


Linde Streamlines Billing Process To Accelerate Revenue Recognition

OVERVIEW



Customer: Linde Gas & Equipment
Industry: Industrial Gases and Engineering
Location: New Providence, New Jersey

Kiteworks Capabilities Used:

- Email
- File Transfer
- Automated File Transfer
- File Sharing
- APIs
- Web Forms

Founded in 1879, Linde Gas & Equipment is a leading global industrial gases and engineering company. The company serves a variety of end markets, including chemicals and energy, food and beverage, electronics, healthcare, manufacturing, and metals and mining. Linde’s industrial gases are used in countless applications, from life-saving oxygen for hospitals to high-purity and specialty gases for electronics manufacturing, hydrogen for clean fuels, and much more.

Striving To Improve Billing Efficiency

Linde’s pharmaceutical and medical gas products and services enable healthcare professionals to provide optimal treatments for various medical conditions. For each delivery of gases made to a healthcare provider, Linde generates an associated proof of delivery (POD) document. It is not uncommon for Linde to make more than 1,000 deliveries to a customer in a month. 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 per week that all roll up to one insurance payer,” says Bob Gentile, business process specialist with Linde. “There was a huge amount of staff time needed on our customers’ behalf to manage the billing and invoicing of our products. We wanted to make the process less resource intensive.”

Automating POD Delivery

Linde initially used a third-party service provider to scan and index delivery numbers, print POD documents, and mail them to customers. But the process was not ideal, and the company wanted to leverage its internal SAP deployment to streamline the process.

The organization then deployed an electronic capture and recognition technology that converts a scanned image of the POD to PDF format, indexes it, and links it to the delivery record in SAP. Using an in-house customization, Linde stitches PODs and associated invoice images from SAP for set periods of time into a PDF document that can be as long as 1,000 pages. The documents are filed into folders labeled with the customer’s name and customer number.

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

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Case Study

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Deploying Secure File Transfer Provides the Missing Link

Linde turned to Kiteworks to enable its PODs to be delivered to customers on-demand. Linde deployed the Kiteworks desktop synchronization client on an internal server that contains the aforementioned customer folders. The Kiteworks client automatically synchronizes all content to the cloud to ensure that the latest delivery and billing documentation is ready for secure download by authorized users.

Customer service representatives at Linde grant individual customers permission to view assigned folders within Kiteworks. Customer privacy is protected because only authorized users can view, download, or print invoices and POD documents in their assigned folders. New documents are pushed to the folder automatically on a set schedule, based on when the customer wants to see them—typically weekly or monthly, but in some cases daily.

Realizing Tangible Benefits

Efficiencies brought about by deploying Kiteworks has resulted in several substantial benefits for Linde:

- *Faster delivery of invoices.* “We dramatically enhanced our invoicing processes by leveraging SAP, and Kiteworks was the final missing link,” Gentile explains. “Now our customers have access to the time-sensitive PODs they need, and turnaround on our end is basically one day.”
- *More complete delivery of invoices.* The streamlined process has improved the rate of successful distribution of PODs to customers from less than 70% before SAP and Kiteworks to more than 99% today.
- *Getting paid faster.* “Adding Kiteworks to our customer billing process has accelerated our revenue recognition cycle and positively impacted our bottom line,” Gentile asserts. “Giving our customers faster access to PODs and invoices means that they are paid faster, as are we.”
- *Savings in paper and mailing costs.* “We used to double up on invoice delivery, sending documents electronically and via hard copy,” Gentile recalls. “With Kiteworks, customers have asked that we stop mailing paper invoices, as Kiteworks has become their go-to destination for accessing delivery and invoice information.”

Expanding the Footprint

This process works so well that Linde is now using Kiteworks for other functions in the company. 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.

Needs

- Automate and secure the transfer of invoices matched with PODs
- Deliver invoices in a timely manner for quick payment

Kiteworks Solution

- Secure File Transfer to disseminate PDF documents containing PODs and invoices on a monthly, weekly, or even daily basis

Business Impact

- One-day invoice delivery, automatically matched with PODs
- 99% success rate in delivering invoices, up from 70% prior to automation
- Faster revenue recognition due to more timely invoicing
- Savings in paper and mailing costs with fully electronic invoicing

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