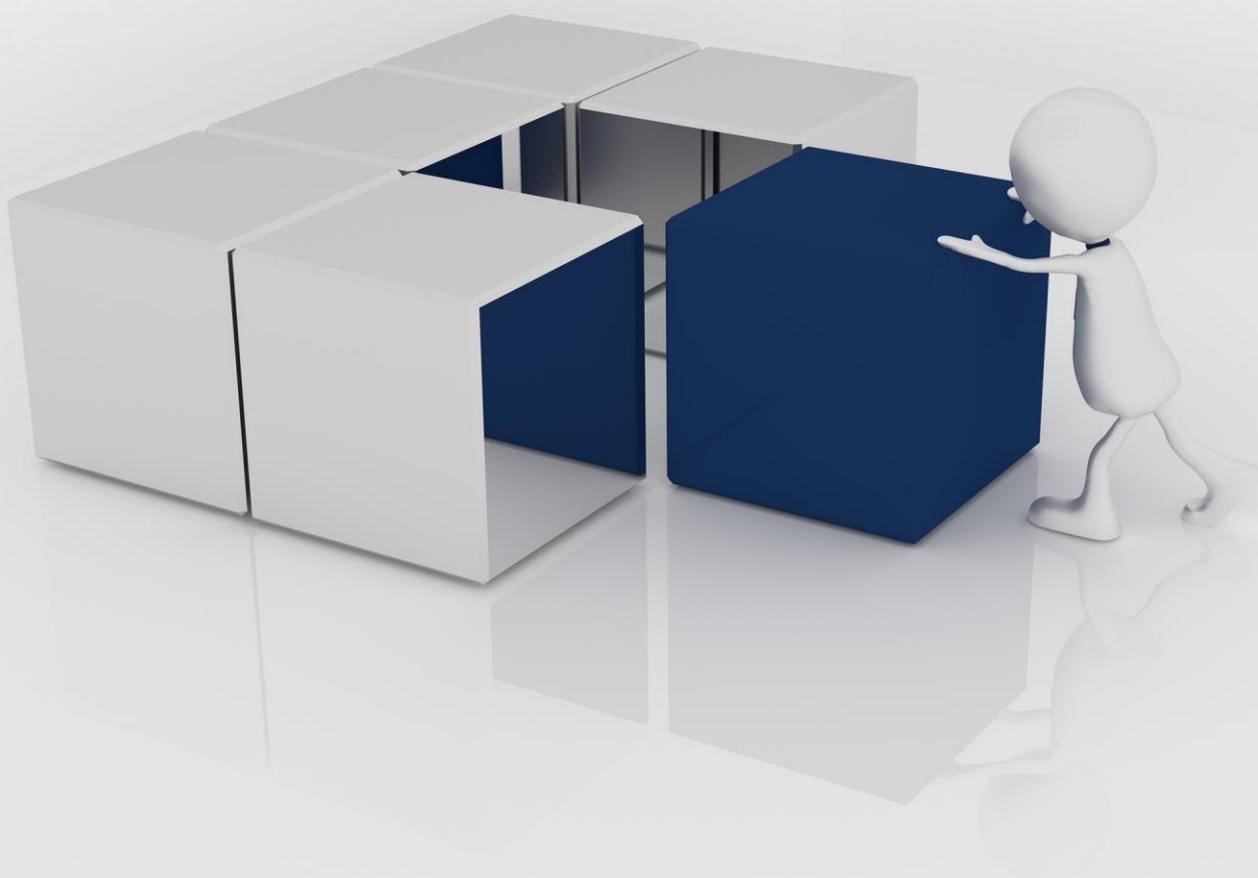


STEPOVER – REWE GROUP SUCCESS STORY

A paperless H.R. Department



A PAPERLESS H.R. DEPARTMENT



REWE Group success story Paperless - H.R. Department

Use of the handwritten electronic signature with Adobe's SAP Interactive Forms

In the Human Resources department of the REWE Supermarkets, they stopped printing and filling in forms by hand, and put an end to the slow process of sending, scanning and destroying paper forms. They are all things of the past because, from now on, the administrative processes between the REWE supermarkets and the head-quarters will be processed completely electronically through EDPP (the German abbreviation for staff portal for retail trade services). Any documents



which require a signature are signed with a StepOver electronic signature directly on the system, and they are sent and processed electronically in a short period of time.

