

Business
Problems.

Solved.

USE CASE

Automated Invoice Processing Impact On Customer Service And The Bottom Line

GENERAL OVERVIEW

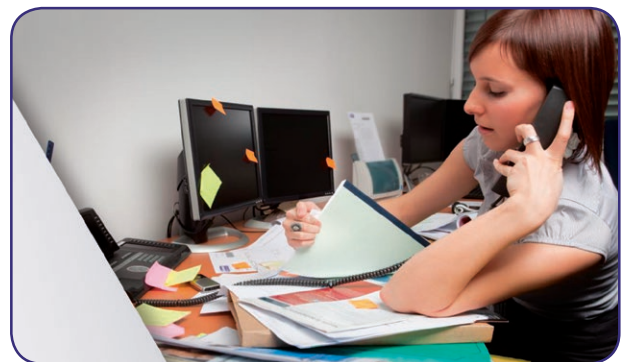
This case study follows a leading manufacturing company in the development, production, and distribution of packaging materials for flowers and plants. Over 75 years they have evolved and grown internationally, with five subsidiaries serving all components of the floral industry worldwide. Employing 120 people across its businesses and generating an annual turnover of over \$50 million, they offer growers, exporters, wholesalers, and retail stores a range of custom printed and unprinted packaging solutions that include flexible sleeves, buckets, and other transport containers.

Despite this continuous expansion, their invoice processing system was becoming an expensive bottleneck and undermining the company's professionalism. Invoices were manually transferred across departments during the approval process, leading to delayed or even failed payments. This not only increased labor costs and affected relationships with suppliers, but also forced the company to accrue costly penalty fines from governing bodies.

Recognizing the need to rectify this problem, the company contacted Canon. After assessing the company's specific needs, Canon put forward its premier solution, Therefore™, which manages information scanning, capture, archiving, and workflow and gives the company total control over its invoices. This enables complete transparency across the transactional workflow, benefitting staff, suppliers, and customers alike.

Thirty-five percent [of companies] describe their records and documents as "chaotic" or "somewhat unmanaged."

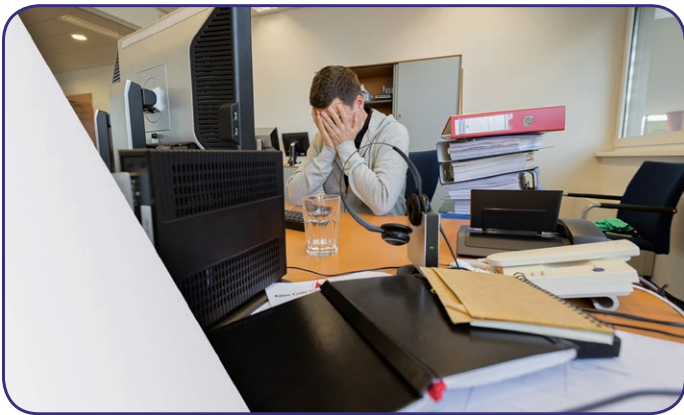
— Source: AIIM 2012 –
Capitalizing on Content



CUSTOMER ISSUES

The Information and Communications executive of this manufacturing company explains the problems they were having with their old invoicing system and the pressure it was putting on the company:

"The previous system required the receptionist to receive the mail and then pass on the original copy of the invoice to the Finance and Purchasing departments. This meant that there was a continual risk of an invoice going missing due to human error. Even when we started photocopying the documents, the multiple copies were merely adding to the confusion surrounding the status of the invoice. As a result, the stages at which the authorized personnel verified and validated payments weren't joining up correctly."



This manual task of filing the invoices absorbed time that could have been better spent elsewhere.

"Not only did the manual transfer leave the process susceptible to errors and loss, but it was [also] time-consuming. Once filed, the searching and retrieving of an invoice was often lengthy. We worked out that, each week across all departments, this single process amounted to one whole week of a full-time employee's time. That's over 200 working days per year that were being wasted that could have been better channeled into other aspects of the business, such as commercial support."

