

Gourmet grocer eliminates manual AP data entry, creating shared process ownership by using accounting automation software.



Tony Olufson, Accounting Manager
Kowalski's Markets, Minneapolis-St.Paul, MN

"With DocuWare we ended up making our processes better and easier: the end result is that we catch things that would otherwise be too labor intensive to research. This kind of insight is invaluable to us."



Location: USA
Industry sector: Retail / Wholesale
Deployment: On-premises
Department: Finance
Integration: SAGE

When Gourmet grocer, Kowalski's Markets, implemented DocuWare, not only did they streamline work processes, they were also able to improve cost analysis and vendor relations, as well as create a shared sense of ownership in the company and see employees thrive once the burden of manual data entry was eliminated.

Founded in 1983, Kowalski's Markets is an upscale gourmet market with 12 locations across the Twin Cities.

The markets feature a variety of local, sustainable, all natural or organic products throughout the meat, seafood, deli and sushi, produce, bakery, artisan cheese, specialty grocery, dairy, frozen foods, wine and spirits, gifts and floral departments.

As Kowalski's Markets grew and expanded, managing paper accounting records became very difficult. It took one corporate accounting employee 3-4 days a week to type the invoice information into the accounting system.

Department managers were also typing the invoice information to compile a weekly report.

To sum things up, manual processes were unnecessarily being done twice and were taking away from employees' core responsibilities.

Kowalski's spoke with their trusted IT Vendor and Authorized DocuWare Partner, who introduced them to DocuWare.

The solution was piloted in the headquarters store for a few months, then rolled out to all 12 stores, one at a time, over the course of the next 3 months. Today invoices are scanned at each store and automatically indexed using DocuWare's Intelligent Indexing feature, which is an AI service that learns how to "recognize" index terms wherever they are on a page. Next, the invoices are electronically routed to the department head, who fixes any missing or incorrect index terms and reviews the costs. Using an electronic stamp, the invoice is routed to the corporate accounting office where it is given one final review before being stored in DocuWare.

A tight integration between DocuWare and Kowalski's accounting solution, Sage, allows the accounting staff quick access to documents stored in DocuWare, right from within their familiar accounting program.

Kowalski's has eliminated more than 40 hours a week in data entry time and their employees have more time to dedicate to the key part of their jobs.

"DocuWare helped us create a shared sense of ownership and gave everyone an understanding that they are an important part of the big picture."

"Accounting team member, Michelle, no longer spends hours on data entry. With DocuWare in place, she is thriving in her position. It has been exciting to watch her grow and gain leadership and accounting skills."

The accounting department can instantly answer vendor questions about being short paid. One of the biggest benefits the accounting department has seen is that they no longer look up information for department managers as these managers now have searchable, self-serve access to important accounting information.

For Tony Olufson, the Accounting Manager, the biggest benefit is being able to instantly perform a cost analysis. Vendor relations have been positively impacted now that answers are readily on hand and the company is able to take full advantage of early payment discounts.

When Kowalski's rolled out the solution, they discovered the upfront customer facing departments didn't understand how much work the back end or accounting department was doing.

Converting paper records to digital ones, has eliminated 384 boxes of records a year that Kowalski's will no longer need to physically store.

DocuWare's impact can be felt on many different levels.

"If I'm curious why expenses are high, I can easily run a report in the system and become instantly aware of what we are spending."

