

Customer Case Study

Comcast Cable automates complex approval process by implementing EZ-Workflow



Customer Profile	Name of customer	Atlantic Division of Comcast Cable Communications, Inc.
	Country	United States
	Customer industry	Broadband cable operator and content provider
	Location	United States (Division HQ: White Marsh, MD; 8,000 employees)
	Holding	Comcast Corporation

Business Problems

In its ongoing goal of customer service and internal operations improvement, it became clear that the manually operated purchase approval process in the Atlantic Division of Comcast Cable Communications was no longer providing the speed, flexibility and real-time tracking required to run the business efficiently. All capital expenditures had to be initiated on electronic forms (via Excel) and printed out in order to obtain the appropriate approval signatures. Each document then had to be routed to multiple offices throughout the United States to obtain the required signatures from the System / Region / Division and/or Headquarters levels. This manual routing not only incurred significant inter-office courier costs, but also resulted in approval cycle times that often took several weeks.

As the actual approval routing is determined based upon several factors (such as the amount, cost category, etc...), the purchasing department had to manually analyze each transaction to determine the appropriate routing. Not only was this task time-consuming, but its accuracy was subject to the quality of the information and routing rules.

The fact that paper documents were dispersed throughout the organization resulted in a loss of control and accountability, creating time-consuming searches to determine the status of specific transactions. This manual mode stalled the approval process because approvers were out of the office and/or the documents were simply misplaced.

Solution

To address these challenges, the purchasing department of Comcast's Atlantic Division identified key business requirements, including:

- a fully Web-based environment to easily deploy the approval process in multiple locations
- online real-time monitoring of active transac-

- tions with detailed history of approval events
 - electronic Web-based forms to eliminate all transport of paper documents between Division offices
 - robust and secured electronic signature capabilities to comply with all auditing requirements
 - rules-based engine and conditional routing capabilities to address the complex approval structure of the organization
 - "pro-active" system issuing task notifications to users to insure quick approval cycles and to alert the purchasing department after final approval to generate the associated Purchase Orders
 - ease-of-implementation and usage to expedite projects and quickly generate results
- and finally, a Workflow engine generic enough to be used for other processes in the organization and compliant with the existing Comcast network/application technologies

After several months' assessment, the EZ-Workflow solution, developed by DynaFlow Inc., was selected and implemented. Although the Comcast approval policies are multi-level and complex due to several project and cost types, the EZ-Workflow rules-based engine enables the Atlantic Division to automate tedious and time-consuming tasks, freeing personnel to provide better customer service. From the initiation of the capital expenditure process to the issuing of purchase orders, all users involved are notified via a browser-based "User-Worklist", enabling them to check status and/or approve from any network PC available. For urgent approval, mobile-messaging devices (Pager, SMS) can also be used to expedite the process.

The Director of Purchasing, states: **"Our initial estimates show that our traditional approval cycle time of 2-3 weeks can be significantly scaled down**

"Our traditional approval cycle time of 2-3 weeks can be significantly scaled down to a few days, and urgent approvals can be processed within a day"

Director of Purchasing at Comcast Cable Communications



to a few days, and urgent approvals can be processed within a day. Not only has the removal of our paper-driven approval process achieved this key business objective, but the electronic approval made possible by EZ-Workflow will also translate to important savings by eliminating daily inter-office couriers. Finally, capital expenditure initiators, buyers and management are able to track on a real-time basis the status and evolution of the approval process”.

Implementation

Pierre Beaulieu, President of DynaFlow Inc., adds: “Because Comcast had a good understanding of their current approval process and knew what objectives this implementation was targeting, it was possible to install EZ-Workflow, configure the approval routes and rules, and go live with the first “Comcast System” in only 7 weeks. The browser-based (zero-client) architecture not only enables quick implementation of the automated approval process, but also facilitates easy deployment to other Systems and potentially to other business processes within the organization”.

Benefits

- Cost reduction as the shipping of physical docu-

ments by courier is fully replaced by online requisitions data, readily available to appropriate approvers via their browser

- Significant decrease in the duration of the approval process, by replacing time-consuming manual steps by electronic notifications and by using the rules-based engine to define automatically the required approval route of each transaction
- Increased operational monitoring as the real-time status of all documents is available online for (authorized) employees and managers, and idle transactions or approval bottlenecks are easily identified
- Low cost of ownership by a centralized Web-based architecture providing a zero-client access for all approvers/coordinators

“The implementation of EZ-Workflow has proven to be a wise decision for the Atlantic Division of Comcast Cable, as all targeted operational objectives associated with our capital expenditure approval process are being met. In addition, DynaFlow has proven to be a reliable and responsive partner, always eager to adapt the solution to improve our internal process,” concludes Steve Hughes, Sr. Director of Resource Management.

About Comcast Cable

Headquartered in Philadelphia, Comcast Cable Communications, a division of Comcast Corporation, develops, manages and operates broadband cable networks and provides programming content. Operating in 17 of the United States' 20 largest metropolitan areas, Comcast is one of the leading communications, media and entertainment companies in the world. The company's 55,000 employees, in five divisions, serve more than 21 million customers.

The Atlantic Division of Comcast Cable serves more than 3.7 million customers in Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, Washington, D.C. as well as parts of Pennsylvania, Ohio and West Virginia. The Atlantic Division also serves customers throughout the Southwestern United States including Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and Southern California. The Atlantic Division offices are located in White Marsh, Maryland.

About DynaFlow

Leader in Business Process Management in the Americas and Europe, DynaFlow is dedicated to providing its customers with World-Class expertise and business solutions in the strategic domains of Process Modeling, Knowledge Management and Workflow Automation. With key market acceptance, its EZ-Process e-Product Suite supports ERP/B2B/ISO/KM implementations and Business Process Re-engineering initiatives in various size organizations. Since 1990, DynaFlow has maintained a strong and constructive relationship with Baan, by its direct involvement in all critical aspects of the DEM/Workflow design & development, global training and worldwide rollout. For more information, visit: www.dynaflow-dem.com

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