Furthermore, the company's professional integrity was being questioned. Suppliers were naturally concerned with doing business with a firm that was inconsistent with its payments. Moreover, the penalty fines were costing between \$2,000 and \$5,000 a year, which was damaging the company's reputation and hindering its profitability. The Information and Communications executive continues to say, *"It became an obvious problem that we knew could be solved, but we needed the right solution. So we contacted a number of vendors, including Canon, and considered our options. We decided to work with Canon, not only because its solution offered the best value and was most effective, but also because the company already had an understanding of our business and demonstrated a willingness to learn more."*

CANON SOLUTIONS OVERVIEW AND COMPONENTS

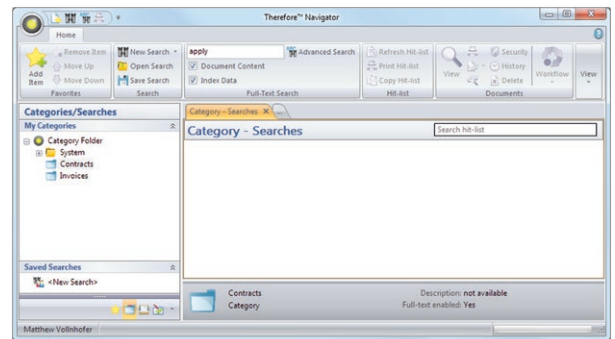
Since the company had installed five Canon high-speed departmental scanners to streamline other internal processes, it was already familiar with Canon and its services and was very satisfied with both the product and the accompanying service.

The Information and Communications executive explains further: *"The Canon scanners work really well for all our scanning needs and the reliability is excellent. If there is ever a problem, the engineers quickly fix it. The machines all work to a high standard and quality. This is how we knew Canon would have the solution to our invoicing problem. Its consultants always look to work through the problem with us in order to find the right solution."*

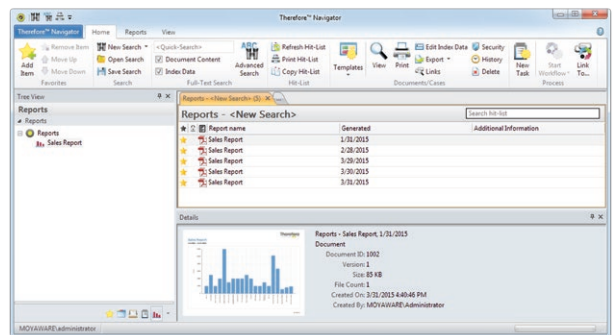


CANON SOLUTIONS OVERVIEW AND COMPONENTS

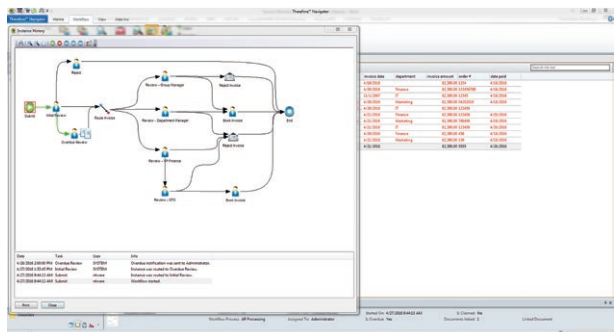
The Information and Communications executive stated, "Now, using the Canon Invoice Processing Solution with Therefore™ and the Canon scanners, the receptionist simply scans the invoices that arrive by post and e-mail. After the software has transformed the document into a digital file, it is imported and stored in the Therefore™ Invoice Processing Solution's archiving module. Authorized personnel from the purchasing department can then access the invoice simply and efficiently via unique tagging codes before verifying it. It is then passed to the financial director for final approval before the Accounts Payable department makes the all-important payment to the supplier. This gives us total control over the process."



