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Oakwood Worldwide Implements Kofax Intelligent Capture & Exchange to Automate Invoice Processing

By Michael Troncale

The Situation

Founded in 1960, Oakwood Worldwide (www.oakwood.com) is the leading global temporary housing and serviced apartment provider. Its client base is primarily Fortune 2,000 companies, but Oakwood also serves a wide range of clients, including small-to-mid-sized businesses, entertainment executives and production companies, insurance companies, consulting firms, professional sports teams, and U.S. government and military personnel.

The Challenge

At any time, in virtually any location, Oakwood can lease more than 25,000 temporary housing residences and furnished apartments worldwide. For each unit, Oakwood must manage and process multiple utility bills, including gas, water, electricity, Internet, cable and phone.

In addition to the sheer volume of invoices that Oakwood receives in its Arizona-based processing facility each month, another key challenge lies within the design of utility bills in that they are normally double-sided, several pages in length and some even contain advertisements. Further, each bill contains many different lines of data that refer to various charges over a date range. Oakwood processes between 60,000-80,000 lines of data each month.

Oakwood had to hire a large number of temporary workers to manage the complex task of processing these utility bills in a timely fashion and to avoid disconnects with suppliers, which could result in service interruptions for its clients.

“Oakwood’s accounts payable process was paper-intensive and required a lot of human interaction,” said Ray Hughes, general manager, Western Office Systems. “We knew we could help to develop a solution to better automate the process.”

The Solution

Oakwood turned to local Kofax Certified Solutions Provider Western Office Systems to develop a solution to manage its high volume of utility bills that it receives each month. Western Office Systems (www.wos.com) designed a custom solution that leveraged Kofax Intelligent Capture & Exchange, which serves as the foundation for Kofax’s strategy to help organizations streamline business processes by capturing documents in the front office, where they originate, and move such information in real time to transactional business processes.

“The custom Kofax-based solution we developed for Oakwood has allowed them to support future business growth,” added Hughes. The custom invoice processing solution leveraged key elements of Kofax Intelligent Capture & Exchange, including:

- Kofax Capture, the world’s leading automated information capture platform
- Kofax VirtualReScan (VRS), the de facto standard for capture productivity and quality throughout a document’s lifecycle
- Kofax Transformation Modules (KTM), which streamline the transformation of business documents into structured electronic information by automating the processes of document classification and data extraction

WOS also developed and integrated several customized validation, recognition and release modules into the solution to meet Oakwood’s various business rules for utility bill processing. In addition, Oakwood is using two Fujitsu fi-5650C scanners as part of the solution. “Kofax Intelligent Capture & Exchange not only enabled me to easily apply the business rules surrounding the Oakwood process, but it also allowed me to easily modify and incorporate new rules as they become necessary,” said Tony Underwood, senior systems engineer at Western Office Systems.

The Results

By utilizing Kofax Intelligent Capture & Exchange, Oakwood has been able to reduce the number of disconnects, currently at less than .05 percent of all utility services provided, and is now able to process 50 percent more transactions. In addition, Oakwood is better positioned to support future growth and manage increased volumes of utility bills.

“We have been able to reduce disconnects with our vendors and are positioned to support our projected annual growth of more than 20 percent without increasing full-time or temporary staff,” said Brad Niemiec, manager of the national accounting process for Oakwood Worldwide.

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