KREBS+KIEFER

Artificial intelligence
replaces printed paper

Sucess story

windream

MANAGING DOCUMENTS

Artificial intelligence replaces printed paper

Comprehensive digitization of the entire invoicing process

Paper was the dominant medium in accounting at KREBS+KIEFER. Printed invoices caused a considerable amount of work, required time and resources for their processing, and caused unnecessarily long process cycle times.

„We want to use our precious resources more efficiently" explains Dierk Erdmann, member of the management board of KREBS+KIEFER Service GmbH. This has been fully achieved with windream.

KREBS+KIEFER

Many wishes, one solution

It quickly became clear that the paper-based processes with all their pitfalls should be replaced by a digital solution. But the vision behind this task went even further. „We don't simply want to map analog processes digitally, but effectively use the possibilities of digitization in accounting for ourselves," Dierk Erdmann explains the strategy. The view is clearly future-oriented. Simply digitizing everything that was previously available as a paper document in accounting would only have used part of the potential that an integrated document management system offers. It quickly became clear that not just any off-the-shelf solution would do. What was needed was a flexible solution with the same interfaces and a high degree of automation. After a thorough examination by the in-house IT department and after intensive consultations with windream, KREBS+KIEFER decided to test the windream Invoice Management solution. „windream promised us not only document management, but also a tool which automates the invoice process as far as possible," explains Dierk Erdmann.

KREBS+KIEFER

Background: The KREBS+KIEFER Group

The KREBS+KIEFER Group provides engineering services for the most demanding construction projects. The range of services extends far beyond the usual engineering services and accompanies the entire life cycle in the construction industry - from the idea to the planning and realization to the maintenance. More than 800 employees at 17 locations contribute their specialist expertise along short communication paths and under personal supervision in order to achieve the best solutions for customers and partners. In accordance with the company's mission statement „GIVING SPACE TO THE FUTURE", the company, founded in 1950, relies on innovation, diversity and competence as qualifications. This also applies to the structure of the company itself. KREBS+KIEFER Service GmbH handles the invoicing processes of all locations. But this did not always work smoothly: Too many paper-based processes were slowing down performance in this area.

Exterior view of the company headquarters in Darmstadt

Not an easy task

KREBS+KIEFER Service GmbH placed the bar for an invoice management system quite high: About 800 employees handle several thousand projects per year, which adds up to more than 10,000 annual incoming invoices. The „old" invoicing process ran almost exclusively via paper invoices, which were approved at the various locations by classic signature and then sent to the central accounting department. In some cases, scans were also made manually in advance and sent in parallel, but this increased the complexity of the process even further. During the test period, partial streams of invoices were directly fed into a digital process with windream Invoice Management. This means that a part of the accounting processes was practically converted during ongoing operations without affecting business activities. During the six-month test period, the relevant interfaces were developed so that the windream solution could be seamlessly integrated into the existing IT-infrastructure. After the test had been successfully completed, the windream solution was installed and successfully rolled out step by step at the central KREBS+KIEFER Service GmbH.

It's all a question of workflow: Artificial intelligence shortens invoice identification dramatically

In this way, the invoice process is digitized step by step and approvals are partially automated: At the beginning, invoices are received, either by e-mail or in some cases as paper invoices. The latter are scanned at the respective locations and forwarded via e-mail. In an Office365 workflow, the attachments of the mails are temporarily stored in a cloud storage. The recipient e-mail addresses are retained as information on the document to ensure easy assignment to the respective client. The first step of the invoice run is completed with the conversion of the invoices into PDF-A documents to ensure permanent readability.

The next step is document recognition in accordance with the set of rules stored. For this purpose, an AI-based cloud service from Blumatix Intelligence is used first, which reads out and identifies the required data from the document. These are forwarded to a self developed web service.

The web service reads the relevant information for automatic invoice verification and pre-accounting from the windream database. This information is compared with a predefined set of rules and the process can then execute decisions like e.g. automatic release, allocation of certain cost centers as well as cost distribution and comments independently. This significantly improves efficiency and frees up valuable working time for other tasks. This is followed by the manual process steps in the form of factual checking and approval. The generated accounting records are transferred to the DATEV accounting system via a standard interface.

Key facts

✓ Implementation of integrated document management

✓ Automation through workflows

✓ Partial conversion of the accounting process during ongoing operations

✓ Invoice identification via AI

✓ Saving valuable manpower and time

Faster, safer, more efficient

The invoice process is now significantly accelerated. Repetitive activities are reduced and employees are left with more space for the implementation of demanding tasks. Even the previously time-consuming search for invoices has literally shrunk to a task of seconds due to the introduction of windream Invoice Management: In most cases, invoices can be found in the digital repository in less than half a minute. Frequently, questions concerning invoices can thus be answered directly during a (telephone) conversation. Time-consuming searches and follow-up consultations are no longer necessary.

