



Real speed, thanks to digitalization



SCHWARTAUER WERKE GmbH & Co KG has long relied on xSuite Group solutions for electronic workflows and files

As far as digital processes and electronic files are concerned, the German food industry still has some catching up to do. That is what Dominik Behling, Head of Finance at SCHWARTAUER WERKE GmbH & Co. KG, sees again and again. When, at important industry events, he explains what his company already does in this area, the audience is amazed. It has now been twenty-one years since the Schwartauer Werke first dealt with Enterprise Content Management (ECM), workflows and electronic archives. From the beginning, the xSuite Group has been the technology partner. Since then, the food manufacturer has relied on the application software of the manufacturer from Ahrensburg, continually expanding and extending.

Today, there's not much paper left at the Schwartauer Werke. Rather, it's digital processes and electronic files that make up the picture. Take inbound invoice processing: As early as 1998, the company began scanning invoice documents after having processed them, and storing them in an electronic archive. In 2004, xSuite implemented SAP-integrated inbound invoice processing. Since then, the routine has changed: documents have been scanned, extracted, and validated centrally at the company upon arrival, to then be distributed electronically to the approximately 100 factual approvers and 50 releasers for further processing.

Company

Web: www.schwartau.de
Sector: Food industry
Founded: 1899
Headquarters: Bad Schwartau

xSuite® solution

- Incoming invoice processing
- Archiving
- Folder management

Decisive arguments for xSuite

- Innovative software manufacturer
- Customer references

Systems integration

- SAP ERP
- Del credere programme

Schwartauer Werke & xSuite

Image source: Schwartauer Werke

**Technology compensates for minimal staffing levels**

The introduction of the electronic xSuite workflow has made it possible for Schwartau to approve invoices for posting and payment in as little as one day. As fluctuating staffing levels often dipped below the baseline, documents were left unprocessed for long periods of time — which is why CFO Behling has considered it so important to rely on digitization.

„Without xSuite's invoice workflow, we wouldn't be able to keep up speed with processing anymore,“ he is certain. „We haven't had paper invoices waiting in the inbox for processing for a long time now. A lot of times, other companies don't even believe me.“

The Schwartauer Werke receives 40,000 incoming invoices a year, mostly from suppliers and service providers. However, among these invoices are debit notes — a phenomenon well-known in food retailing. These are counter claims from customers who, for various reasons, whether justified or not, complain about a delivery and thus an invoice from Schwartauer Werke. Of course, since sending invoices or outgoing mail digitally is still largely unknown to large food retailers, these transactions also have to be processed and consist almost exclusively of paper documents. These documents must therefore be scanned and fed into the electronic inspection workflow too.

Improved business relationships through invoice workflow

The Schwartauer Werke uses the speed gained through digital process design to further optimize their business relationships. For example, they added advanced instruments such as a del credere program, which is a special form of guarantee contract under which creditors can insure themselves against bad debts via an external body (the association providing del credere cover).

„Of course, this only works if invoices are posted quickly,“ says Dominik Behling. At the Schwartauer factories, this is mainly used by raw material suppliers. Now, with all their data right at hand, other models are now also options for Schwartauer Werke. Reverse factoring (supplier or purchase financing), for instance, has been implemented and will be used increasingly in the future.

xSuite's solutions cover more than just invoice processing at the Schwartauer Werke, however. The workflow is also used, for example, by quality assurance, which classifies certificates and incoming goods documents with xSuite's capture solution, storing them in the electronic archive.

A number of electronic files has also been created with the xSuite solution. The technical department was the forerunner and served as a blueprint for other business areas. An electronic technical file is a structured folder system accommodating documents. In the xSuite file solution, a collective number was set up as the generic term for this. Below this file header are various folders for individual projects and departments. Thanks to the electronic file, the employees in the technical departments, who are dispersed across three locations, can access the digital information from anywhere. Not only that, but accessed information cannot be changed either, i.e., it is audit-proof. In explaining the qualitative added value of an e-file, Dominik Behling says, „Otherwise we could just as easily have solved this using Windows Explorer.“

Linking e-file documents to SAP documents

Storage in the record is structured in such a way that the stored documents are linked to the SAP documents. The engineers approving documents have access to all information, from the quotation to the order confirmation to technical drawings and complaints. Operations which are used by all technical departments as well as the commercial department have their own separate files. As many as 12,000, including „Maintenance of a forklift truck,“ „Repairing an entrance door,“ and many more specific operations have been set up and are used on a daily basis.

The xSuite file solution is based on modern SAP Fiori UI5 technology, which is structured with easy-to-use tiles for different functionalities. In addition to technical files, other types have now been set up at Schwartauer Werke, including a procurement file whose documents are also archived electronically. The digital personnel file at the Schwartauer Werke comprises several thousand copies (for the approximate 850 current employees and all former employees). It allows the HR team to work quickly and clearly, with all types of personnel documents. The xSuite archive system is connected as an electronic archive system. In addition, a contract system with around 5,000 electronic contract files is in use, among others for the suppliers, to which a restricted user group consisting of management, secretariat and finance department has access.

Dominik Behling: „The large number of applications and the fact that xSuite has proven to be the right technology partner for us from the outset — these are the reasons why we are far ahead of other large companies in the field of digitization today.“

The company

With the brands Schwartau Extra, Samt, Fruttissima, Hofladen and others, SCHWARTAUER WERKE is Germany's leading manufacturer of jams, holding an approximate market share of 30 percent. The company's cereal bar brand Corny also occupies a market-leading position. Bad Schwartau is home to the headquarters and all three plants for the production of fruit products and muesli bars. Each year, the factories in Bad Schwartau produce about 40,000 tons of jam — 140 million jars —, 11,000 tons of muesli bars — about 375 million bars. Founded in 1899, the company belongs to the Hero Group, an international food group specializing in fruit products, baby food, muesli and fruit bars, and headquartered in Lenzburg, Switzerland.