



THE LINDE GROUP

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Business Process Specialist,
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World's largest industrial gas company integrates kiteworks with SAP to streamline billing and accelerate revenue recognition

Background

Founded in 1879, The Linde Group is a leading global supplier of industrial, process and specialty gases and is one of the world’s most profitable engineering companies. Linde products and services can be found in nearly every industry, in more than 100 countries. With approximately 60,000 employees worldwide, the company is committed to technologies and products that unite the goals of customer value and sustainable development.

Challenge

The Linde Group’s pharmaceutical and medical gas products and services enable healthcare professionals to provide optimal therapies and treatments for a number of medical conditions. For every delivery of industrial and specialty gases made to a healthcare provider, Linde generates an associated Proof of Delivery (POD) document. It’s not uncommon for Linde to make over 1,000 deliveries to some customers in one month, resulting in the same number of POD documents. In order for Linde to get paid for these products, Linde’s healthcare customers and their insurance payers need to be able to match a POD to an invoice.

“Some of our customers receive 400 deliveries a week that all roll up to one insurance payer,” said Bob Gentile, Business Process Specialist with The Linde Group. “There was a huge amount of manpower needed on our customers’ behalf to manage the billing and invoicing of our products and we wanted to make the process much less resource intensive.”

Initially Linde used a third-party service provider to scan and index delivery numbers and in turn, print and mail copies of POD documents to customers. The process wasn’t ideal and Linde wanted to leverage its internal SAP deployment to streamline the POD and invoicing process, driven by customized business rules.

The organization then moved the POD process in-house, utilizing an electronic capture and recognition technology which sends a scanned image of the POD for indexing and electronic conversion to PDF format. Once the POD image is automatically linked to the delivery record in SAP, custom code downloads the proof of delivery and associated invoice images from SAP for set periods of time (daily, weekly, bi-weekly, monthly) and stitches both together into a multiple page PDF document. These documents can be as long as 1000+ pages in total.

As a result, Linde has improved the rate of successful distribution of PODs to customers from less than 70 percent prior to the automation, to 99 percent or greater today.

Linde was then faced with a new challenge: how to get the PDF into the hands of customers? Not only were the documents massive in size, but they also contained confidential customer and financial information.

Quick Facts – The Linde Group



Deployed Since
2015



Number of Users
30
+ unlimited external



Custom Web Interface
Yes



HIPAA Compliant
Yes



Mobile Integration
Yes

✓ Accelerates revenue recognition cycle by getting invoices and supporting documents to customers faster

✓ Enables up-to-date capture and delivery of extensive shipping and billing documentation

✓ Reduces paper billing and mail delivery lag time

Solution

The Linde Group turned to kiteworks to enable their POD documents to be delivered to customers on demand. The organization's custom code automatically extracts the POD documents and invoices from SAP into folders labelled with the customer's name and customer number (based on the SAP "ship to" data) These folders are organized in a hierarchy on an internal Linde server which is running the kiteworks desktop synchronization client. The kiteworks client automatically synchronizes all content to the kiteworks cloud solution, mirroring the same hierarchy described above. This ensures that the latest delivery and billing documentation is ready for secure download by authorized users.

"We dramatically enhanced our invoicing processes by leveraging SAP, and kiteworks was the final missing link," continued Gentile. "Now, our customers have access to the time-sensitive Proof of Delivery document they need and turnaround, on our end, is basically one day."

Customer service representatives at Linde grant individual customers permission to view assigned folders within kiteworks to ensure only authorized users can view, download or print invoices and POD documents. These documents are then pushed to the folder automatically on a set schedule, based on when the customer wants to see them – typically on a weekly or monthly basis but in some cases daily as well.

"We used to double up on invoice delivery, sending documents electronically and via hard copy in the mail," continued Gentile. "With kiteworks in place, customers have asked that we stop mailing paper invoices, as kiteworks has become their go-to destination for accessing delivery and invoice information."

The benefits of incorporating kiteworks into customer communication workflows is catching on at The Linde Group. For example, kiteworks is now being used to support the organization's global electronics customers. Exporting gases and chemicals overseas comes with stringent mandates and extensive paperwork. With kiteworks, Linde has enhanced its sales exchanges, providing a secure way to upload, share, and access required documentation.

"Adding kiteworks to our extensive customer billing process has accelerated our revenue recognition cycle and positively impacted our organization's bottom line," said Gentile. "Giving our customers faster access to POD documents and invoices means that they are paid faster, as are we."

TOP-SELLING POINT

Ability to deliver customer-requested documentation for product deliveries in a secure manner

STAND-OUT FUNCTIONALITY

Seamless integration with SAP enhances and accelerates the billing process by pushing up-to-date customer Proof of Delivery documents and invoices to kiteworks for instant customer access

COOL USE CASE

Provides a simple, fast and secure method for sharing required documentation for the global export of gases and chemicals

About Accellion

Accellion, Inc. enables enterprise organizations to collaborate on content with external partners securely via private cloud. Enterprises can leave existing content where it lives today, and extend it outside the firewall without having to migrate content or disrupt their business workflows. Accellion's solutions are used by more than 15 million users and 2,500 of the world's leading corporations and government agencies including Procter & Gamble; KPMG; Kaiser Permanente; Latham & Watkins; National Park Service; Umpqua Bank; Cargill; and the National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST).

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