

INDUSTRY

Pharmaceuticals

CHALLENGE

Reorganising employee files into electronic folders for new HR system

SOLUTION

Off-site re-sorting and scanning of personnel records

VALUE

- Reduced demand on in-house resources
- Enabled faster project completion
- Avoided disruption of normal HR workflows

CASE STUDY

ASTRAZENECA GMBH

RESTRUCTURING AND DIGITISING STAFF RECORDS MAKES LIFE EASIER FOR PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANY

SEAMLESS EMPLOYEE RECORDS TRANSFER TO NEW HR SYSTEM

AstraZeneca is an international pharmaceutical group headquartered in London and one of the world's largest drug manufacturers. With sales of US\$24.7 billion, it employs around 61,500 people. AstraZeneca GmbH located in Wedel is the German subsidiary of AstraZeneca PLC and has 800 employees.

The worldwide introduction of new HR software required the digitisation of all personnel records held by AstraZeneca GmbH. At the same time, the files had to be reorganised into different information categories.

"We are talking about nearly 750 records with an average size of 96 pages, plus around 250 records of former employees," says Peter Mescher, AZengage Business Process Lead at AstraZeneca GmbH. "To enable seamless transfer into the new HR system, information in each file had to be organised into up to 15 different categories before digitisation."

To complicate matters further, the categories were set against a new AstraZeneca HR international file structure. This differed from the structure of the existing paper files and meant manual re-sorting was required.

COMPLEX CATEGORISATION TOOK CONTINUOUS COMMUNICATION WITH ASTRAZENECA

The entire procedure would have required a high level of resource commitment at AstraZeneca GmbH. "With an average processing time of about half-an-hour per file, this work would have taken at least 500 man-hours excluding scanning," explains Peter Mescher. "This effort would have seriously disrupted our normal workflow."

AstraZeneca GmbH needed to outsource the project and engaged Iron Mountain®, with whom the company has been working for many years.

Before work began a dedicated Iron Mountain team received training from the HR department of AstraZeneca GmbH. The first task was to re-sort the content of employee files into the new categories. On average there were nine different categories of information in each employee file.



“IT WAS A REAL CHALLENGE BECAUSE OF THE TIGHT SCHEDULE BUT IRON MOUNTAIN MASTERED IT EASILY.”

Kerstin Schumann
HR Advisor
AstraZeneca GmbH

Document types emerged that were not clearly assignable to any category and further guidance from AstraZeneca GmbH was needed. An Excel spreadsheet was created and maintained throughout the project to record the categorisation decision for each of the various document types. In addition to re-sorting the paper files, Iron Mountain also captured employee numbers from the respective file covers. This enabled linking of individual personnel records with the HR master data.

Scanning of records followed. The PDF files generated were named using a standard convention defined by a clear specification, so that files could be uploaded to the new HR system error-free. Iron Mountain also created an index file for later import into the new AstraZeneca GmbH systems.

Finally, the scanned files, the index file and associated personnel master data were transferred to AstraZeneca GmbH using an encrypted data storage device. Paper documents, sorted according to the new categories, were put into interim storage at Iron Mountain for subsequent reference and to enable quality control checks.

FINAL DOCUMENT CHECKS FOR CONSISTENT QUALITY

During final quality control involving checks of the digitised data by AstraZeneca GmbH, it emerged that some employee documents had been misplaced, mostly from mistakes in the original filing.

“It becomes a delicate matter when an employee finds a document relevant to a colleague in his file,” says Kerstin Schumann, HR Advisor at AstraZeneca GmbH. “It meant we had to ask Iron Mountain to review every file in detail. It was a real challenge because of the tight schedule, but Iron Mountain mastered it easily.”

Peter Mescher endorses this flexibility: “From my point of view, three criteria were critical for this project - reliability, flexibility and customer orientation. If we have other such projects in the future, Iron Mountain will be the people we would turn to because they met all three project criteria consistently and without exception.”

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AZengage Business Process Lead
AstraZeneca GmbH

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