

Founded in 1946, Lancaster quickly became a leader in sun care, offering a broad selection of self-tanners, sunscreens, and after-sun products. Through a strategy focused on scientific innovation and numerous patents, Lancaster made its mark with consumers, selling 10,000 products each day. Today, the brand is part of COTY, one of the world's largest beauty product manufacturers, with an annual revenue of €4.2 billion.

The Monaco-based division, Lancaster S.A.M, employs nearly 300 people across its production site and the group's second research and development center.

Company Name

Lancaster

Industry Sector

Beauty Products
Manufacturer

Installed Solution

IRIS and Therefore

Installation Date

2013

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Business Background

Looking to streamline information flow between their department and the rest of the company, Lancaster's accounting team was the first to outline the key challenges in managing documents :

Key Challenges

Lower the processing costs for supplier invoices

Eliminate document loss caused by paper workflows

Gain control over the invoice validation process. For accounts payable, tracking where invoices were during approval among departments was time-consuming

Eliminate payment delays to better control their impact on deliveries and the production chain

Strengthen supplier relationships by shortening average payment times

Eliminate low-value tasks in the invoice processing workflow

Benefits



Process optimization :
employees save valuable time



Shorter response times
to suppliers, thanks to faster processing and better invoice organization



Traceability, with visibility into each step of invoice handling



Cost savings,
by removing repetitive, low-value tasks



Enhanced security, with a processing chain that now follows Lancaster's validation steps



Before we digitized our invoice processing, we never really knew why a payment was delayed: Was it because accounting took too long to record it? Because purchasing hadn't approved it in time? Or simply because the invoice got lost?



How things worked before the solution: time-consuming paper handling

Prior to the implementation, supplier invoices for production—referred to as Stock invoices—were shuffled between departments as paper copies. Once the mailroom received them, each invoice was stamped, dated, and forwarded to accounting. The accounting team manually entered the relevant details (supplier number, amount, invoice number, date) into Lancaster's business software, Mapics.

Mapics would then assign an internal invoice number and generate a projected payment date. The accounting entry was finalized by adding the remaining details from the invoice itself.

Finally, a paper reconciliation slip—called a Voucher—had to be prepared to link goods receipt to accounting. This voucher was cut out and stapled to each invoice.

If the voucher showed discrepancies (price, quantities), it was sent on via internal mail to the purchasing department for validation.

Technology and expertise working together: a key advantage of the Canon solution

The Canon document management solution was selected following a consultation process that included offer presentations, product demos, and proof-of-concept sessions.

Canon was chosen for the reliability of its software, the accessibility of its team, and the high caliber of their guidance.

The Canon solution seamlessly adapted to Lancaster's existing workflows, offering a user-friendly and more intuitive experience. Canon's consulting team stood out for their deep understanding of business challenges and demonstrated they could successfully manage this complex project—from ERP integration to skill transfer—empowering Lancaster to operate independently during the rollout phase.

Rolling out the document management solution: a collaboration among accounting, IT, and the Canon team

One of Lancaster's top priorities was ensuring the new document management solution integrated flawlessly with the Mapics ERP, particularly for data synchronization. To guarantee this success,

a true partnership formed between the accounting team, who defined the business needs, the IT department with technical expertise, and Canon, working together to translate functional requirements into technical specifications that fit client needs and constraints.

Effective skills transfer

To help users adapt to the new digital processes, Canon delivered hands-on training directly to end users, supporting them in mastering the new tool and ensuring a smooth transition.

Lancaster then took charge, conducting regular usage reviews. This ongoing support made for a smooth and efficient transition.

Additionally, the successful transfer of expertise—a key requirement for Lancaster—enabled the team to manage the new tool in-house with the help of detailed guides. The goal of full independence with the new processes and the digitization of related workflows was achieved. Now, Lancaster benefits from faster response times in case of any issues, along with the already short support window.

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We wanted to be self-sufficient, but also count on quality support with Canon's maintenance and regular updates for the tool.

“When it came to reliability and expert guidance, Canon truly stood out.”

“

Transferring expertise has made us more agile in responding to business needs.



Operation with the solution Canon : automation and synchronization

Now, all the suppliers send invoices directly the as PDFs to the accounting department's mailbox. Every index is automatically extracted by OCR, then transferred into the document management software, which handles synchronization with the ERP. Mapics automatically generates an internal invoice number and payment due date, then syncs this data with the Canon solution.

Validation routes are completed electronically based on any discrepancies found : invoices over 40,000 euros are sent to the department manager, and those over 80,000 euros to the department manager and the plant director.

Key Benefits of the Solution Canon

Time , elimination of paper handling and repetitive, low-value tasks are reduced. 39 hours per month saved by removing the need to search for supplier numbers. 235 hours per month gained with automated creation of reconciliation statements.

Labor hours are reassigned to higher-value activities like account statement reconciliation, leading to better supplier portfolio management. supplier portfolio.

Response Time , faster supplier response times to suppliers. Not only is processing quicker, but invoice prioritization is made easier by automatically sorting invoices by due date.

Traceability with step-by-step visibility of the invoice processing stages

Costs , which are directly linked to time savings. Lancaster estimates the savings to be more than one full-time equivalent position thanks to the elimination of stages of search, pre-numbering, and creation of reconciliation statements.

Security , the chain of processing requires compliance with validation steps through automated validation workflows. the most critical invoices are properly to the relevant stakeholders, Manager of or Director.



Now we know what needs to be sent and when : There are no more routing errors, and we have full traceability.

“ We're now more responsive and more alert. Our work methods are much more reliable than before, thanks to the automated sorting of invoices by due date.”

Project enhancements

With the expert guidance of Canon's consultants, Lancaster then implemented a management solution for customer invoices and delivery slips. Validation workflows for both document types were added to Canon's document management software to connect all relevant departments involved : logistics, invoicing, archiving, dock operations, and carriers.

Find out more: Lancaster Success Story customer invoices

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