

Problem, solved.

Garden retailer

French gardening retailer switches to a cloud-based data collection and hiring workflow, freeing up the equivalent of one full-time employee and reducing legal risk.

RunMyProcess.

a Fujitsu company

Problem – sales data

A chain of retail garden centers in France wanted to simplify one of its most time-consuming tasks: collecting sales information and calculating supplier discounts. If it ordered in large enough volumes, the retailer was eligible for discounts from suppliers.

With more than 200 stores and over 350 suppliers, the task of collecting sales records was laborious. Stores ordered directly from the suppliers and the only way to track sales was to have suppliers report their sales per store. This was done by emailing an Excel file back and forth, and then compiling the results by hand. Unsurprisingly, this process was prone to errors and delays, as well as being annoying for suppliers.

Solution – sales data

At first the retailer considered installing a central ERP system, which would have required each store to have a VPN connection. But this approach was judged to be too expensive and complicated to introduce. Instead, they opted for Google Apps.

Searching for a cost efficient and simple solution, the retailer decided to share the sales record spreadsheet with stores via Google Docs. But after further examination, it was decided that it wanted to create an entire online workflow using Google Apps and Google Docs. That's when it turned to Fujitsu RunMyProcess for help.

An automated workflow was built using Fujitsu RunMyProcess. Each month, the stores receive an email containing a link to a Google Docs spreadsheet. They download the spreadsheet as an Excel file, fill it out, and upload it again via Google Docs. As soon as the spreadsheet is returned, it is checked and automatically compiled with the figures from the other store.

Benefits – sales data

The project has been a resounding success. Firstly, the new workflow provides complete process visibility. The retailer knows which stores have downloaded the spreadsheet and uploaded it, and when it has been approved. Reminders are triggered automatically.

Secondly, the Fujitsu RunMyProcess solution didn't need additional investment in IT infrastructure – such as servers, VPN

or ERP software. The stores can access the files using a simple web browser.

Finally, by reducing the data processing and error handling time by half, the new workflow has freed up the equivalent of one full-time employee and has virtually stamped out data entry errors. When mistakes are detected, they are resolved more quickly than before.

Problem – hiring process

Managing the human resources of more than 200 garden centers throughout western Europe requires a high level of organization. But for this retailer, difficulties cropped up each spring as they sought to recruit a large number of seasonal short-term employees.

Each store was individually responsible for its own candidate selection and hiring. The recruitment process was complicated by the long validation process – each new employee had to be approved by the regional managing director, who approved the head count cost, and the regional HR manager, responsible for approving employee contracts. Following approval, the new employee request was then forwarded to the central accounting and administration teams who prepared the actual employment contract and created an account in the pay system. Finally, the new contract was sent back to the individual store to be signed by the new employee.

This validation process was very time-consuming and inefficient, taking up a lot of HR managers' time during the peak hiring period. Furthermore, the delays increased legal and financial risk to the company. According to French law, all short-term employees must receive and sign their contract within 48 hours of starting their new positions. If they don't sign within that 48-hour window, it automatically converts into a permanent contract. The retailer decided to approach Fujitsu RunMyProcess in search of an optimal solution to their inefficient HR process.

Solution – hiring process

The Fujitsu RunMyProcess team worked with the retailer to design a workflow application that manages the new employee recruitment process. Once a store manager has offered a job to a candidate, the manager fills out an online form starting the approval process. The online form contains all information on the candidate needed to create the employment contract. Once submitted, the form is automatically forwarded to the regional director and HR manager for approval. Following the validation, the form is submitted to the central administration and account teams. If the key manager is absent or on vacation, the Fujitsu RunMyProcess workflow application automatically sends the form to the next assigned manager. All participants are notified via an alarm to ensure that the form is validated in the allotted time. The whole process is easy to follow and track at all times.

Benefits – hiring process

The project was successfully implemented and exceeded the retailer's expectations. Because the online workflow made it easier to see where a hiring request was at any given time, the administrative teams had to become more responsive and timely. Greater transparency also reduced the number of errors significantly. In addition, the improved workflow has generated large cost savings for the retailer due to lower legal risk.

This is the second project the retailer has carried out with Fujitsu RunMyProcess. The first project was to find a way to collect and analyze the sales information from its stores, the new solution for which enabled the retailer to monitor its sales at all times, reducing data processing and error handling time by half.