TOSHIBA

Case Study: Lion Hudson

Streamlining document workflow

Independent publisher, Lion Hudson, finds a robust document management solution with the help of Toshiba Tec, helping provide a seamless and transparent operation for its accounts team.

TOGETHER INFORMATION

Toshiba streamlines document management for Lion Hudson Limited

Lion Hudson is a leading small independent publisher based in Oxfordshire, committed to publishing quality literature, worldwide, true to the Christian faith. It publishes accessible books and other media for adults and children under multiple imprints that reflect a Christian worldwide view to a general audience as well as resources for Christian families, individuals and communities. The books, especially illustrated colour ones, are translated into over 200 languages and sold around the world.

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To support this impressive and successful business, Lion Hudson required a robust document management solution that would provide seamless and transparent operation for its accounts team. For advice on devising an effective and affordable solution, it approached leading specialist Toshiba Tec.

John Ruda, Process Optimisation Consultant at Toshiba Tec visited Lion Hudson to observe the processes and workflows at the publishing house, and also to audit the logging and approval system for invoices. It transpired that much of the invoice-handling process was paper-driven, which meant that a lot of time was being spent on storing, processing and retrieving invoices.

"We had already realised that manual storage, approval and retrieval of paper-based invoices was not serving us well, and this was leading to poor efficiency and frustration on all sides," explained Bekky Fayers, Management Accountant at Lion Hudson. "There was little visibility of the approval process, which made it hard to gain a quick overview of what was outstanding and to identify the bottlenecks in our system. What's more, manual data entry into the accounting software was time-consuming and prone to errors. Toshiba Tec, working with the information that John had collected, helped us identify the issues in our workflow and suggested improvements."

On a normal day, with Lion Hudson's existing invoice handling systems, for every new invoice raised someone had to manually enter numerous details, such as the PO number, invoice number, company name, account number, amount and so on. The solution offered by Toshiba was a complete document management system (DMS) that would automate many of these mundane tasks and eliminate reliance on paper-based documentation.

But paper isn't the only problem when managing business documents. A quickly growing stockpile of data and multiple information sources pose additional challenges. The finance team at Lion Hudson had to manually handle over 400 invoices each month from printers, authors, designers, freelancers and other

suppliers. Late payments due to missing invoices created a bottleneck and were putting pressure on the entire department.

The company needed to deal with invoice data more efficiently and the DMS proposed by Toshiba promised to deliver just that by providing digitalisation and automation of all key processes. Whether it is an authorisation, proposal, reminder or any other operation in need of intervention or a decision, digital document-based workflows are not only faster than their paper-based equivalents, they are also far more reliable.

Once clearly defined, DMS processes run securely and virtually error-free: for example, when an invoice receives digital approval, the workflow automatically sends it on to the next person in the chain. And with a simple click, documents relating to an invoice can be opened instantly in order to clarify outstanding issues such as comparisons with delivery notes, payment authorisation and bookings.

The foundation for Toshiba Tec's intelligent information handling is structured storage of all documents in one central document pool. This centralised storage is complemented by customised workflows that guide documents electronically from user to user. These workflows ensure that team members can view, verify or authorise as needed and that they tackle the tasks in a timely manner and in the correct order.

Caroline Gregory, Finance Director at Lion Hudson enthused: "We had incredible buy-in from the whole company, as everyone could see that there would be no more time wasted on searching for documents in filing cabinets, lever arch files or in-trays. In addition, we no longer have to think about storing documents in our office, and our data security has improved enormously. We currently process between 80 and 90% of invoices using the paperless system, and all of the 30 people involved have noticed a positive change – invoices are now being turned around in a day, which was something we could almost never achieve with our old paper-based systems."

The general workflow of the company has improved, and in the future, the Toshiba Tec DMS will also be used to provide document storage for the company's legal contracts.

"The Lion Hudson employees noticed immediate improvements when the new system was implemented," said John Ruda. "They managed to move from an average time of five minutes spent per invoice to just 30 seconds. This is a huge time saving and it means that employees have been freed up to contribute to other areas of the business. It also means that invoices are typically approved for payment in one day rather than a week. Overall, everyone in the finance team now has the right tool for the job, and the resulting efficiency gains are sending savings straight to the bottom line!"

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About Toshiba Tec

Toshiba Tec UK Imaging Systems Ltd is part of the globally operating Toshiba Tec Corporation, active in various high-tech industrial sectors.

Toshiba Tec Corporation is a leading provider of information Technology, operating across multiple industries. With headquarters in Japan and over 80 subsidiaries worldwide, Toshiba Tec Corporation helps organisations transform the way they create, record, share, manage and display information.

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