

Lucerne Tax Office Improves Data Quality and Productivity with OCR for AnyDoc®

At A Glance

CITY OF LUCERNE

Industry

Government

Customer Profile

The regional tax office for the city of Lucerne, Switzerland, is responsible for the administrative processing of tax returns. Since 2001, the city of Lucerne has played a pioneering role in the automatic capturing of tax returns.

Challenge

The regional tax office of Lucerne processes over 56,000 tax returns annually. This equals an annual volume of over 1.4 million pages. On peak days, up to 30,000 pages are handled.

Solution

With OCR for AnyDoc, the city of Lucerne reduced ongoing costs and gained increased flexibility with the scalability of the solution. Since no high costs incur as a result of new developments or an increase in scanning volume, the office can now offer the solution to third parties to process tax returns and voter registration forms.

Benefits

- Improved production management resulting in greater organizational efficiency
- Eliminating data entry provided better use of human resources
- Reduction of required IT infrastructure lowered costs
- Increased cost transparency improved business processes
- Solution expands to process increasing volume of forms
- Users can use existing skill sets to operate the system
- AnyDoc provides reliable support with a low cost of ownership

The city of Lucerne, as the hub of Central Switzerland, enjoys great cultural and economic significance. As of 2007, Lucerne has over 61,000 inhabitants. And because of its special location between the lake and the mountains, the city is a popular place to visit for tourists from all over the world. To be able to handle their responsibilities efficiently, the city council has to depend on the support of modern IT systems. This applies in particular to the Director of Finance, who is responsible for the lawful management of revenues and expenditures. The main revenues of the city of Lucerne come from taxes. The regional tax office carries the main burden of administrative processing.

In 2001, the city of Lucerne took on a pioneering role by being the first city in Switzerland to introduce an imaging and OCR system. This system is used to scan and archive the paper documents and to extract relevant data and deliver it into a special tax application. In 2006, the time had come for the system to adapt to new requirements. The objective for the tax office was to be able to increasingly offer their system as a service for outside clients. That's why the regional tax office of Lucerne looked for a system that operated mostly independent of the supplier and would enable them to reduce operating costs. They chose OCR for AnyDoc from AnyDoc Software GmbH.

The tax office processes over 56,000 tax returns annually for Lucerne, Littau and Ebikon. This equals an annual volume of over 1.4 million pages. On peak days, up to 30,000 pages are handled. Fifty percent of the forms are already filed as an electronic tax return. The other half of the filed tax returns is handwritten. Overall, on a peak day over 375,000 handwritten characters are recorded. Aside from the tax returns, the office also uses OCR for AnyDoc to record voter registration forms for ongoing statistical analysis and accounting documents for archiving purposes.

The Solution

The administration staff of the tax office in Lucerne thinks of OCR for AnyDoc as especially reliable and intuitive. The director of the regional tax office of Lucerne, Dr. Esther Müller (Ph.D. in Economics), says, "For us, it is of decisive significance, that the tax returns are recorded as quickly as possible and that the extracted data are available to our tax experts immediately and in the best possible quality. With the AnyDoc solution we are absolutely able to meet these criteria."

With OCR for AnyDoc it was possible to reduce investment costs as well as attain savings in ongoing costs. The attractive server-license model, which in contrast to a volume license allows for higher scanning volume without cost increase, is an additional advantage that speaks for the acquisition of OCR for AnyDoc.

High reliability and stability

Despite great time pressure, AnyDoc Software GmbH succeeded in implementing the project on time. The scanning system ran robust and reliably from the beginning. The software fully integrated with the existing systems (Hummingbird DMS and NEST). In the course of a continuous fine-tuning of the processes, the office increases the number of documents and characters to be recognized. Since an increase in the scanning volume is not tied to an increase in license costs, the system can now also be used in other fields.

Team manager Roger Wespi said, "Especially during the great influx of tax returns in spring we are happy that the new scanning solution functions exceptionally well."

Benefits

The new solution not only led to an improvement of the controlling and production management, but also resulted in an increase in cost transparency. With OCR for AnyDoc, the tax office covered all its data capturing and processing needs; no additional software solutions are necessary. The office especially appreciates that the solution can independently adapt to changing requirements. The in-house IT specialists can install and manage new applications for the most part independently. This makes the office less dependent on external software suppliers and makes it possible to use staff and technical resources more consistently and effectively.

Wespi is happy about the newly gained independence. "The system enables further development while better using the full capacity of our employees. Since no high costs incur as a result of new developments or an increase in scanning volume, we can also offer the solution to third parties at attractive conditions," he says.

Hermann Trüb, project manager of Consulting & Projects of the city of Lucerne, adds, "With OCR for AnyDoc we have introduced a very flexible and scalable system. We are now technically equipped to cover the future scanning volume even beyond the system limits of the tax office. By replacing the previous solution with OCR for AnyDoc we are able to amortize the investments in only one and a half years, due to the annual savings on maintenance costs alone. This doesn't even include the cost savings in the areas of hardware and support."

"Even during the installation of OCR for AnyDoc, which ran absolutely smoothly, we already recognized that this was a very well-developed product," says Marc Eugster, also a project manager for Consulting & Projects. Eugster is equally excited about the savings potential in the area of IT infrastructure. "Today the system runs reliably with three servers. We used to need five for the same work," he explains. "Also, OCR for AnyDoc requires very little maintenance, which reduces the operating costs even more."

What can we do for you?

Want to learn how AnyDoc Software can impact your organization?

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