

Blount International Implements xft personnel file



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Blount International is a global manufacturer and marketer of replacement parts, equipment and accessories for the forestry, agriculture and construction industries. To manage employee records and reduce paper-handling costs, they implemented an SAP-based system providing one-stop access to a 'Single Source of Truth' for personnel-related information worldwide.



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The Challenge

About Blount

Blount International is a global manufacturer and marketer of replacement parts, equipment and accessories for the forestry, agriculture and construction industries. Headquartered in Portland, Oregon, the company has a long and rich history of producing quality products under brand names that range from ICS to OREGON and Carlton. Known worldwide for its industry leading innovations, the company actively promotes a corporate culture that emphasizes performance, continuous improvement and growth. Blount markets and sells its products in more than 100 countries and manufactures its products on three continents, with facilities located in the U.S., Brazil, Canada and China. The company employs more than 3,800 people and reported 2010 sales in excess of \$611 million.

Opportunity Drives Best Practice Implementation

Blount consistently leads the market in product quality and innovation by fostering a work environment that promotes excellence in all aspects of its business operations. So when years of growth and strategic acquisitions began to strain the Human Resource (HR) department's ability to cope with a largely paper-based document filing system, Blount's management team acted quickly to evaluate its options. In the process, they very quickly realized that the resources required to manually process and store personnel information had organizational impacts that went far beyond the department's ability to manage an ever increasing volume of paper.

Without a centralized way of managing personnel information that was easily accessible to all authorized users, regardless of where they were located, gaining timely insights from operational data posed an increasingly daunting and complex challenge. This was particularly true at the enterprise level, where the lack of a common file structure and document repository forced each Blount facility to independently manage and maintain its own record-keeping system.

To improve talent resource utilization and strategic decision making, the company needed a single source of truth for all personnel-related information in SAP worldwide. A source that, for regulatory compliance and operational purposes, could also seamlessly integrate the thousands of historical records — whether on CDs, microfiche, paper or other media — stored on-site and scheduled for backfile conversion.

Evaluation Leads to xft

From an organizational perspective, the team envisioned a personnel file management system that would address a broad range of strategic, human resource management and cost containment goals.

Specifically, the team's evaluation process focused on finding a solution that would enable the department to:

- « Centralize access to all employee-related information and records on a worldwide basis.
- « Automate work processes and repetitive administrative tasks, while ensuring the consistency and accuracy of the data.
- « Leverage the company's existing SAP-based ERP investments, such as document repositories, data structures and access control lists, to eliminate the need to maintain duplicate systems.
- « Enable more proactive, enterprise-wide talent management initiatives by eliminating the time-intensive, routine tasks associated with the handling and storage of printed documents.
- « Unclutter expensive office real estate to enable more room for growth.

"Very quickly, we were up and running on xft and moving forward with the backfile conversion to eliminate the final source of paper and other hard-to-access media types in our records-keeping system. Working with Spectrum Information Systems NW, Inc. (SIS NW), almost one million legacy documents were integrated into xft, completing our journey toward a single source of truth for personnel records."

Andrea Panasewich
Senior HRIS Analyst for Blount

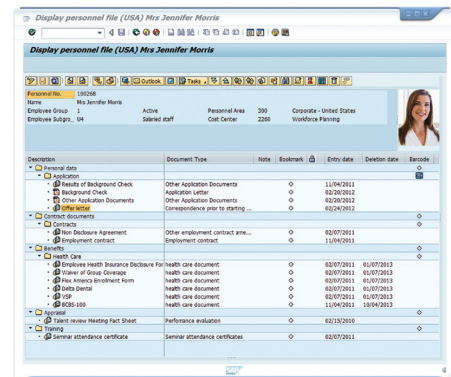
The Solution

Following a thorough evaluation process, Blount decided to implement xft personnel file. From the onset, the team was impressed with how closely its SAP-based approach to records management matched their department's operational needs. Across all offices and lines of business, xft's work processes, common data repository and structured folders for navigating personnel records would enable the HR department to:

- « Manage day-to-day administrative tasks in a way that inherently promotes data consistency, reliability and compliance with corporate or regulatory mandates.
- « Increase access to supporting information and transactional data, such as e-mails, faxes and externally generated documents, via a hierarchical file structure that is easy for managers to navigate and use.

