

2007 Microsoft Office System Customer Solution Case Study



Customer: Wolters Kluwer
Web Site: www.wolterskluwer.com
Customer Size: 18,400 employees
Country or Region: Netherlands
Industry: Information services
Partner: PointBridge

Customer Profile

Wolters Kluwer is an information services and publishing company based in Amsterdam. It has approximately 18,400 employees and annual revenues of 3.4 billion Euros (U.S.\$4 billion).

Software and Services

- Microsoft® Office
 - Microsoft Office InfoPath® 2007
 - Microsoft Office SharePoint® Server 2007
- Microsoft Server Product Portfolio
 - Windows Server® 2003
- Technologies
 - Active Directory®

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Publisher to Reduce Administrative Work by 25 Percent with Automated Forms

“This application will give us the opportunity to streamline HR processes, which have been known to be unclear and unfriendly.... Our goal is to reduce HR administration for business units by 25 percent.”

Diana Christides, Director of HR Source and HRIS, Wolters Kluwer

Wolters Kluwer is a multinational information services company eager to tie its global operating units together more tightly and increase efficiencies with paperless workflows. The company created an automated workflow proof of concept in its human resources (HR) department using the 2007 Microsoft® Office system. Early indications are that, over time, the system will significantly reduce HR administrative work by 25 percent.

Business Needs

Wolters Kluwer provides products and services including books, journals, databases, and other information resources for healthcare, financial services, legal, tax, accounting, regulation, and education professionals. Based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, Wolters Kluwer has operations across Europe, North America, and the Asia Pacific region. It employs approximately 18,400 people and has annual revenues of 3.4 billion Euros (U.S.\$4 billion).

Until recently, Wolters Kluwer operated as a financial holding company for its diverse

information publishing companies and had little involvement in their daily operations. However, challenging global market conditions impelled Wolters Kluwer to reorganize to facilitate growth, provide more integrated services, and reduce expenses. In 2003, the company began the transformation to a more streamlined organization and standardized many operational functions to speed information flow.

HR Source, part of the Wolters Kluwer Shared Service organization, found itself at the hub of the standardization attempts,

because all employees and managers access the company's PeopleSoft employee database. Manual processes engulf nearly all of the human resources (HR) organization, introducing delays and frustration. "Many of our processes rely on human intervention, paper forms, e-mail messages, and phone conversations, presenting many opportunities for errors, rework, and redundancy," explains Diana Christides, Director of HR Source and Human Resources Information Systems at Wolters Kluwer.

For example, when business units create new departments, they update their local financial applications but not always the PeopleSoft employee database. This omission causes problems when charging employee expenses to departments and when hiring and/or transferring employees to different departments; users see error messages saying that the department does not exist.

"We saw a big opportunity to reduce the amount of HR administrative work required of the business units," Christides says. "We estimate that our HR Business Partners are spending 50 to 75 percent of their time on administrative tasks. We are highly motivated to improve operational efficiency to help them focus on more important activities such as workforce and talent management."

Solution

Kevin Taylor, Principal Architect in the Information Technology Outsourcing Department at Wolters Kluwer, evaluated the 2007 Microsoft® Office system with a special interest in the workflow capabilities of Microsoft Office SharePoint® Server 2007. Taylor decided to build a proof of concept using the PeopleSoft employee database, because it crossed all corporate boundaries and would serve as a highly visible model for

introducing automated workflows across the company. "We had previously tried to create a workflow capability ourselves, and it was a nightmare," Taylor says. "Having workflow built into [Office] SharePoint Server 2007 saved us an unpleasant and expensive development effort and will give us an infrastructure for making many different online forms available using a standard, repeatable set of procedures."

Wolters Kluwer engaged PointBridge, of Chicago, Illinois, for help in building a prototype solution based on Office SharePoint Server 2007. PointBridge is a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner in Advanced Infrastructure, Information Worker, and Security Solutions.

The new solution provides a controlled and documented process for new-department creation/deactivation requests, as well as a method for communicating modifications to all affected parties. Financial controllers can request a new department by filling out an electronic form created with the Microsoft Office InfoPath® 2007 information-gathering program. Active Directory® service, part of the Windows Server® 2003 operating system, controls forms access.

A workflow attached to every form guides the user in filling it out and routes it for approval. Office InfoPath 2007 automatically checks availability of department codes and prompts for correct fields. Once approved, the requester and other relevant parties receive an automatic confirmation.

Benefits

Wolters Kluwer expects that its new database update process will improve the productivity of both HR and finance staffs

and alleviate frustrations throughout the organization.

- **Expected 25 percent reduction in administrative work.** Christides expects that the standardized forms and workflow provided by the 2007 Microsoft Office system will provide significant productivity increases across the organization. "This application will give us the opportunity to streamline HR processes, which have been known to be unclear and unfriendly," she says. "New HR processes will be more intuitive, with step-by-step guidance. Our goal is to reduce HR administration for business units by 25 percent."
- **Increased data accuracy.** Delivering a tightly synchronized process throughout Wolters Kluwer systems, applications, and services will continue to drive more accurate data throughout the company. "People tend to see HR as the owner of accurate employee data; however, employees and managers really own the responsibility of making sure their data is correct," Christides says. "We can now provide managers with the tools to easily keep employee and departmental data up to date."
- **First step toward HR portal.** This initial proof of concept will serve as a template for improving similar paper-based processes at Wolters Kluwer and ultimately creating a complete HR portal. "The new Microsoft technologies are very exciting because of the potential they provide for bringing our divisions together with a single toolset," Christides says. "This is the first step toward building a true HR portal where managers can find all HR resources in one place, guided by intuitive workflows, without the need to deal with multiple applications."