., a Fortune 500 company with a rich legacy that spans over 60 years, is a global provider of atmospheric gases, process and specialty gases, performance materials and chemical intermediates. Their unique portfolio of products, services and solutions serve the healthcare, technology, energy, and industrial industries. With operations in more than 40 countries worldwide, and an employee base of close to 22,000, Air Products has annual revenues of approximately $10 billion.

"With Open Text, we found the perfect solution, including cost-savings associated with paper-based processes."

*Gillian Berg,
Enterprise Archiving Manager
at Air Products*

Bogged Down by Outdated Applications and Processes

Over the course of its history, Air Products' IT infrastructure evolved to meet various business requirements. As a result, issues began to surface due to a large number of old applications that had either become redundant or required significant modification when Air Products deployed an SAP system in 2003. One of the most pressing challenges was that, even though some applications were retired or made obsolete by the SAP system, the data that resided in those systems still needed to be archived for legal, internal policy, tax, and compliance purposes.

Air Products began an Application Retirement Program (APR) in 2003 to decommission all legacy applications made obsolete by their recently installed SAP system. The program was initiated to substantially reduce IT costs associated with maintaining these legacy systems, and to reduce storage costs.

To ensure the ARP's success, a number of guidelines had to be approved by the Air Products Technology and Architecture Office. Additionally, documentation needed to be created in order to describe how the data would be stored, accessed, and deleted. A comprehensive list of all achievable objects also needed to be compiled and maintained by IT in accordance with internal policies and industry regulations.

Technical guidelines posed a major problem for the Air Products IT team. For instance, the technology used for storing the data had to be independent of the original application. After all, what would happen if the original application was being removed, but access to the data was required in the future?

Air Products also needed to ensure that the archive was tamper-proof, so that archived objects could not be modified or deleted altogether. The archive environment had to be auditable and it needed to incorporate a disaster recovery component, such as long-term offsite tape storage, in order to comply with stringent industry regulations.

Document Management for SAP Solutions Creates Order

To address these critical challenges, Air Products selected Livelink ECM – Document Management *for SAP Solutions* (also sold by SAP as "SAP Document Access by Open Text") to establish standardized and centralized legacy archives. The solution was deemed to be cost-effective and complemented their SAP system because it offered a secure archiving solution that could store documents and data indefinitely while ensuring content integrity by leveraging the proven strength of the SAP NetWeaver® platform. Overall, the Document Management *for SAP Solutions* application provided a reliable foundation for Air Products' evolving file storage requirements while reducing future integration costs and protecting their existing investment in SAP technology.

Industry

Energy - Industrial Gas and Chemical Manufacturing

Customer

AIR PRODUCTS

Business Challenges

- Improve archival practices
- Reduce IT infrastructure costs
- Facilitate coexistence of SAP and legacy applications
- Mitigate compliance risks
- Improve cost-effectiveness of IT staff and resources

Business Solution

- Livelink ECM – Document Management *for SAP® Solutions* (sold by SAP as "SAP Document Access by Open Text")

Business Benefits

- Reduces legal and business compliance risks
- Reduces storage costs
- Improves data security
- Saves time - permanent staff need fewer tools and less time to access content
- Improves productivity
- Increases motivation of permanent IT staff in longer-term roles
- Reduces IT support complexity
- Improves SAP performance
- Improves company communications

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The solution was implemented ensuring easy end-user access to data and documents and used generic templates for data and documents for standardization purposes. "Enforcing program principles and processes was extremely crucial," says Gillian Berg, Enterprise Archiving Manager at Air Products. "When we set out on this project we knew we would need the best tools at our disposal if we were going to make it work. The Open Text solution provided exactly what we needed."

The biggest benefits of the Document Management for SAP Solutions system was that it could encompass all legacy archives (documents and data), it improved SAP performance, and it met all specified Air Products IT team requirements. "It was essential that we had an experienced Open Text consultant to help us build a simple but effective solution in a timely manner and that we received archiving approvals early while we made this step forward," says Berg.

Document Management for SAP Solutions offered a long-term storage and archiving solution for physical files (documents) via the Archive Server. All contextual metadata associated with the documents in the SAP database is leveraged by DocuLink™ (a component of the Document Management *for SAP Solutions* application) to generate virtual views of archived documents based on customizable criteria. In addition, Document Management for SAP Solutions uses SAP's user management, auditing, version control, and security permissions features for document access and editing, avoiding administrative duplication and lowering total cost of ownership.

The Solution at Work

Air Products chose Document Management for SAP Solutions to archive documents and data across a range of operational areas, including finance, manufacturing, and research and development. The solution also consolidated document images from other archives - including invoices,

digitized signatures and delivery notes. To date, more than 200 applications have been retired using the Open Text solution.

"Livelink ECM – Document Management *for SAP Solutions* is instrumental in Air Products' Application Retirement Program's archive approval process," says Berg. "The solution includes a form for each application to be retired, and once the strategy has been agreed upon, Open Text's solution archives all relevant data based on the corporate record retention guidelines."

In addition, Air Products uses Document Management *for SAP Solutions* for storing formatted SAP reports and scanned documents from SAP systems, which belong to joint venture partners and acquired companies.

Document Management for SAP Solutions: Improving the Entire Business Process

"With Open Text, we found the perfect solution," comments Berg, on the significantly improved business processes at Air Products – including cost-savings associated with paper-based processes."

Berg also accredits Document Management *for SAP Solutions* with freeing up considerable IT time, and reducing the need for contract staff. "Morale has improved as a result of contract staff moving to more permanent, longer-term roles," says Berg. "Staffing productivity has been improved as there are now fewer tools needed to do their jobs. The ease of the solution has meant less training time on the new systems, and less time spent searching for documents."

The success of the implementation has led to considerable cost-effectiveness for Air Products. The IT team is now accountable for retirement of applications for technological obsolescence, and for expansion and development - on top of the SAP system.

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