- « Provide seamless access to historical documents brought into the system via a backfile conversion involving more than 940,000 documents and file types.
- « Quickly centralize the management of employee records as each additional Blount office or manufacturing facility is added to the system, while being responsive to their specific needs and changing business conditions.
- « Avoid all the pitfalls associated with managing duplicate access lists and security protocols by fully leveraging the company's existing SAP-based investment in these costly-to-maintain infrastructure conditions.
- « Eliminate paper, a necessary precursor to accomplishing the team's "single, trusted resource for human resource information" goal.

To date, Blount's corporate headquarters, U.S.-based facilities and operations in Brazil are actively up and running on xft personnel file, with Canada, China and European facilities to follow as part of a strategic rollout plan for enterprise-wide adoption.



xft personnel file

Flexibility Leads to Best Practice Solution

Transitioning dozens of offices and manufacturing facilities, each with an independent means of processing and storing records, to a new personnel management system can be a daunting challenge. To ensure success, the Blount team felt it was important to not only choose the right software solution, but also a vendor with broad experience in the human resources arena and a thorough knowledge of industry best practices.

"We interact with a lot of vendors, but rarely do we see the level of interaction we experienced with the xft team," said Mardi Slick, Compensation and Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) manager for Blount International. "From day one, they understood our business – where we were, where we needed to go and how to help us get there, quickly and efficiently. To our benefit, the team demonstrated a remarkably deep understanding of industry best practices and a willingness to share that knowledge to help us improve our system. So while the personnel file software solution more than met our expectations, the xft team really hit the ball out of the park."

With xft personnel file, the HR team now has direct control over the design of its records system and daily work processes, enabling them to quickly make changes in response to internal requests, new regulations or changing market conditions. This level of control and flexibility has also enabled the team to quickly adapt to the specific needs of the company's remote offices and manufacturing facilities, without compromising the integrity of processes or data.



"xft provides us with an enterprise-wide resource for accessing personnel records that meets the disparate needs of our decentralized organization, while delivering the data consistency, reliability and trustworthiness required to facilitate high-performance business operations."

Karen Erne
PHR Manager, Compensation and Benefits, Blount International

Highlights

Document management plus process management

xft personnel file doesn't just collect personnel documents, it makes them an integral part of HR process management. Preconfigured standard processes increase the transparency and efficiency of processes and ensure that nothing important is lost. And as every process and every change is documented, xft personnel file is the safe choice from a legal perspective.

Optimum data protection

Use of the role-based authorization system of SAP HCM ensures that, despite transparency, confidential information remains confidential. HCM users can access files according to their SAP HCM authorizations, while occasional users' access is based on their SAP user role. Time-controlled

processes (e.g. for automatic deletion of warnings and reprimands) ensure that personnel files meet legal requirements, while predefined dual control workflows provide the required level of control.

Fully integrated with SAP

xft personnel file is based 100 % on SAP, and seamlessly integrates with SAP HCM. This means that you can use SAP authorizations as well as all SAP standard scenarios, from SAP transactions to portal applications such as MSS/ESS. xft personnel file also works directly with SAP data and not with data duplicates in a separate mirror system. Thus all information is easy to access and always up to date.

Lean and flexible

Programming of all xft products follows a modular design, based on the principle of service-oriented architecture (SOA). Communication with the SAP HCM system takes place via clearly-defined interfaces (service providers). This makes it possible to connect several separate SAP HCM systems to the digital personnel file, even if they are running different releases or custom developments. xft personnel file can be used with all scanning and archiving solutions supporting the SAP Archive-Link interface, among them all market leaders.



About xft

xft is a growing SAP partner company specializing in the integration and optimization of business processes in SAP. We create our own software products based on SAP NetWeaver and complement them with individual, customer-specific solutions. Our SAP expertise and our solid technical and industry knowledge attract a range of customers from medium-sized companies to international publicly traded companies in almost every industry sector.

We provide a central access point to all relevant business and process information (documents, e-mails, or electronic records), fully integrated within the process context. Our products include all types of record management solutions, from digital personnel files, invoice management and contract management to project and change management in production. In the background, xft basic components manage business processes and maintain connections with other systems.

xft distinguishes itself through its close relationship with SAP, in terms of expertise, location, and professional ties. The founders of xft worked in the major development departments of the Walldorf-based software giant for many years. As an official SAP partner, we offer solutions directly within the SAP context. Many well-known sales and implementation partners include xft products in their solution portfolios.

About SIS NW

The xft partner company Spectrum Information Systems NW Inc. (SIS NW) developed a methodology for classifying the contents of the files that made it incredibly easy to identify a specific document within an existing file and sort into the respective folder in the xft personnel file. SIS NW is a leading backfile conversion provider. Find SIS NW on the web at sisnwinc.com or contact us at info@sisnwinc.com.