opentext™

Success story

Alliander N.V.

Industry
• Utilities

Solution
• OpenText™ Extended ECM for SAP® Solutions

Results

🖥 **Content quickly and easily accessible in SAP,** in context speeds processes up

📄 **Users able to reliably access latest document templates** ensuring consistency and compliance
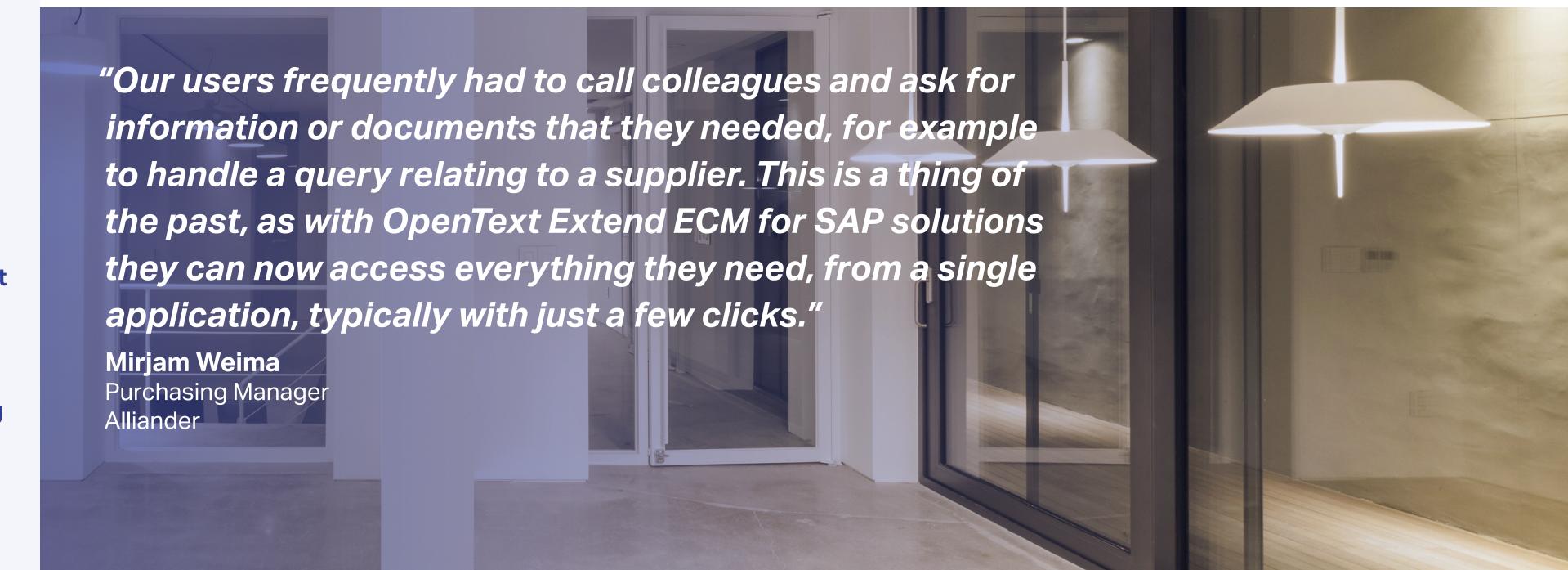
👥 **Content accessible by all** providing complete transparency across key procurement processes

Alliander powers ahead to transform procurement processes

OpenText Extended ECM for SAP Solutions provides mobility and standardization to improve customer service

"Our users frequently had to call colleagues and ask for information or documents that they needed, for example to handle a query relating to a supplier. This is a thing of the past, as with OpenText Extend ECM for SAP solutions they can now access everything they need, from a single application, typically with just a few clicks."

Mirjam Weima
Purchasing Manager
Alliander

Alliander N.V. operates energy networks that distribute gas and electricity to large parts of the Netherlands, facilitating businesses, homes, transport and recreation. The company, with headquarters in Arnhem, can trace its origins back to 1915 in Amsterdam. Around 7,170 employees work to supply 5.7 million customer connections, using their 88,000-km electricity and 42,700-km gas distribution network. In 2014, the company generated revenue of €1.7 billion.

