

CUSTOMER CASE: E-INVOICING

ABB handles secure e-invoices across Europe

ABB manages electronic invoices across Europe, reduces costs, and creates a foundation for further improved efficiency.

- We chose StreamServe as our partner since they offered a solution that could meet our requirements for electronic invoices in Europe in a very simple and appealing way, says Pether Jonsson, Project Manager for e-invoicing in the ABB Group.

ABB needed to improve its existing invoicing process by adding support for secure e-invoices within the ABB group. StreamServe Enhanced Security was implemented, and ABB is now able to send and receive secure e-invoices, and receive supplier invoices electronically, all over Europe.

ABB used to have a very decentralized organization, but has shifted towards more centralization. This involves consolidation of legal units, IT systems and processes. This also applies to the invoicing solution, which is now managed centrally by ABB in Zurich and will during the course of 2007 and 2008 be available for ABB companies throughout Europe. Already in 2006, approximately 30 000 invoices are signed and validated with the appropriate security certificates; the potential volume exceeds one million invoices.

- In ABB's case it is important to have a flexible and cost efficient solution, considering the number of countries and companies that will use it, says Pether Jonsson.

With StreamServe Enhanced Security e-invoices pass through a central point where signatures are managed and validation takes place. Which certificate is used in a specific transaction is based on which countries are involved in sending and receiving the invoice.

The EU Directive on Electronic Invoicing has been implemented differently in different countries. As always, changes also take place, and it can be difficult to follow the development and make sure regulations are adhered to.

- We needed a solution that could handle differences between countries. Furthermore, a partner such as StreamServe can provide us with updates on changes in regulations, and their effects on ABB, Pether Jonsson explains.

A second important aspect of streamlining the invoicing process was on the supplier side - making it attractive for partners to send invoices electronically. Smaller suppliers can use a web-based system. For the larger suppliers a B2B process involving both invoices and other exchanges (orders, delivery notes etc.) is used. While the B2B solution involves a larger initial investment, the web based system is easy and low cost. ABB is looking to lower the threshold and get as many suppliers as possible on board. All incoming supplier invoices within ABB's Advanced Supply Chain Collaboration system are validated with StreamServe Enhanced Security.

One of the major benefits from e-invoicing within ABB is cost reduction for invoice management. Automating the process results in fewer mistakes and less administrative work. Furthermore, analysis of invoice data and other related internal processes is simplified when invoices are now easily accessible electronically.

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