Paper costs time and money

The automation of processes, central data processing and preventing format mismatches ensures quick and effective management of day-to-day tasks in the world of business. In the case of declarations of intent or confirmations which require a signature, using paper is often a hindrance to achieving the desired efficiency. In the specific case of RE-WE, before introducing EDPP, the HR department used a huge amount of resources to process documentation.

All of the important HR forms (e.g. changing current details, holiday requests, trips, group changes, reclassification or transfer, changes in wages, etc.) were printed on paper. The supermarket managers and staff filled in the forms by hand and then signed them. The paper forms were sent by mail to the regional office, where it passed through several departments via the internal mail services until they finally arrived at the manager's desk. He or she then manually entered the details from the paper form on the HR SAP system and inserts the signed form into the employee's electronic personnel file after manually scanning and filing it.

Apart from the delay caused by the physical route which the paper had to take while it was being processed, there were often misunderstandings or there was a considerable need for clarification between those people involved in the process, because of forms being incorrectly, incompletely or illegibly filled in, not to mention the additional effort required to correct the data which had been entered.



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Internet portal, interactive forms and the electronic signature as new components

In order to reduce the amount of mistakes, the processing time and the associated costs, in the summer of 2007 the PKS (German abbreviation for personnel information systems and accounts) department created the EDPP project.



Under the direction of this department, the project was conceptually and practically implemented, obtaining satisfying results.

Although electronic processing was the main objective, there was also a desire to preserve the traditional image of

a paper form for the employees. Furthermore, it was necessary to follow the steps required for the approval to process certain files and to insert the electronically signed PDF forms into the SAP Records Management electronic personnel file.

These requirements meant that it was necessary to use interactive PDF forms, also known as SAP Interactive Forms by Adobe. On the one hand, Interactive Forms offer great flexibility in the assistance given to the user when filling in the forms and, on the other hand, it also enables the communication of issue and people-related data with the existing SAP system.

The optimized EDPP process is currently performed as follows. The manager of the super-market logs into the EDPP internet portal and selects the corresponding operation and the relevant PDF form is displayed in its local SAP environment via Adobe Reader. The data is entered onto the PDF form with the help of accuracy verification, default values and computation. The employee then signs the completed form on the computer on a signature pad. In addition to the image, the StepOver pads also capture the biometric data, which are individual characteristics such as the pressure and speed with which the signature is written, making it possible to identify the signatory when necessary.

The software which is used is StepOver's PDF PlugIn. This additional software for Adobe Acrobat and Adobe Reader securely stores the biometric data from the signature on the PDF form together with the document checksum, created from the form and the data entered into its fields. Any manipulation of the signed PDF form can be reliably verified using the checksum. After the signature has been captured, the SAP system automatically sends the PDF forms to the regional office.

When authorisation has been given, the manager transfers the electronic data from the PDF form to the HR SAP system. At the same time, the PDF form is automatically stored on the electronic personnel file. All of the stages which the form had to undergo under the old system of a processing unit (supermarket, regional manager to the head clerk) or by mail or via the internal postal service, are now completed without any loss of time in the SAP Business Workflow.

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The secure electronic signature for interactive forms

The basic requirements of REWE for its electronic signature solution were seamless integration to use SAP Interactive Forms, the probative value of the signatures and day-to-day usability for the company. The StepOver products satisfied the managers on all of these counts.

“The signature fields can also be integrated immediately into existing interactive forms without any problem. I have rarely seen such little need for instructions”, says Marc Elberskirch, from REWE Information Systems, regarding the ease-of-use of the StepOver software component.

The signature from the pad is inserted into the PDF form by creating signature fields in the Adobe LiveCycle Designer. The plug-in’s additional options of verifying and evaluating the signature facilitate an automatic process. “The technical support, the exchange of opinions on approaches to the project, the variety of solutions and its installation with StepOver have also been excellent”, adds Elberskirch.