Calling up documents directly from the DATEV accounting software also makes it much easier for the accounting department to find documents. This is because it is not necessary to start separate software to find the documents. The central overview of ongoing and completed invoice processes greatly simplifies tracking and clarification of queries. This rules out the possibility of an invoice „falling under the table".

Last but not least, legal requirements are easily and securely met with the windream solution. Revision security is given and a deletion protection is also integrated.
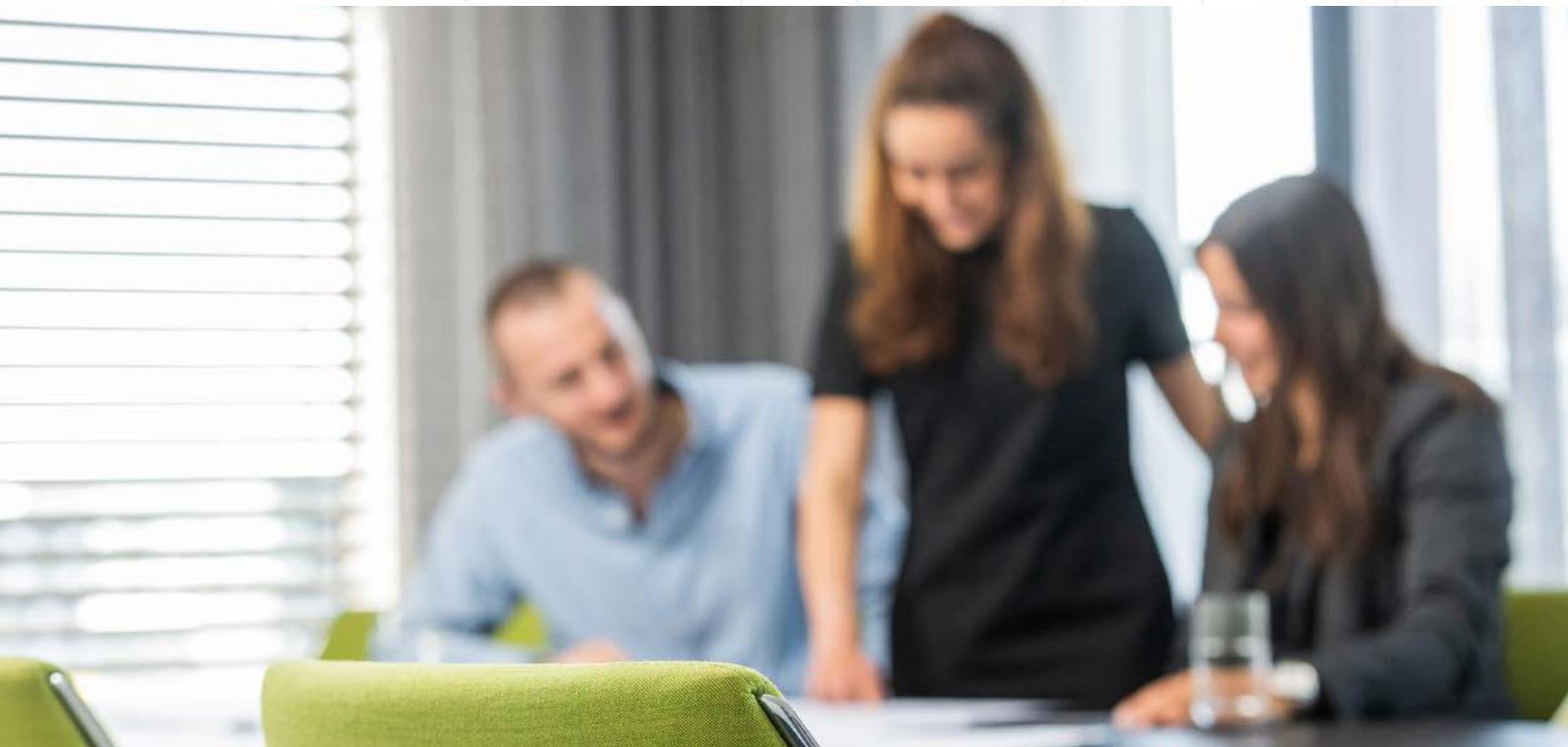
Bye-bye paper

The change of invoicing processes to bypass paper has brought many advantages to the KREBS+KIEFER Group. Due to seamless integration into different interfaces in the company, the windream solution offers a unique degree of automation in the workflow, which saves valuable manpower and time and makes it available for other tasks.

„With our new digital invoice processes, we have reached a level which gives us more space for the value-adding activities in the company group," Dierk Erdmann sums up: „Nobody misses the paper-based processes."

Rely on the Technological Market Leader

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In the market sector of ECM-software suppliers, windream GmbH is the technologically leading manufacturer. With the windream ECM-system based on the patented Virtual File System technology (VFS), we have created an unrivaled tool for administering your complete company knowledge. Our software is easy to handle, effective, and future-proof. We have 20 years experience in successful software solutions development for enterprises of any size. Medium-sized companies and multinational corporations as well rely on our top quality products and on our technological know-how.

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