The OpenText solution has met the objectives we set to reduce costs and improve efficiency. We’re able to handle all invoices faster, more accurately and with fewer staff.

Andrea Leva
Regional Process Owner and Systems Finance EMEA
Linde Schweisstechnik GmbH

Linde Schweisstechnik automates vendor invoice processing with OpenText

Manufacturer cuts costs, improves efficiency and increases transparency with OpenText Vendor Invoice Management for SAP Solutions

Results

- Reduced cost of invoice processing
- Increased efficiency with automatic invoice posting and purchase order matching
- Eliminated reliance on individuals for invoice approvals
- Improved transparency with ease of access to invoices for auditors, along with complete audit trail
Linde plc is a leading industrial gases and engineering company employing approximately 80,000 globally. The business has customers in more than 100 countries and revenue of approximately $28 billion USD in 2018. Linde Schweisstechnik GmbH, a subsidiary of Linde plc, headquartered in Pullach in the district of Munich in Bavaria, Germany, has grown both organically and through acquisition, with branches throughout Germany.

With a growing network of branches, many using legacy systems, the task of processing, matching to purchase orders and approving vendor invoices had become a challenge. Approval of invoices was often reliant on a single point of contact at a branch, with a physical signature required on a paper copy of an invoice. This would then be scanned and attached to an email for processing and posting in SAP, an inefficient process, prone to delays and errors. Linde Schweisstechnik, like other companies in the group, used SAP as its central finance platform and so the decision was made to seek a solution that would streamline the processing of vendor invoices.

“Our main driver in seeking a solution was to improve efficiency, whilst also considering our compliance responsibilities,” explained Andrea Leva, Regional Process Owner and Systems Finance EMEA at Linde Schweisstechnik, like other companies in the group, used SAP as its central finance platform and so the decision was made to seek a solution that would streamline the processing of vendor invoices.

“A select team was assembled to drive the project forward. It kicked off with a team consisting of representatives from finance management, project management and IT, as well as OpenText Professional Services. Vendor Invoice Management for SAP Solutions was deployed largely ‘out of the box,’ with only minor changes to process structures to meet the needs of Linde Schweisstechnik. This avoids delays by ensuring that groups are responsible for invoice approval and never a single individual.

Invoices are now captured and archived upon receipt, whether from paper or as email attachments, using the optical character recognition (OCR) capabilities of OpenText™ Intelligent Capture for SAP® Solutions that automatically extracts all header and line item details. From this point, the invoice can be viewed within SAP and there is no further reliance on paper.
Linde Schweisstechnik automates vendor invoice processing with OpenText

“Our staff have responded very positively to the OpenText solution. Frankly, we expected some teething problems, but it has been a very smooth transition. Importantly for us, there was no disruption to relationships with our suppliers. Staff no longer have to ask, phone or email their colleagues when looking for a particular invoice. They can quickly access it from their familiar on-screen environment,” explained Leva.

All invoices, once captured, are stored in a single, central archive. This means that queries can be made from any Linde Schweisstechnik location, providing further efficiency gains. Where invoices are not automatically matched to a purchase order, the individual handling the exception can easily see the invoice, purchase order and other relevant information. They can then take prompt action to move the process forward, whether they originally posted the invoice or not.

“With supplier invoices captured promptly, this has a positive effect on reporting, too. For example, at month or quarter-end accruals, we no longer have to call around to the various branches to ask if they have any unprocessed, high value invoices that we need to post accruals for,” said Leva.

Auditors can also quickly access invoices when required, rather than searching branches, filing cabinets or an individual’s desk. Also, all approvals are tracked and a full audit trail of who did what and when is always maintained.

“The OpenText solution has met the objectives we set to reduce costs and improve efficiency. We’re able to handle all invoices faster, more accurately and with fewer staff. We are now actively deploying the solution to additional branches in the coming months in addition to the nine we have successfully completed to date,” concluded Leva.