The energy landscape is changing, with energy being produced both centrally and locally and new energy sources and applications are emerging, increasing the number of suppliers in the market. This changing landscape places new demands on Alliander's infrastructure, how it provides information and its growing number of partnerships. Alliander aims to play a facilitating role in this energy market transition. The company is helping to create an open market, supporting the sustainable energy choices of customers with easier-to-use, consumer-like processes in the regions where it operates.
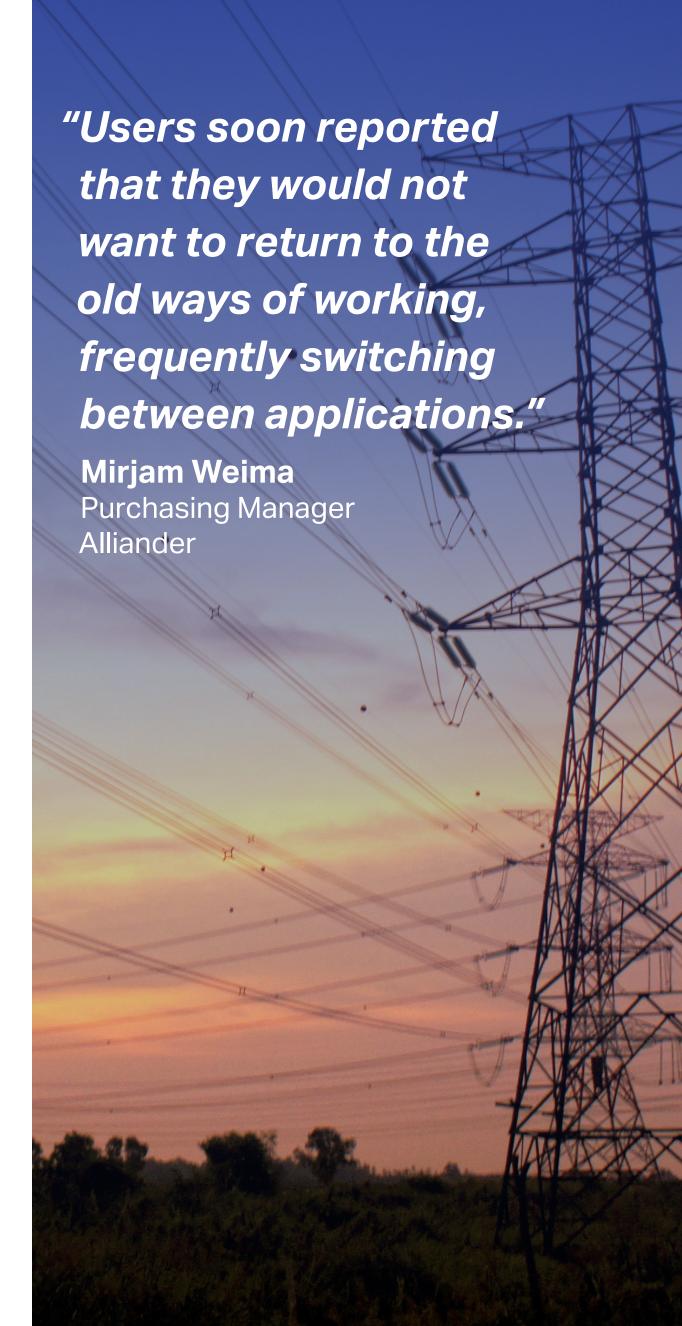
Alliander's purchasing and sourcing teams work with almost 2,000 suppliers and generates thousands of purchase orders and associated documents each month, including wholesale supply contracts and variations, supporting email and other correspondence etc. For many years, they have used OpenText™ Content Server to manage the unstructured documentation associated with their procurement processes. Content Server and their SAP system are seen as critical systems within Alliander. However, as they move to new ways of working, increasingly reliant on mobile access, being able to retrieve information anytime and anywhere, they sought to improve how OpenText and SAP work together.

Tackling goals of mobility, operational excellence and standardization

One of the challenges faced by the procurement and sourcing teams at Alliander, was when needing to access documentation relating to an order in SAP, perhaps to handle a supplier or internal query. This meant leaving the SAP environment and performing a separate search in OpenText Content Server. SAP was used solely for structured and OpenText for unstructured content. Moving between systems takes times, causes delays in their business processes, can lead to errors or omissions and ultimately affects supplier relations. They required a solution that would allow them to view all content within SAP, quickly, easily and in context of the business processes, with lower risk of errors.

"As an organization we're constantly looking for better ways of working. How can we improve work-life balance for employees, provide better customer service and meet our operational goals through standardization," stated Mirjam Weima, purchasing manager at Alliander. *"New ways of working are emerging, including increased mobility, 24/7 operation, remote working and so on. We want to provide these capabilities in relation to our purchasing practices."*

Alliander turned to OpenText as a natural evolution of their existing Content Server implementation. After discussion, it was clear that OpenText Extended ECM for SAP Solutions was the natural fit to provide seamless access to unstructured content, in context, from within SAP.

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Carefully planned implementation helps user adoption

As far as was practical, Alliander wanted to use the solution without any customization. This would help ensure the deployment was as smooth as possible, would keep costs to a minimum and make future support and maintenance a simpler task. When convening a project steering group, they involved internal stakeholders, as well as SAP, OpenText and their implementation partner, Delaware Consulting.

"We turned to Delaware due to their experience with OpenText Extended ECM and SAP. We felt they were best placed to provide the impartial advice and implementation skills we needed for a successful project," added Weima.

Starting with a small group in purchasing, Alliander used the experience gained to help them expand the solution to a wider user base. A new architecture was also designed and implemented and scaled to the broader user base with input from their internal architects, Delaware, SAP and OpenText—each contributing their specific knowledge and experience.

"Careful planning, involving many stakeholders, paid off. Users quickly appreciated the benefits of being able to access documentation from within SAP using Extended ECM. They soon reported that they would not want to return to the old ways of working, frequently switching between applications," stated Weima.