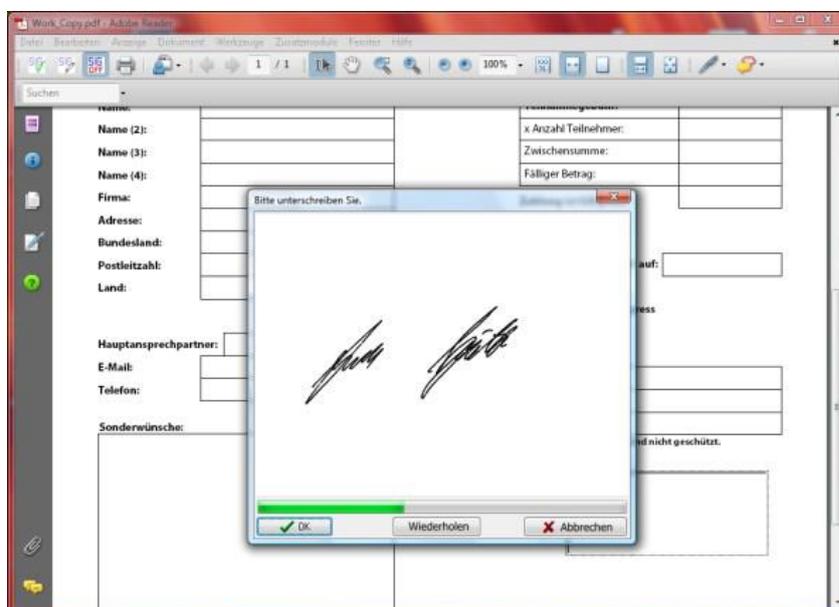
Furthermore, together with the StepOver naturaSign Standard signature pad, the plug-in offers an “advanced electronic signature”, in compliance with the EU directive and German legislation regarding electronic signatures. In addition to these requirements, StepOver’s electronic signature solution provides standardised security with RSA 2048 bit encryption of all of the important security components such as checksums and biometric data.

Implementation process and data

Combined with user training, EDPP was initially introduced in autumn 2008, in the “Centre” trial region, with the first 600 supermarkets. The initial experiences already showed clear signs of optimisation. In addition to the massive reduction in paper and the fall in sending costs, processes were now being completed in much less time, thanks to the disappearance of the manual stages. The loss of receipts and expensive checks were now a thing of the past.

It was gradually introduced in the other regions until spring 2010. Over 3,000 REWE supermarkets took part in the EDPP. “The new procedure has been well received. All participants, whether they be in supermarkets or in regional offices, are benefiting from our new EDPP”, declares Agnieszka Stang (REWE’s HR Information Systems and Accounts). “Because the processes are highly transparent, there is also a lot of information, such as the evaluations or the status of a process, which can be accessed and viewed at any time. Generally speaking, a considerable increase in efficiency has been observed in all areas”.

Because of its huge success, REWE also in-tends to offer the system to the Group’s other distribution sectors, to save time and costs throughout the group, thus optimizing work.



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The REWE Group

The REWE Group is one of the leading trading and tourism companies in Europe. Ever since the year of its foundation in 1927, the cooperative business group has always aimed for long term sustainable growth. Meanwhile, over 320,000 employees work in 16 Europe an countries for the REWE Group, with a sales volume of approximately 50,000 million euros.

In Germany, the business group employs 210,000 people in approximately 10,000 centres - from supermarkets, discount stores and department stores to specialist shops and travel agencies.

The distribution sector of the REWE supermarkets manages approximately 3,300 stores in Germany. They represent a friendly supermarket with a good range of products, and they provide a wide and diverse variety of high-quality fresh food.

The StepOver GmbH

StepOver GmbH is a European and global market leader in the field of handwritten electronic signatures. The company, with its headquarters in Stuttgart, develops and produces signature capturing devices in its own factory. Furthermore, with its range of software, it provides simple integrations and applications, ensuring a secure handwritten electronic signature system. Every year, over one million signatures are given using StepOver electronic signature solutions, thus preventing format mismatches between the electronic processing of data and paper. Their main advantages are the huge savings made and the conservation of our natural resources.