

SAP-Integrated Incoming Invoice Processing for the BBRZ Group



Austrian service provider specializing in education and occupational rehabilitation automates their internal invoice release process by introducing the xSuite solution; the web interface conveniently connects all employees to the workflow.

The BBRZ GROUP is a leading Austrian service provider focusing on education, occupational rehabilitation, and integration services. It was created by merging the Berufsförderungsinstitut Oberösterreich vocational training institute founded in 1960 and the Berufliche Bildungs- und Rehabilitationszentrum Linz educational and occupational rehabilitation centre opened in 1975. Today, the group comprises twelve affiliated companies that offer a very broad range of services from adult education and rehabilitation facilities through to services for the manufacturing industry in protected fields of work. The organizations cater to different target groups and clients, but their common mission is to foster education, employment, and occupational integration.

Because of its heterogeneous organizational structure, the BBRZ Group is present in close to 180 locations across Austria. Given this geographic spread, accounting workflows were slow and complex when all subsidiaries received documents on the local level and internally checked them before forwarding the information to the central accounting department in Linz. This structure also made it difficult to observe discount periods.

“For a long time, we had no transparency over which incoming invoices were already in the pipeline,” explains Markus Stadler, Head of Finance at BBRZ Group. This is why the SAP user started looking for a solution that provides an automated and digital release workflow within the existing ERP system. At the end of 2011, xSuite Invoice, a product component of xSuite, was identified as the most suitable solution.

Company

Web: www.bbrz-gruppe.at
Sector: Service Education and occupational rehabilitation
Headquarters: Linz, Austria

xSuite solution

Invoice processing with SAP
(xSuite Invoice)

Decisive Arguments for xSuite

- Standardized solution that seamlessly integrates with SAP
- Low training requirements for SAP users
- Invoice release via web interface

Systems integration

SAP ERP

Image source: BBRZ

**Working in an SAP-integrated manner means to avoid creating a 'parallel universe'**

Dieter Lamb, Head of the IT Specialist Systems Department, BBRZ Group: "We evaluated many standard solutions, including xSuite Invoice, to identify the most suitable technology. Many providers base their solutions on Microsoft SharePoint. But there is an inherent problem with this approach: It creates a 'parallel universe' for the administrative invoice processing staff since they are exclusively working within the SAP ERP system. But if the solution integrates with SAP, there's hardly anything that needs to be taught to the users, resulting in a very low training overhead."

According to Dieter Lamb, another key advantage of xSuite Invoice is the option of releasing invoices via a web interface. This saves the company from having to purchase additional ERP system licenses for the employees involved in the invoice release process. Normally, only procurers and accountants work directly with the SAP ERP application – and these are precisely the roles that perform administrative tasks relating to invoices. The persons in charge of releasing invoices, however, are generally not SAP users; they make up more than 90 percent of the workflow participants in the holding company and in all subsidiaries.

Transitory group of releasers calls for faster invoice throughput

The introduction commenced at the Linz-based holding company in 2011. After that, a new company code was added once every other month. The implementation was not complicated from a technological point of view, but it presented the BBRZ with organizational challenges. Austrian xSuite partner frontworx, who realized the BBRZ project, needed to adapt the xSuite software to the different business processes and release procedures while also accounting for diverging numbers of people in charge of approval. Moreover, both employees and responsibilities change rapidly at BBRZ since invoices are received for measures and courses that exist as an object for a short time only. For example, person A is responsible for a particular course for one year, and in the following year there are hundreds of new courses run by other people. This made it very important to facilitate fast invoice processing and transparently visualize release statuses based on an electronic workflow solution.

Image source: BBRZ



All 3,000 employees integrated in the workflow

The solution has been in live operation at eight company codes of the affiliated companies as of 1 January 2012. The central mail room based in Linz is equipped with two scanning stations, and this is where creditors now send their invoices to. The stations scan an annual volume of about 70,000 incoming documents and store them on the SAP content server. Data reconciliation with supplier master data is performed using xSuite Interface Prism. Following this, the release workflow is kicked off, targeting the designated approvers.

Each of the close to 3,000 employees of the BBRZ Group can access xSuite Invoice via a web interface. User feedback has been highly enthusiastic across all departments. “Ever since introducing the xSuite system, we have been able to meet all discount periods and have gained full transparency over all processes,” says Finance and Accounting Manager Markus Stadler with satisfaction.

The company is already planning to introduce another xSuite solution to process the steadily increasing number of invoices that are delivered electronically in PDF format: the xSuite Interface Prism system interface. It automatically imports e-mails, invoices, and attachments from a defined mailbox and then forwards this data directly to the downstream workflow process within SAP.