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ALMATIS

Almatis Prepares for S/4HANA with VersaFile's docuflow for SAP



INTRODUCTION



With over 100 years of alumina expertise, Almatris is the world leader in the development, manufacturing, and supply of premium alumina and alumina-based products. With its head office in Frankfurt, Germany, Almatris serves its customers from 14 strategically located sales, research, and manufacturing sites – producing plenty of business-related content along the way.

“Almatris estimates they will be able to reduce the size of their SAP database by ~40%”

Almatris uses SAP as its enterprise resource planning (ERP) software, which it runs globally to produce, sell, and deliver its product. Shipping, transportation, and customer service teams are required to attach business documentation to a transaction record in SAP. **Almatris was using native capabilities of SAP system as well as 3rd Party archiving server to store and archive SAP linked attachments.** Shipping documents, vendor invoices, and Certificates of Analysis (CoAs) are just some of the documents that get attached to the SAP transaction record.

THE PATH TO MODERNIZATION

The Almatris team began their search for a digital archiving solution as part of their preparation for their migration to SAP S/4HANA. With so many years of data on their SAP ECC database, the migration to SAP S/4HANA appeared both daunting and costly. **Reducing the size of their current database would be key for simplifying their migration effort, lowering risk, and reducing costs.**

At the same time, Almatris didn't want to store or archive its unstructured SAP data in its legacy solutions. Total cost of ownership (TCO) was high, and **they wanted lower-cost storage for their business-related content.**

"We were looking to introduce an archiving solution that would help us optimize our costs and be better prepared for the upcoming S/4 conversion program," says Vlad Lavysh, Global Director of IT at Almatris.

Additionally, Almatris wanted to improve the user experience of accessing content within SAP. Users were limited in their creation of attachments in SAP because of the costs associated with an ever-growing database. This resulted in documents stored across SAP, email, on local computers, and more. As well, SAP's native interface capabilities just weren't cutting it anymore. Users wanted to be able to group related documents more easily in the front-end interface. Mr. Lavysh says, **"We were looking to improve user experience and provide the business with better opportunities to work with non-structured content."**



DOCUFLOW FOR SAP CHECKED ALL THE BOXES



The Almatris team knew what they were looking for: they needed a scalable solution with tight SAP integration and automated tools to migrate their content into a flexible content management system.

During their search, they found that many of their available options were not suited for them. **“The other solutions we found were either way too big and complex and not really affordable,”** says Mr. Lavysh. “They provided a lot of features that we weren’t looking to implement as part of the scope of this project.”

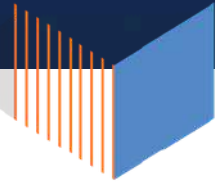
Through an online search, Almatris found **VersaFile, a leading provider of business automation and content management solutions**, and its product docuflow for SAP.



Almatris discovered that **VersaFile’s docuflow could migrate, archive, link, and automate content processes to Microsoft 365 SharePoint Online**. This checked the final box for Almatris. “We were looking to use SharePoint Online as our archiving platform,” says Mr. Lavysh. “We weren’t looking to introduce a new archiving solution into our IT landscape.”



INTEGRATING MICROSOFT SHAREPOINT WITH SAP



Almatis teamed up with VersaFile to replace the SAP attachment process. The end solution used SharePoint, as well as a plugin to transfer documents quickly and easily from Outlook to SharePoint. The end-to-end content integration with SAP was made possible with VersaFile's docuflow. With the help of VersaFile, the Almatis team modernized how they integrated and automated content across their business with definite business outcomes:

Minimizing the load on the legacy Document Archiving solution

Previously, staff would attach Certificate of Analysis (CoA) documents to the SAP record, which would then get archived into the legacy solution. **To minimize the use of their legacy solution, and its implicit cost, VersaFile migrated the CoAs from the legacy platform to SharePoint,** then implemented outbound attachment archiving so that future attachments would automatically archive into SharePoint. "We're envisioning a series of rollouts so that SharePoint can become our single archival platform for SAP's unstructured data," says Mr. Lavysh.



INTEGRATING MICROSOFT SHAREPOINT WITH SAP



Reducing the size of the SAP database

Jerry Kidd, IT Applications Specialist at Almatiss, explains that they were looking to both decrease the volume of attachments in SAP and offload them from the database altogether. “And that functionality happened,” he says. VersaFile configured docuflow to archive ADK data objects from SAP into SharePoint, greatly reducing the size of their SAP database. For example, once vendor invoices reach a certain age, they’ll now be automatically archived in SharePoint via docuflow. After completion of planned roll-outs, the outcome is an estimated **40% reduction in the size of their SAP database**, setting Almatiss up for a more efficient migration to SAP S/4HANA.

Automating tasks and processes

VersaFile also implemented an email capture plugin, which embeds into Microsoft Outlook and lets users add attachments and emails directly from Outlook to SharePoint. These attachments also link to the appropriate SAP record and populate metadata from email attachments for a more streamlined experience. Now, **users can attach content from Outlook to the appropriate SAP transaction in just a few clicks, without having to log in to SAP and locate the correct place.** “The whole process is way more efficient,” says Mr. Kidd. “It’s a big time-saver for our people.”

“VersaFile was instrumental in helping us manage the process, and they helped us structure SharePoint so that it’s functional and scalable for us in the future.”

- Jerry Kidd, IT Applications Specialist at Almatiss

INTEGRATING MICROSOFT SHAREPOINT WITH SAP



Improving user experience

docuflow also made it possible to sort and organize SAP attachments into virtual folders in the front-end SAP interface. This made it easier for users to view all of the information related to an order in a single screen and quickly locate the right attachments. **“This has saved our users a lot of time and effort switching between a sales order or a shipment document or an outbound delivery,”** says Mr. Kidd. “[Users] can see everything from the sales order now.”

“In the future, Almatiss may consider allowing access to SAP attachments in SharePoint without a VPN connection or logging into SAP, enabling quick access.”

Moving towards a single-point-of-truth storage

Today, users are no longer restricted in what they’re able to store on the SAP database, since the system has been reconfigured so that attachments are technically stored on SharePoint. **“All of the documentation that underpins our business process can be stored in [one place],”** says Mr. Lavysh. Almatiss has seen a big uptick in the number of documents users attach in SAP since the change and an increased utilization rate. “As we monitor usage since implementing docuflow, we can see more and more people using the system,” says Kidd. “The acceptance by the business and the stakeholders has been very good.” Mr. Lavysh adds, **“We’re moving towards a single-point-of-truth storage.”**



“The experience of working with the implementation team, and the entire VersaFile team, was really outstanding.”

- Vlad Lavysh, Global Director of IT at Almatiss

MODERN, ENTERPRISE- GRADE RESULTS



From the very beginning, Almatris was confident in the expertise of the VersaFile team. “We had a high level of confidence in VersaFile after we saw their presentation,” says Mr. Lavysh. “There were a lot of fruitful explanations of how the solution works and limitations we should consider.”

And the implementation went well, too: the VersaFile team proved capable and delivered. “I found the team provided by VersaFile very easy to work with,” says Mr. Kidd. “Sometimes going above and beyond what we had requested – and they were amiable with the cost associated with it.”

In one instance, Almatris experienced an application error and Mr. Kidd says they reached out to VersaFile. “They were very quick to do the analysis and to put in the fix,” he says. “Since that application fix, we haven’t had any more errors and **everything is running like clockwork.**”

Mr. Kidd says Almatris users love using docuflow. He explains that they’ve received positive feedback about the ability to access everything in one place and also transfer documents directly from Outlook to SharePoint. “When transportation is getting a lot of emails from carriers and other sources, they can go to the email and attach it directly from Outlook to the ticket or sales order or shipment delivery document – without having to log in to SAP,” he says. **“Everybody absolutely loves it. The change management was very easy.”**

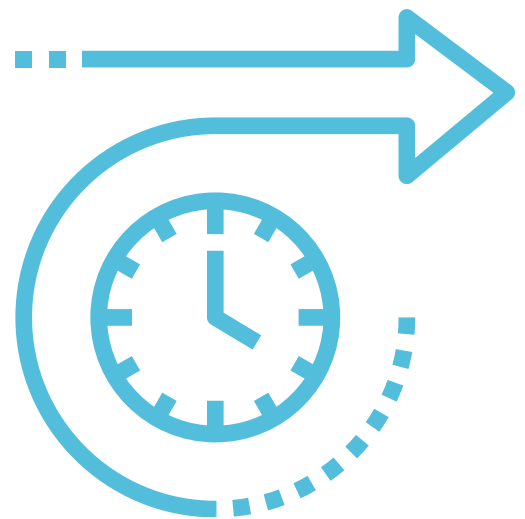


THE ROAD AHEAD



Next steps for Almatris include using docuflow to move vendor invoices from its legacy archive to SharePoint. They plan to continue working with VersaFile to migrate purchase orders and requisitions from SAP to SharePoint. The goal is to make SharePoint the single archival platform for SAP's unstructured data.

"We do several projects per year with different vendors," Mr. Lavysh concludes, "**Working with the VersaFile team was a really great experience and I would rank it number one.**"





VersaFile® helps organizations running SAP to save money and time by modernizing how they integrate and automate content across their organization. Most SAP customers are saddled with expensive, monolithic ECM systems to manage & integrate their SAP content, which is critical to operating their business, but to date...there have been no real alternatives to this approach.

Today, with our docuflow for SAP product, we provide a modern, quick-to-implement content integration platform that not only allows SAP customers to achieve this critical capability but can use more modern cloud-based platforms such as Box, Microsoft 365, and AWS S3. This enables customers to:

- Save costs on legacy systems
- Save time with easier automation, and
- Reduce compliance risk

Customers are elated with docuflow because it is:

- Easy and fast to implement
- Integrated deeply into SAP business applications, and
- Flexible, supporting multiple content platforms

Simply put, docuflow is the modern alternative to legacy ECM for content & process automation with SAP.

Ready to get started?

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