



When Technology and Process Analysis Go Hand in Hand

Germany's Largest Life Assurance Company, Allianz Lebensversicherungs-AG, puts its Trust in Electronic Accounts Processing.

It is no secret that digitalisation of accounts processing is a must for any modern insurance company, and particularly so for such a large company as Allianz Leben. Electronic processing has proven itself to be quicker, more reliable and more efficient than working with hard copy documents. The electronic processing of the complete customer incoming post has been established at Allianz Leben for years anyway. That is why it was a matter of course that the company would decide in favour of switching to electronic processing for incoming invoices (e.g. material purchase, services etc.).

"In future, received invoices are to be scanned in and incorporated into a newly created workflow", is how Rüdiger Stephan, head of the IT division at Allianz-Lebensversicherungs-AG, explains the initial situation. "The project plan envisaged that the entire processing of an invoice, from receipt to archiving, would take place electronically and in automated form", he continues. However, automated does

not necessarily equate to optimised. For this reason, a solution is required which is convincing not only in technical terms but also with regard to understanding the process, which is acceptable in terms of its degree of complexity and also remains manageable. With these criteria, the IT department at Allianz initiated the AROS project in conjunction with its partner CENIT, as commissioned by the Accounts department.

a concept which initially concentrated particularly on analysing the accounting processes at Allianz. "The solution should be as complex as necessary and as simple as possible", explains Rüdiger Stephan. In turn, this requires a detailed description of the processes. It is necessary to gain an insight into the thought and work patterns deployed in the Accounts department. The time necessary to do this can ultimately be set off against the costs which will be saved at a later stage", according to Rainer Stop-

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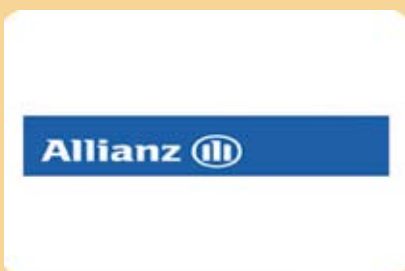
► THE AROS PROJECT

AROS stands for Allianz Rechnungsbearbeitung Online System (Allianz Online Accounts Processing System). The following were involved: the Accounts department of Allianz Leben (as customer and with specialist responsibility), the IT department at Allianz Leben and a team from the Stuttgart-based consultants CENIT, which lists enterprises content management solutions for banks and insurance companies among its core competences. The partners to the project designed

per, the project manager responsible from the IT department at Allianz Leben.

► THE SOLUTION CLOSE-UP

Today, incoming invoices are immediately scanned and then indexed and checked by the Accounts department. The booking and payment data is recorded and then transmitted electronically to the person responsible for approval. After approval has been granted, an automated payment and booking process begins. The invoice processing and invoice approval processes



ALLIANZ-LEBENSVERSICHERUNGS-AG: WHEN TECHNOLOGY AND PROCESS ANALYSIS GO HAND IN HAND

are documented in full via a version creation which ensures transparency: Using a search function, it is possible to search for invoices, as required, and on the basis of the versions the processing step/current processing status can be tracked and checked. However, this is still not enough. While the team was considering the best way of controlling the electronic approval during the planning phase, they realised that the existing approval process could be simplified to a large extent. It became clear that it is an advantage if technology and process analysis go hand in hand – not only the technology benefits but also the underlying process. “Specialist users and solution designers should therefore always work closely together and also shed light on the processes”, emphasises Bettina Reinig, project manager at CENIT.

While the image file of the scanned invoice is transferred immediately into the FileNet archive, the processing data/statuses are routed into an oracle database and, therefore, stored securely for future auditing – which is indispensable with regard to the legal specifications on document management.

The SAP system and the Allianz in-house payment system were connected via interfaces. The existing applications at Allianz Leben for incoming post (e.g. scanning) were also extended for the AROS requirements. “CENIT also implemented the ‘business logic’, via which the next process steps are automatically determined and the corresponding plausibility and integrity checks are carried out with the backend systems. It was implemented with Java and is a central component of the solution

concept, because it ensures reliability, efficiency and, ultimately of course, accurate record keeping”, is how Bettina Reinig explains the tasks. “The shortened through-times allow payment targets to be adhered to and the utilisation of cash discounts”, says Rüdiger Stephan, adding that “when it comes to the annual financial statements, Allianz will also benefit by being able to generate the open receivables and payables from the system using the AROS inventory evaluation.”

If Rainer Stopper is asked whether he believes AROS delivers on its promises, he replies that “Thanks to the introduction of this pioneering procedure, we have significantly improved management and evaluability within the accounting process, made extreme cuts in through-put times and made optimum use of synergies. We

where to use information technology to bring benefits for the company. “The result is, as it should be, a solution which is not overly complex but which does justice to, optimises, accelerates and simplifies, for all concerned, a multifaceted process”, concludes Rüdiger Stephan.

► SOLUTION COMPONENTS AT A GLANCE

- FileNet IS
- FileNet Capture
- Existing Allianz applications for incoming post and background processing
- Oracle-database and control tables
- Integration with SAP and Allianz in-house payment system
- JSP pages for the processing screens
- Business Logic in Java

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Rainer Stopper

Project manager of the IT department

are particularly happy that the application implemented in conjunction with CENIT is stable and runs with virtually no maintenance requirement now.” The implementation of an electronic accounts processing corresponds to the IT strategy that has been pursued rigorously for decades, of developing integrated and highly automated solutions on a component basis. As early as the 1970’s, the company understood

► ABOUT ALLIANZ LEBEN

The Allianz Group is one of the largest and most famous providers of financial services in the world. In an international network, it bundles together the competencies of specialists in the fields of insurance, provisioning, and assets management as well as bank services. Allianz Leben is responsible for the life assurance business of the Allianz Group, in which field it is market leader, in Germany.



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