windream.

PEARL

From MP3-Players to Navigation Systems

Digital invoice management in Germany's biggest catalog distribution center for software and PC accessories

With nearly three million customers in Germany, Austria, France and Switzerland, the PEARL group of companies counts among the biggest European software and computer accessory catalog distributors. Under the heading "Innovative, reasonably priced, competent", PEARL offers more than 6,000 different products from the sectors of hard- and software, PC peripherals as well as technical products and communications. In Germany, PEARL Agency is the leading distributor for software and IT accessory par excellence: The current PEARL catalog lists more than 3,000 products, explained and illustrated in detail on more than 260 pages.

An efficient administration of the distribution business including the invoice management would nearly be impossible without using an electronic document management system. Since December 2002, the "PEARL Agency Allgemeine Vermittlungsgesellschaft mbH" – which is the official company name in Germany – has been using windream now for administering all incoming and outgoing invoices.

Nothing without DMS

Daily, PEARL Agency, situated in Buggingen, Germany, stores up to 8,000 invoices – mainly outgoing invoices – in windream. Before the company decided to use windream, the incoming invoices were stored and archived as paper receipts. Instead in a DMS, outgoing invoices were administered in an ERP system. After a period of two years, data were saved on electronic media and

PEARL Agency in Buggingen

sourced out. However, a problem occured, as the access to data sourced out became more and more difficult:

Although the information was still available on the media, it could not be accessed immediately. This circumstance led to the decision to invest into an electronic document management and archiving system. A basic requirement was that the new DMS had to guarantee a quick retrieval of older information stored as well as an efficient administration of all current invoices.

Before a decision was made in favor of a specific DMS, the company collected as much information as possible about systems which were available on the market. PEARL used the internet as information source, but also visited fairs and contacted several suppliers.

Why windream?
The main reason was that windream is substantially different from other systems in specific functions. PEARL

Agency has been using the finance accounting system FibuNet since 1999. The FibuNet company, which has been a windream partner for years now, and windream GmbH have developed a software which connects the accounting system to the DMS via an interface. "The seamless integration into FibuNet", says Christian Allinger, member of the PEARL Managing Board, "was one of the most important criteria. In addition to this, we also wanted to invest into a system which allows us to operate a document management system without any training efforts. As the windream functions have completely been integrated into the Windows Explorer, our staff in the accounts department could immediately work with windream without having to learn a completely new user interface. Additionally, the attractive price also played an important role." Only those employees who are responsible for the system administration at PEARL attended a specific training course.

windream was ready to operate after a short implementation phase of six days only. The system went into productive use without any further testing and, at present, it is used in the accounts and billing department.

Administration of incoming invoices with FibuNet and windream
First, the employees who are responsible for accounting book incoming invoices in FibuNet. Each captured invoice will be equipped with a barcode label containing a unique ID-number of the receipt. The receipts acquired will then be scanned and forwarded

Key facts:

● Document management and accounting integrated in one system

● Efficient caption and administration of incoming and outgoing invoices

● Quick and easy retrieval of archived receipts

to windream as TIFF-files. The scanning process is executed via Ascent Capture, a scan software developed by Kofax. This software also provides a software interface with a connection to windream and thus allows users to automatically forward scanned invoices to the DMS. At present, the monthly volume of receipts captured via scanner is about 20,000 pages.

Additionally, information on bookings is also acquired automatically from FibuNet and used in windream as indices. The barcode number assigned to each receipt allows the staff in the accounts department to uniquely identify invoices in windream and in FibuNet as well.

Automatic caption of outgoing invoices at night

Specialized backend solutions named PCL COLD and XML ImportManager are used for an automated caption of outgoing invoices. These programs have been designed to forward electronically created outgoing invoices and the data contained in them (like for example invoice or customer number) to windream. Within this process, data read from the invoices is used by the system for automatic document indexing. The documents themselves are stored in windream as PDF-files and saved in the long-term archive.

The complete capturing and importing process is run automatically at night. Manual entries – like for example by an authorized system administrator – are not required. Generally, the complete process including

the caption of all new outgoing invoices, the indexing and the storage in windream takes one hour per night only.

After having been forwarded to windream, all receipts can be administered, retrieved and stored in the long-term archive efficiently and conveniently.

Archiving in the long-term archive

For long-term archiving, PEARL Agency uses an efficient jukebox which provides more than 100 slots for taking up storage media. Documents are stored in the archive on WORM-media (WORM = "Write once – read many").

The PEARL group of companies

PEARL

The PEARL group consists of a joint venture of international companies focused on trade, marketing and publishing business. The activities of the branches in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, France, Russia, the USA and China primarily focus IT markets. The PEARL group of companies counts among the internationally leading distribution centers for PC software and computer accessories.

PEARL Agency Germany is the European headquarter of the PEARL group. As Germany's biggest distributor of PC software and accessories, PEARL Agency informs more than 15 million customers with more than 20 million catalogs every year. In addition to this, PEARL also advertises up-to-date products in well-known computer magazines. The large product range addresses many target groups: end customers, large-scale consumers, public authorities as well as wholesale traders and distributors. The variety of products includes more than 6,000 items from the sectors of PC hardware, software and PC accessory and also many product innovations as well as exclusive products.

PEARL Agency was founded in 1989 and, since then, has grown from a medium-sized company to an established brand name in IT businesses.

The total storage capacity of the archive is nearly 1,000 Gigabytes. The windream juke-box control ensures that all documents which have been archived can quickly and easily be retrieved with the windream DMS-functions.

Administration of invoices as customer service

PEARL Agency does not want to limit the use of windream to an exclusive invoice management only. Future plans intend to also connect other departments like the product support, the customer service, the product management and all further departments to the DMS.

In future, Christian Allinger wants to offer a very specialized service. All customers who buy products in the PEARL online shop shall get the opportunity to administer their invoices online. With windream, this service can be realized in an ideal way.

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Managing
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