

Brown-Forman

Saving time and money by managing global enterprise content—from invoices to photographs—with enterprise content management



Business overview

Brown-Forman is one of the largest American-owned spirits and wine companies and among the top 10 largest global spirits companies. The company globally markets and sells various categories of beverage alcohol products, such as Jack Daniel's Tennessee Whiskey, Southern Comfort, Canadian Mist, Old Forester, and Woodford Reserve; Fetzer, Jekel, and Bonterra California wines; tequila; liqueurs; vodka; rum; and ready-to-drink products. Brown-Forman sells 37 brands in more than 135 countries and has offices in cities across the globe. Employing 3,750 people worldwide, the company had sales of \$2.4 billion in fiscal 2006.

Challenges

"As we looked at how to drive down costs and improve efficiencies, we knew that automating manual, transactional processes for managing content was a great place to start," says Rob Price, lead system engineer of Brown-Forman. For instance, mailing paper invoices back and forth between offices was costly and time consuming, invoices could too easily be lost, and visibility across departments or locations was difficult if not impossible. "Finding an enterprise content management solution became a top priority for Brown-Forman, with streamlining invoice processing as our first project. We began looking for a comprehensive solution that would integrate seamlessly with our SAP system and provide easy, global access to electronic invoices and other content."

High costs and inefficiencies associated with using advertising agency as "middleman"

In addition, locating specific Brown-Forman brand assets—logos, marketing and sales collateral, magazine advertisements, point-of-sale artwork, audio for radio spots, video for television commercials, PowerPoint presentations, and so on—was often difficult because they were stored and managed in many different places. In addition, many of these assets were maintained by the company's advertising agencies.

"Whenever anyone in marketing or field sales needed a brand asset, they had to request it from the advertising agency which then charged us for the time and expense to find it, make a copy, and ship it," explains Price. "The ad agency also housed and maintained all of our brand websites so all changes to web content had to go through them as well. We knew if we could eliminate the advertising agency as middleman, without overburdening our own staff, we would save a lot of time and money."

EMC solution

In 2005, Brown-Forman implemented the EMC® Documentum® enterprise content management platform along with EMC Captiva® to consolidate information silos and more efficiently manage a wide variety of content spread across its extended, global enterprise. "We initially chose the EMC Documentum platform as the point solution for invoice processing and brand asset management, because it would work well for both of these applications and could easily be extended to become our enterprise solution," said Price.

Today 1,500 employees use the new invoice processing system to process approximately 12,000 invoices each month. Approximately 4,200 users worldwide—including external partners, such as advertising agencies and print houses—manage 800 gigabytes of 30,000 objects using a Documentum-based brand asset management system. Legal, packaging, and others have also begun relying on the Documentum platform. As of 2007, more than 6,000 people used the Documentum system to manage or access Brown-Forman content.

Reducing cycle time, shipping expenses, and errors in invoice processing

With help from EMC partner Imagitek Ltd., Brown-Forman significantly streamlined accounts payable processes. As soon as incoming invoices in either paper or electronic form are scanned, EMC Captiva InputAcce[®] uses its optical character recognition (OCR) capability to capture metadata which is then automatically imported into the Documentum repository along with the document image. Using Imagitek Prodágio A/P software, which provides a role-based interface designed specifically for accounts payable users of the Documentum platform, AP users fill in additional fields needed by the company's SAP system.

“In addition to reducing cycle time for invoice processing, delivery of brand assets, and web publishing, we have eliminated shipping costs and advertising agency fees, increased visibility, and facilitated outsourcing of non-strategic tasks. And we’re not done. We expect to continue reaping benefits by extending the EMC Documentum platform even further.”

Rob Price, Lead System Engineer

Because the SAP and Documentum systems are integrated using EMC Documentum Content Services for SAP, invoice images can be accessed from either system. When SAP users click on an invoice transaction in SAP, they can immediately pull up a PDF rendition of the invoice, enabling them to resolve issues and answer questions many times faster than before, when they had to track down the invoice manually.

“With the Documentum-SAP integration and Prodágio A/P, we have significantly reduced the cycle time for invoice processing, freeing up staff and enabling us to take advantage of early payment discounts,” says Price. “Eliminating the shipping of invoices back and forth also saved a lot of money and reduced payment errors.”

Cutting cycle time for brand asset requests and increasing visibility

To consolidate information silos of brand assets, Brown-Forman created a brand asset resource (BAR) system based on the Documentum platform and EMC Documentum Digital Asset Manager. With its central repository and web interface, BAR makes all approved Brown-Forman brand assets easily available to all who need them, inside or outside the company, on Macintosh computers or PCs, wherever they are located. Authorized internal users can search through low resolution thumbnail versions of photographs and other digital assets to quickly find the most recent version and appropriate format of the asset they need. External users are sent e-mails with embedded hyperlinks to specific assets.

“Using EMC Documentum Digital Asset Manager, we can get the right brand assets into the hands of the field salesperson, distributor, local public relations firm, journalist, or whoever else needs it—within minutes,” says Price. “Having all our brand assets in one place also gives us a level of visibility we never had before. Now it’s much easier for marketing and brand managers to both control the use of brand assets and repurpose them.”

Saving time and money by enabling in-house management of brand assets and brand websites

In addition to making brand assets available much more quickly, being able to manage brand assets in-house saves Brown-Forman hard dollars that would have been paid to an ad agency. "Not only can we deliver brand assets faster, we no longer have to pay the ad agency to modify, copy, and ship them for us," says Price.

The Documentum platform also enables Brown-Forman to manage brand websites internally, starting with the Jack Daniels Digital Pressroom, www.jdpressroom.com, which is a model for the company's other 36 brands. Using Documentum Web Publisher and preset templates, brand managers create and update press releases, fact sheets, contacts, historical information, events calendar, and other content for the site. Web Publisher automatically exports approved content and metadata from the Documentum Content Server to a cached repository for fast delivery to site viewers.

Providing secure, centralized repository for managing legal contracts, packaging labels, and more

Other Brown-Forman departments, such as packaging, photo studio, and legal are benefiting from the Documentum platform as well. For instance, the legal department uses the Documentum system to track and store all versions of legal contracts and ensure that only authorized users have access to the documents. Imagitek Prodágio streamlines the authoring, reviewing, and executing of contracts through a web-based interface tailored to the requirements of users who manage contract documents. In addition, having secure, fast access to documents makes it easier for the legal department to outsource non-strategic tasks to third parties.

Planning to reap additional benefits in the future

Brown-Forman has many plans to further leverage Documentum and Captiva. By implementing InputAccel for Invoices and taking advantage of its advanced OCR features and templates, the company intends to streamline invoice processing even more. And with Content Services for SAP Portal, Brown-Forman plans to drive the majority of the content for its corporate portal from the Documentum repository. A Documentum-supported portal for external customers is also in the works.

"Being able to maintain our own brand websites saves us a lot because we no longer have to pay ad agencies to create, house, and maintain web content," says Price. "With EMC Documentum Digital Asset Manager and Web Publisher, brand managers can create and modify web content in minutes—seamlessly accessing digital assets and combining them with text to create compelling content, all without needing to know any HTML programming."

Summary

With the EMC Documentum platform as its enterprise content management standard, Brown-Forman is reaping many benefits in accounts payable, accounts receivable, marketing, sales, legal, and other departments. "In addition to reducing cycle time for invoice processing, delivery of brand assets, and web publishing, we have eliminated shipping costs, reduced advertising agency fees, increased visibility, and facilitated outsourcing of non-strategic tasks," says Price. "And we're not done. We expect to continue reaping benefits by extending the Documentum platform even further."



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