

Discovery Foods gains new control over document automation, thanks to performance of EASY ENTERPRISE



Discovery Foods was founded by James Beaton in 1989 and has grown at a considerable rate into a business with sales in excess of £44M. The company offers some of the finest cuisine food recipes from around the world including Caribbean, Mexican and Latin American.

Today Discovery Foods employs around 350 people, sells nine different sauces, three seasoning mixes, five tortilla and wrap kits, numerous accompaniments such as jalapeno peppers and guacamole, and makes around 40 tonnes of tortilla chips and six million flour tortillas a week from its three factories in the Midlands.

Managing paper and processes in such a rapidly growing businesses is critical to ensuring that service level expectations are met, efficiency levels are maintained and staff productivity and utilisation stays high. This meant taking a closer look at how paper could be better managed at Discovery Foods both from an archive and retrieval perspective as well as tracking its journey through the business and across different sites.

Greater responsiveness

To this end, Discovery Foods invested in EASY ENTERPRISE two years ago, to scan, store and manage its purchase ledger invoices. As well as making the business more efficient and responsive, this has enabled Discovery Foods to have instant visibility of the status of any invoice without relying on paper chasing or searching through endless lever-arch files.

Alison Baker, IT Systems Controller at Discovery Foods explains, "We operated across four sites and invoices were manually sent to the relevant manager for approval. As this was paper based, it was susceptible to loss and misplacement and the sheer effort of trying to track where the invoices were in the approval process was hugely time consuming and a very unproductive use of staff time."

Alison and her team conducted a rigorous search of the market to find a solution that would fit the current and future needs of Discovery Foods and critically that was user friendly enough to ensure its quick adoption by staff across the business. "EASY won over all the other competitors because of its ease of use and that still holds true today. Converting staff to the EASY system has been painless and this has ensured its continued take-up across the company," adds Alison.

continued overleaf



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Alison Baker, IT systems Controller, Discovery Foods.

SUCCESS THROUGH PARTNERSHIP



"We are only just scratching the surface on business benefits from our document management deployment," adds Alison. "We have clearly identified benefits from the automated invoice processing application – a report run on outstanding invoices used to show 400 invoices and now shows closer to 100. And we conservatively estimate savings in the region of £30,000 from storage, postage, stationery and hours saved or redirected from manually filing, retrieving and chasing documents."

*Alison Baker, IT systems Controller,
Discovery Foods.*

This first implementation of EASY's document management technologies soon highlighted key benefits to Alison and the accounts department. Integrated into the corporate Sage accounts system, invoices are scanned electronically, linked to their record in Sage and then routed via the EASY workflow system for sign off and approval. At any stage in that process, the accounts team has complete visibility of the status of each invoice. At the end of the approval stage the invoices are archived and can be retrieved in seconds if needed by anyone in the business using the simple 'EASY search bar'.

"We process over 2,000 purchase ledger invoices a month using EASY. Previously, tracking and managing these invoice sign-off and approvals was a labour intensive, paper-based process that took weeks; EASY ENTERPRISE has helped us shave many days off that process, while giving us complete visibility of the status of each invoice in seconds," comments Alison.

New opportunities to archive

Before deploying EASY ENTERPRISE the business was beginning to drown in paper. Alison recalls "One of the first and very visible benefits of document management technology is space saving as floor space occupied by filing systems is released. We also recognised that we would benefit from reduced postage costs, considerable time savings from not having to manually file and retrieve documents and substantial efficiencies as we could process transactions faster. This made our business case for document management very straightforward."

Following the success with purchase ledger invoices, Discovery Foods went on to enjoy those same efficiencies in other parts of the business by identifying more and more document types for electronic archival and retrieval using EASY. Delivery notes, despatch notes, sales ledger invoices, credit notes, 3rd party instructions, statements, remittance advices – the list is endless.

Thanks to EASY's integration with output management solution, Planet Press, Discovery Foods has made significant time and cost savings on expensive pre-printed forms which are now eliminated from the business and replaced with plain paper. The same visual look and feel is generated automatically as the data is extracted from EASY and populated onto the Planet Press solution ready for printing. To date this is being used for documents including invoices, P60s, P14s and payslips which are now generated on-demand from data stored in the EASY archive.

Onwards and Upwards

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Discovery Foods' vision doesn't stop there, either. There are plans afoot to move further business processes into this electronic paradigm. Alison and the team are considering future applications of EASY's workflow solution to ease routing and management of documents from all parts of the business. This 'traceability' and audit trail is tremendously beneficial to a business like Discovery Foods and delivers very visible efficiency, productivity and compliance benefits.

For more information visit:
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