



Pragmatic Rather Than Program-Based Accenture introduces a paradigm change for correspondence solutions with SAP

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Increased efficiency and reduced load on the HR department: this is the aim of electronic document management and correspondence solutions. But whereas most of them concentrate on alleviating the daily work of HR employees with technology, the aims of a different solution go further than automated document creation. Accenture Quick Document Builder (AQDB) supports global companies in standardizing employee correspondence and its cost-effective reorganization. It is therefore ideally suited for enabling new business models in HR management – all processed entirely in SAP.

Global networking, increasing requirements, and intense cost pressures are causing more and more companies to reorganize their HR functions globally. Primarily, homogenous administrative HR processes are systematically bundled, centralized within the company, or relocated to specialized, external service providers. Shared service models are catching on. Global companies are also insisting on harmonizing and standardizing processes throughout the company to drastically reduce costs by concentrating specific tasks in countries or organizational units with a more favorable wage structure. Not least, leading companies are in the process of using employee self services to consistently redistribute administrative tasks from HR management to several employees.

This development places a number of new demands on correspondence management solutions. These significantly influence – depending on their efficiency and global suitability – which proportion of HR documents and correspondence can be standardized across countries, and therefore, can be easily automated and cost-effectively reorganized. The efficiency gain depends on the extent to which it succeeds in reducing to a minimum the proportion of complex issues and special cases that can only be processed manually by experienced specialists, and recorded in documents that have to be created individually across all regional and international parts of the HR organization.

New HR operating models: only very few processes require on-site specialist individual care

Experience from diverse projects shows that document-related HR processes – almost 80 percent of all HR processes – can be categorized into different levels of complexity.

- The predominant share of such processes merely requires low levels of specialist knowledge, for example because only simple entries are required in the HR system, out of which the corresponding document creation can be controlled fully automatically.
- A much smaller percentage of personnel administration requires the involvement of experienced HR specialists, of which a large part can be organized into more cost-effective, central, internal, or external shared service units. The prerequisite for this is that the individual process steps are standardized and administrators are consistently supported by the HR system.

Although the processes in the HR system are often very well structured, standardized across the company, and therefore also automated, the subsequent creation of correspondence is an additional challenge for the company, especially within global HR structures. An intelligent correspondence solution can automatically support an agent in a shared service center in Portugal who does not speak German, for example, to ensure that a salary adjustment letter to employees of a subsidiary in Hamburg, Germany, contains a passage that is specially binding for the colleagues in this region who are bound to a certain wage agreement. It does this by evaluating the master data using the organizational assignment of the employee from Hamburg and using a set of rules to insert the relevant defined text module in the document, regardless of the agent. All the same, special solutions are indeed required if the scarcely manageable number of globally valid rules should be efficiently defined, adapted, and managed for the correspondence solution for different organizational units and markets, all in a form in which the correspondence solution can also evaluate them. Previously, only program-based approaches were available, which proved to be a failure in practice. Now, however, another alternative is available.

Simple template maintenance: a pragmatic rather than a program-based approach

Traditional approaches towards creating correspondence follow the path of creating individual forms or documents, where the business logic for document creation is fully programmed or elaborately parameterized using document script language (scripting). Whether it's an intelligent form requesting different user entries or conditions, or the use of user-guided wizard application or macro trying to map any type of complexity, they all adhere to the described scripting approach. Although this is initially revolutionary, it turns a document creation issue into a template maintenance issue. Each adjustment that becomes necessary as a result of a new organizational or statutory ruling, a new wage agreement, or the acquisition or discharge of a company, has to be maintained subsequently in the relevant document and form templates; in other words, it has to be programmed.

By contrast, Accenture Quick Document Builder (AQDB) takes a new, pragmatic approach. It makes the tools with which HR experts can easily and quickly create and update their document templates and provide modified versions to upstream HR functions such as shared services available to the specialist departments – directly and without the need for any programming. In this way template maintenance, which previously had to be coordinated between the HR department and IT, can be carried out coherently and simply by the department with the necessary knowledge to do so. The IT role now concentrates on operating and maintaining the data and integration interfaces to the HR system, for which no HR or IT know-how is required.

AQDB therefore implements an innovative principle of solution implementation: specialized tasks are shifted from IT back to the specialist departments, thus enabling a type of operational self-service. With AQDB, users from HR can independently create and maintain HR-specific templates and text modules, using Microsoft Word for example, and then easily link them with the data and process interfaces of the SAP ERP system that are prescribed by the IT department. They use an intuitive text module editor to easily and quickly map complex issues in managing the different text modules, and also to define the conditions that are required for this from the data in the HR system, or to query the user. Sophisticated version control makes it possible to maintain an overview of the current language versions of the relevant templates, and to query all references of text modules used in templates and documents. AQDB offers attractive template management functions for releasing new or updated templates and text modules and for managing them.

This distinguishes a modern correspondence solution such as AQDB

1. Existing platforms are considered

Whoever introduces a correspondence solution immediately faces the question of which IT infrastructure exists in the company, which data and document formats are used, and the extent to which they are supported by the solution. What initially appears simple within individual markets can turn out to be complex in a global context: in addition to the question about implementation on a global SAP ERP system, which archive solution and which output management channels should be used or introduced has to be clarified. In terms of total cost of ownership, AQDB performs favourably as the system is based on standard existing platforms such as SAP NetWeaver and Microsoft Office (so no additional infrastructure has to be procured), and can also integrate leading digital personnel file solutions such as Accenture's Digital Personnel File Solution with aconso or SAP Records Management.

2. Various scenarios for document creation

AQDB also controls the various scenarios of document creation and management. Whether these are self services, shared services, or mass or process-controlled individual document creation and archiving (such as from an SAP Business Workflow or from the processes of the E-Recruiting system), they are all considered and supported both in terms of technology and with regard to roles and authorizations. In doing so, the solution can securely manage differentiated user rights throughout the company, but also specifically for each process and country.

3. Quickly and easily ready for global use

In addition to the low total cost of ownership, there is also a fast return on investment. Companies who are planning to segment and organize HR processes and document management according to their complexity in order to reduce operational costs in a short space of time are looking for solutions that can be implemented and used as quickly as possible. AQDB does this with more than 600 data fields preconfigured in the standard system. They enable the data from the relevant tables and master data in the SAP system to be linked with templates and text modules. Additional, customer-specific data fields can easily be configured. In addition, the people who create the templates in the specialist departments do not require any special training for this. They work using their usual authoring environment, Microsoft Word, thereby enabling them to create the templates as well as their associated text modules, placeholders, and rules.

4. Accenture – a global business partner

If you want to implement a correspondence solution Group-wide, you need a partner with an international presence. Accenture is the largest SAP consulting partner in the world and is represented with 190,000 employees and a global delivery network in over 50 countries. On-site product services and consulting services can be offered for AQDB at most locations.

Translated from the article:

„Pragmatik statt Programmatik. Accenture leitet Paradigmenwechsel für Schriftverkehrslösungen mit SAP ein.“

Originally released in: *Lohn und Gehalt Spezial*, August 2009

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