Canon's Invoice Processing Solution



Automated Invoicing System

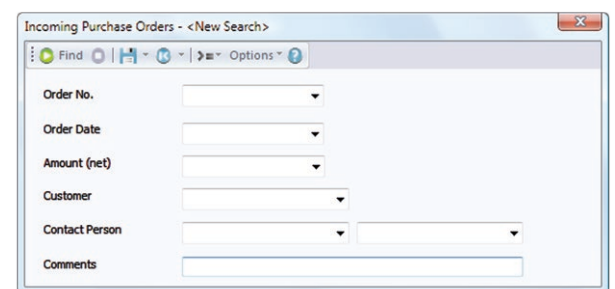


Therefore™ Workflow Process

This also allowed the manufacturer to see where bottlenecks were occurring within its invoice process, so it could identify areas that hindered the cash flow.

The company now has a completely automated invoicing system that enables instantaneous retrieval of each and every invoice. This enables employees to check the current status of an invoice at any given time.

"The solution gives us the ability to locate every invoice with a simple, full-text search. If there is a problem with an invoice, we can see exactly at what stage this has happened and why it went wrong, and begin addressing the issue instead of it sitting there, undiscovered for days on end," added the Information and Communications executive.



Locate every invoice with a simple, full-text search.

THE RESULTS

Customer service has also benefitted from this swift retrieval time. *"If a customer has a query about their product or delivery, we no longer have to hunt around in physical files. Using the solution from Canon, we can efficiently locate the customer's delivery sheet, and we can tell them everything they need to know about their order. This confidence is evident in everything we do now, and I believe our customers are feeling the benefit of our new system and professional communication and service."*

The late payment penalty fines have also reduced substantially. *"We anticipate that this cost will be fully removed in the near future and, with the help of Canon's solution, we can ensure it never happens again."*

"Thanks to Canon, we now have a firm grip on our accounts payable system and are processing the invoices 40% quicker than before. By reducing the processing time by 40 hours, we have saved around \$27,000 to \$32,000 a year. With the addition of the money saved from the reduced penalty fines, the Canon solution has resulted in a 30% cost savings, overall," said the Information and Communications executive.



THINGS TO CONSIDER ...

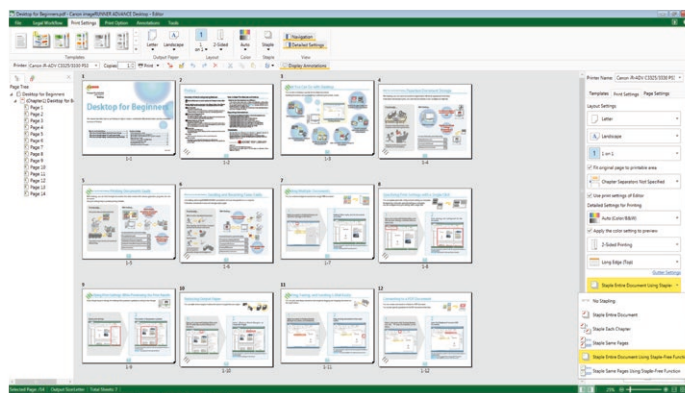


This organization could have also benefited from uniFLOW's Fingerprint. Instead of indexing the files, one by one, as they are uploaded to Therefore™, uniFLOW with Fingerprint can read the forms and take the information needed to automatically index the files and send them to their folders, starting the appropriate approval processes. This happens through a process called "forms processing." The documents go through a process called optical character recognition (OCR), where it's digitally read, and recognized to take the specific index fields and use them appropriately.

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ADVANCE
Desktop**

In many manufacturing companies, multiple people work on a project or have a responsibility for certain documents, all of which

need to be combined later. Instead of everyone bringing hard-copy documents to be laid out on a desk or conference room table, all documents can be combined digitally through the use of imageRUNNER ADVANCE Desktop. Different file formats and sizes, pictures, etc. can be a thumbnail view, with the option to set finishing preferences by page, groups of pages, chapters, etc.



imageRUNNER ADVANCE Desktop



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