

Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation and DocXP®

Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation improves efficiency with DocXP® IDC

The largest formally constituted local authority purchasing consortium in the UK have halved their resource responsible for customer orders, whilst still increasing processing levels by 12%.

Established constitutionally as a Joint Committee of Local Authorities in 1974, the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO) operates under the aegis of the Local Authority (Goods and Services) Act 1970, and aims to provide a professional and cost effective purchasing and supply service to customers in constituent and other authorities.

Over the years, the YPO has developed into a highly efficient and commercially orientated public concern, with an annual turnover well in excess of £270 million.

As the largest formally constituted local authority purchasing consortium in the UK, the YPO is governed by a management committee of elected representatives from constituent authorities.

The YPO had been using scanning and recognition technology in its food operation for a number of years so had a full appreciation of the benefits of automated data capture. The forms in this particular area were designed by the YPO and optimised for scanning so the data could be automatically input into its warehousing system.

But using its own scanning operation was out of the question for catalogue stock and direct supply orders, where the volume of forms far outweighed those in the food operations section and where they had no control over the design of the documents.

The YPO was experiencing a problem keeping up with the manual input of the thousands of customer catalogue stock and direct supply orders received each week.

These were always in a different format depending on the individual customer's house style with the vital data always in a different location on the documents. Not only that, some were completed by hand and some machine printed. This meant the manual processing of these documents was extremely draining on both time and resource. In addition, both the logistical nightmare of storing the paper forms with its associated costs and accessing single documents was always an area for concern.

The DocXP® solution

The YPO wanted an automated solution to address this problem and so carried out a thorough evaluation of the market. It selected DocXP® IDC as the solution that was the best fit from all the products it evaluated.

DocXP® IDC classification technology automatically identifies the document type and is able to perform many sophisticated checks using lookup tables created from databases already operational in an organisation. Data such as customer reference numbers, supplier addresses and product codes can be automatically verified as well as many more complex checks, including mathematical validation in areas such as totaling quantities and financial values.

As a bespoke solution, the YPO were able to specify detailed objectives to be implemented in the DocXP® IDC system. These included:

- increasing the throughput of the data preparation section in order to ensure that orders received in the morning were always processed that day
- reducing the resource needed to process orders
- eradicating the manual filing of orders by providing electronic access to stored images
- automating the initial processing of direct supply orders to prevent paper being circulated, in turn increasing efficiency to achieve a pay back of less than 18 months.

Prior to the introduction of the DocXP® IDC system, 12 full time equivalent staff, supplemented by temporary staff in busier periods, processed some 420,000 customer orders annually.

After just 12 months of operating with DocXP®, this had reduced to eight staff and after a further 12 months to six. This staffing level, supplemented in the busiest period as before, has been maintained and last year some 470,000 orders were processed through the system.

“The implementation has achieved all of our objectives. DocXP® IDC has not only fully automated the processing of our catalogue stock and direct supply orders but has also removed the need for manual filing, by providing electronic images of the orders. As an additional benefit, the accuracy levels have further improved.” Alan Redgwick, retired IT Manager, Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation