



Linen-maker delivers a faster, more satisfying customer experience



- Provides instant overview into project statuses
- Streamlines and automates document processes
- Helps employees work more productively

COMPANY & CHALLENGE

Based in Austria, HERKA Frottier is a leading manufacturer of high-quality terry weaving textile products. With 80 employees, HERKA operates 21 latest generation weaving looms in a fully digitized plant and produces up to 12,000 towels per day.

Running one of the most advanced weaving and sewing lines in Europe, HERKA blends tradition with modern technology to deliver fluffy, highly absorbent and durable towels. All products are “Made in Austria” and delivered to customers including consumers, commercial laundry services, hotels, wellness providers and the healthcare sector. However, many back-office processes at HERKA were still paper-based, and following a traditional approach of completing tasks across all departments sequentially, one after another rather than in parallel, was inefficient.

Fabian Weigl, Controller and Application Manager at HERKA Frottier, says: “We wanted to become more productive and analysed how we could optimise our workflows and deliver faster and better customer service at every stage of a project.” Florian Kocourek, Head of Sales and Customer Service at HERKA Frottier, remembers: “In the sales department, the process to request



and deliver samples to business customers was very manual and time-consuming. We wanted to accelerate this and provide a stronger customer experience from the first contact.”

Initially, HERKA focused on modernising and consolidating documents and data across its business, from pre-sales and sales to order management, logistics and aftersales services. But how could the company realize its vision for more intelligent workflows?

SOLUTION

Moving to a fully digital workflow

The team at HERKA looked at a number of software solutions and concluded that DocuWare Cloud was the best fit for them. “We were impressed by the ease of use of DocuWare Cloud for end users as well as administrators,” confirms Fabian Weigl. “DocuWare Cloud offers great value for money, with a wide range of integrated modules. This was important for us, as it gives us the flexibility to use all the available features and tools without having to worry about additional licensing agreements and costs.”



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HERKA FROTTIER



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FLORIAN KOCOUREK
HEAD OF SALES AND CUSTOMER SERVICE
HERKA FROTTIER



Using DocuWare Workflow Manager and the easy-to-use visual Workflow Designer and DocuWare Forms tools, HERKA implemented dynamic, interactive processes that collect data across multiple steps, before consolidating all information in one central place. “DocuWare is more than a document archive, it drives our business processes,” adds Fabian Weigl.

Meeting the Ricoh team in-person for detailed planning discussions was essential to project success. After the Ricoh experts demonstrated the capabilities of DocuWare, the HERKA team fully appreciated the enormous potential of the solution. “Seeing what we could do inspired us to rethink our approach and come up with new ideas to streamline our collaboration processes,” says Florian Kocourek.

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The DocuWare implementation received praise from HERKA's CEO, when the project was completed ahead of time. “Once everything was set up, we wanted to run a pilot phase for about three weeks,” notes Florian Kocourek. “But after only two days, we decided that the new ways of working were so good, that we decided to roll out the new processes across the company. DocuWare has made a huge difference for us.”

With DocuWare, staff at all levels at HERKA are saving time, as collaboration has become much easier. One key feature that helps HERKA to work faster and more productively is the Highlight Search, part of DocuWare Smart Connect, which makes the built-in full-text search accessible from any application and in any context.

BENEFITS

DocuWare provides instant visibility

“Sometimes, customers call our CEO directly to ask about the status of a project,” explains Florian Kocourek. “In the past, our CEO then had to call maybe three different people to collect information. With DocuWare Cloud, he can simply search for the customer or project and immediately see all important information on a single screen, then provide an instant update, which saves time and also improves the customer experience.”

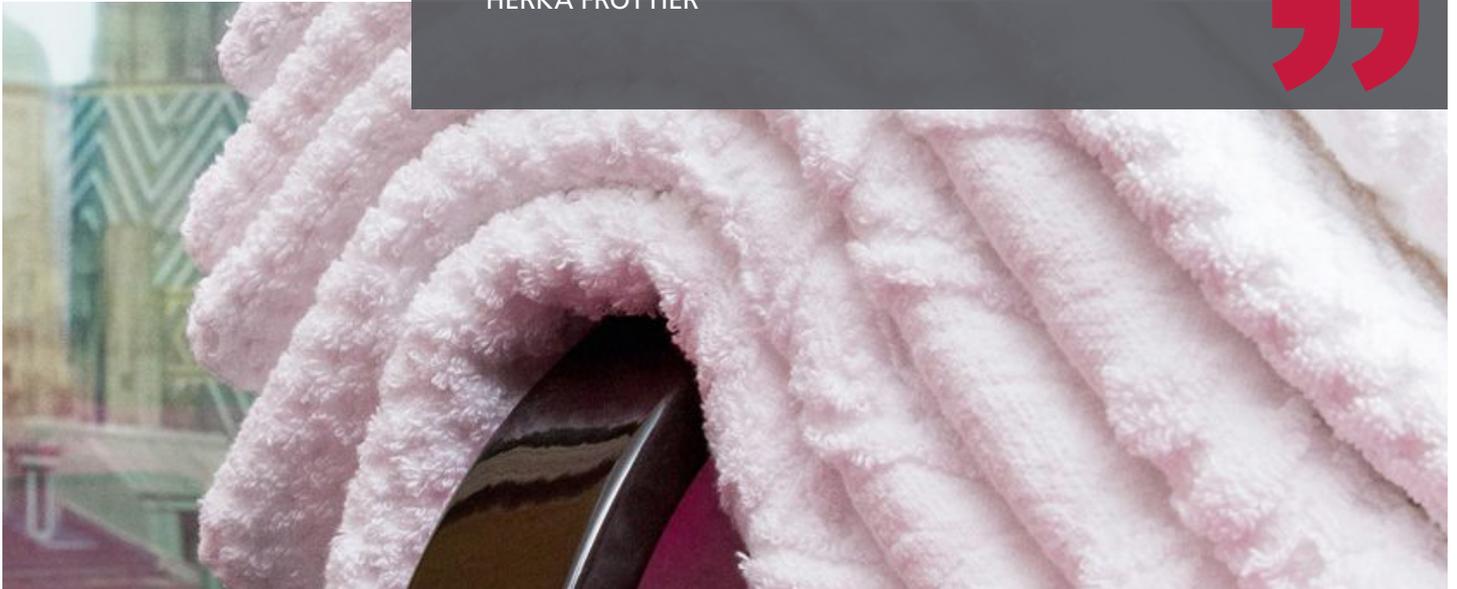
HERKA imports many documents into a central archive in DocuWare Cloud, including emails, design drafts, scanned receipts, bank statements, ERP reports and more. DocuWare uses AI-based technology to convert the content and make all documents easy to search. “When we visit customers, we now have all details at our fingertips and can quickly present a design sketch or other materials,” says Florian Kocourek.

“Sometimes, customers also want to place a follow-up order



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after several years, but don't remember the details of the original order. Thanks to DocuWare, we can now quickly find the right data and start the new project."

As well as using DocuWare Cloud as a central project management platform, the HERKA team built a project summary dashboard that provides a quick overview of the current status. "Having all documents and details on a single summary page is a great help," says Fabian Weigl.

"In the past, we relied on printed documents and every person working on a project added notes, and the process was strictly sequential. Project folders grew larger and larger and became difficult to move between desks, and it became hard to find what we needed. With DocuWare, we've eliminated these inefficiencies and redundant copies. By leveraging built-in workflow features, we're now handling many steps in parallel, enabling us to fulfil customer orders faster and provide better service."

Many workflows are now simpler and more transparent

with DocuWare. For example, the review and approval of design drafts for customised orders incorporates automated tracking of signatures by staff, partners and customers, complete with timestamps. The solution notifies relevant people when action is required, and project managers are updated when everything is signed off and the order is ready for production.

Similarly, HERKA redesigned digital invoice management steps, so that approvals can be granted much faster, thanks to easy access to DocuWare via desktops, laptops or mobile phones. After the CEO experienced the benefits of the new approach, he suggested that the team should also modernise the purchase order processes. It is also much quicker for the sales team to deliver textile samples to customers.

"We now just fill in a short web form after sales meetings, saving us a lot of time," says Florian Kocourek. "The customer often gets the sample on the next day, which is especially helpful for time-critical projects. We automatically get an update when the sample has been dispatched thanks



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to DocuWare text extraction tools that are processing our scanned dispatch lists, so we know exactly when we can follow up with the customer.” Florian Kocourek concludes: “Together with Ricoh, we’ve enabled more effective collaboration. By automating routine tasks, some staff can take on new, more exciting responsibilities. It was great to

see that once we started rolling out the new digital DocuWare workflows, staff were very engaged and suggested additional optimisations and tweaks to our processes. DocuWare has not just transformed how we work, but also inspired our employees to think more independently and come up with new ideas to become even more productive.”

ABOUT RICOH

Ricoh is a leading provider of integrated digital services and print and imaging solutions designed to support digital transformation of workplaces, workspaces and optimise business performance. Headquartered in Tokyo, Ricoh’s global operation reaches customers in approximately 200 countries and regions, supported by cultivated knowledge, technologies, and organisational capabilities nurtured over

its 85-year history. In the financial year ended March 2024, Ricoh Group had worldwide sales of 2,348 billion yen (approx. 15.5 billion USD). It is Ricoh’s mission and vision to empower individuals to find Fulfilment through Work by understanding and transforming how people work so we can unleash their potential and creativity to realise a sustainable future. For further information, please visit www.ricoh-europe.com

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