ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE
INDUSTRY • Manufacturing   ERP • SAP

CASE STUDY

IFCO Brambles

IFCO

EFFORTLESSLY DELIVERING & ARCHIVING INVOICES IN OVER 20 LANGUAGES THANKS TO AR AUTOMATION

BACKGROUND

Brambles Limited is a supply-chain logistics company operating in over 50 countries, primarily via the CHEP and IFCO brands. Brambles employs over 14,000 people and owns more than 470 million pallets, crates and containers through a network of approximately 850 service centres. IFCO Systems, a 100% owned company of the Brambles family of companies and a German-based international logistics company, was looking for a solution to reduce the time-consuming and expensive process of printing and mailing over 15,000 invoices, credit notes and collection letters each month around the world. IFCO required an international partner who would be able to quickly integrate a cloud-based accounts receivable (AR) solution into its SAP® system. IFCO looked to a familiar partner it knew had experience solving these types of AR issues and one that was already automating its fax services in the cloud: Esker.

SOLUTION

The project was implemented at IFCO's headquarters in Germany and just five weeks after the initial meetings took place in Germany, solution delivery was already underway. Phase one was rolled-out with successful implementations in Spain, France, Portugal and the U.K. Six months later, another 10 European international subsidiaries, including Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and Switzerland, were able to send out and archive their invoices on demand. The U.S. has also recently been integrated into the solution.

IFCO is now able to deliver invoices according to their customers' requirements: electronically, with or without a signature, published to a web portal, or via paper thanks to Esker's international network of production facilities.

Three of IFCO's key requirements included: fast implementation; smooth e-invoicing in over 20 countries (regardless of language, e-invoices had to be generated, sent out, and archived in line with the legal requirements of each country) and the assurance that the most stringent data protection standards and local data privacy legislation are observed. Esker met all three.

"Up until now, we had only used a manual process for generating and sending out invoices all around the world. Another subsidiary handled the delivery of a small number of electronic invoices. Without having to invest in hardware, software, and technical know-how, we now have a flexible and intelligent AR solution and we get back to focusing on our core work."

Patrick Klinger | Worldwide Director of IT

Esker starts by interpreting the international subsidiary from which the invoices has come (country, language) and the country to which the invoice is to be sent. The originator is clearly established using a four-digit identification number coded in SAP.

"This is how we work out where the invoice comes from and where it needs sending. The process ensures that the invoice has a signature, and, if required, that the right language is automatically selected for the automated accompanying email."

Patrick Klinger | Worldwide Director of IT

Esker's portal enables authorised IFCO staff to securely access and track invoices at any time — both IFCO's and their customers invoices. IFCO's customers can also electronically archive their invoices for the legal required period of time. The portal makes it easier for companies to switch to receiving electronic invoices and customers can even set invoice format preferences and how they want to receive their invoices.

BENEFITS

The main benefits that IFCO has enjoyed thanks to AR automation include:

- **Cost savings**
- **Reduced DSO**
- **Invoice tracking & visibility**
- **Increased e-invoice adoption rates thanks to Esker's portal**
- **Electronic archiving**
- **Full compliance with international e-invoicing regulations**

"Esker's portal facilitates our customer e-invoicing onboarding and gives them control of their invoices at all times, without burdening them with the additional work involved in electronic archiving. Esker's AR solution has allowed us to increase our e-invoice volumes, save costs and reduce payment times, thereby lowering our DSO."

Patrick Klinger | Worldwide Director of IT

ABOUT BRAMBLES & IFCO SYSTEMS

Brambles Limited (ASX:BXB) is a supply-chain logistics company operating in over 50 countries, primarily via the CHEP and IFCO brands. The Group specialises in the pooling of unit-load equipment and associated services, focusing on the outsourced management of pallets, crates and containers. Brambles primarily serves the consumer goods, dry grocery, fresh food, retail and general manufacturing supply chains. In addition, the Group operates specialist businesses serving the automotive, aviation, oil and gas sectors. IFCO Systems is the leading global provider of reusable packaging solutions, operating a pool of over 225 million Reusable Plastic Containers (RPCs) in 37 countries. IFCO RPCs are used primarily to transport fresh products from producers to leading grocery retailers worldwide. IFCO's solutions help retailers and producers reduce costs and increase sales by maximising efficiency, product protection, sustainability, and safety throughout their supply chains.

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