Improved transparency, consistency and service

In the past, documentation would not necessarily be visible to all that required access. With the new solution in place, more than 100 users, including 60 in purchasing, can now access all documentation relating to a supplier or a particular order.
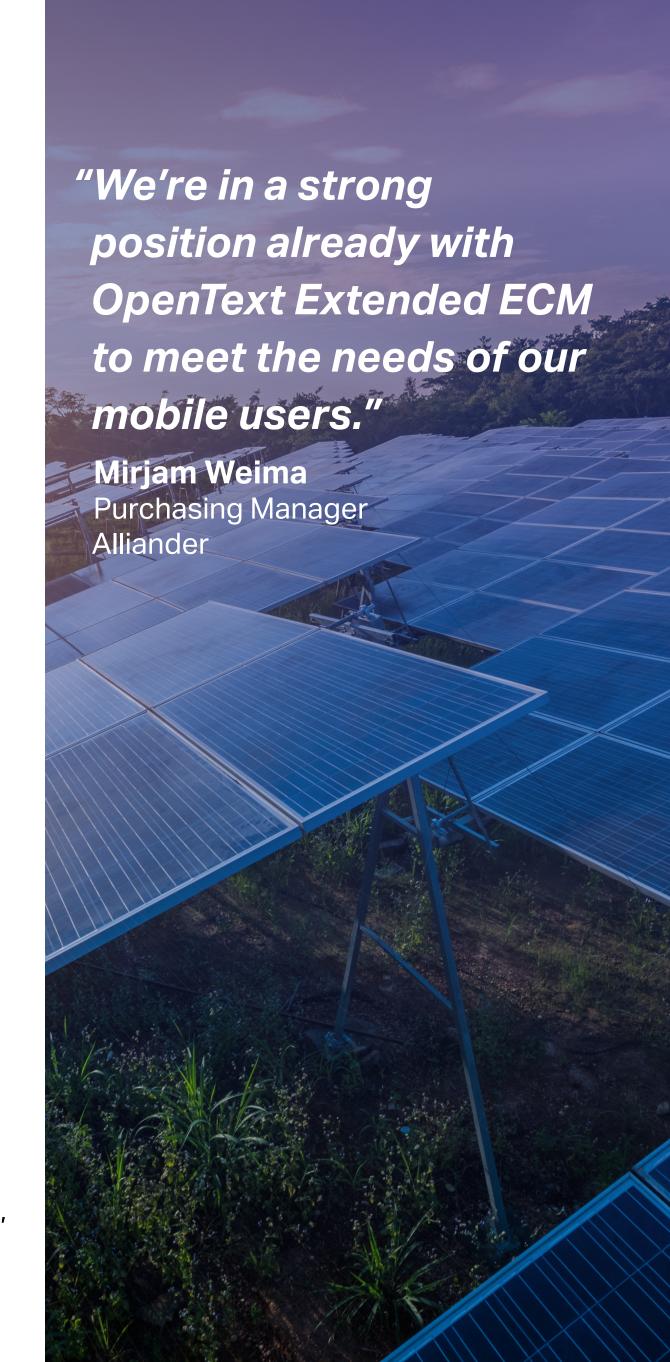
"Having complete transparency means all users can see the complete history of any purchase. Not only the order itself, but also invoices, delivery documents, even complaints and other correspondence. This helps us handle queries more quickly, efficiently and accurately, maintaining or improving relationships with our suppliers," added Weima.

Alliander is also benefitting from greater control over document templates. With everyone accessing a single source, when a new document template is released for use, it is immediately available, without delay. This ensures, for example, that the very latest purchase order terms and conditions, or contract documentation is always used. This reduces the risks associated with the use of outdated documents, such as non-compliant terms and conditions, unfavorable terms, or unenforceable contract clauses. It is now so quick and easy to access the latest document version within SAP, users no longer need nor want to keep local copies of documents.

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Ready for the future: greater mobility, smart meters and process improvement

Alliander will have to install millions of smart meters in the coming years. Each installation will involve capturing details of the location, installation, commissioning and operation of the meters. All of this content will be stored and managed in OpenText Extended ECM helping them achieve their transformation goals, ensuring their business processes are efficient,

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accurate and compliant. Alliander will be well placed to work with the evolving and growing supplier landscape, will have the agility to onboard new suppliers quickly and deal efficiently with queries as they arise. This could potentially add hundreds, if not thousands of users to the system and the rollout, once started, is likely to be fast.

Thoughts are also turning to how to improve business processes through the use of the workflow capabilities of OpenText. Also, with greater demand to access information in the field, from laptops, smart phones and tablets, Alliander is well placed to meet demand.

"We're in a strong position already with OpenText Extended ECM to meet the needs of our mobile users," said Weima. *"We're also evaluating other options with OpenText, such as OpenText™ Tempo™ Box, for secure, local synchronization of files."*

About Delaware Consulting

Delaware Consulting is a leading provider of state-of-the-art IT solutions and services based on the Microsoft, SAP and OpenText technology platforms. We are committed to the motto 'Combining strengths, delivering solutions' because we design, develop, implement and manage powerful IT solutions as a team, in close cooperation with our customers, colleagues and business partners.

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