# SAP® INTERACTIVE FORMS BY ADOBE

## Extending the Power of SAP® Solutions by Automating Business Forms

Web-based forms can help you bridge the gap between paper-based processes and enterprise applications. SAP® Interactive Forms software by Adobe extends the power of SAP solutions with the versatility and accessibility of collaborative electronic forms documentation. The software enables you to streamline and automate your paper-based business processes, as well as to extend the reach of enterprise applications to company executives, partners, customers, and suppliers.

Companies across all industries face common challenges, among them increasing profitability and efficiency; ensuring customer satisfaction by providing responsive, efficient service; and ensuring compliance with government regulations. What you may not realize is how continued reliance upon paper-based business processes is holding your organization back from addressing these difficulties.

Paper-based forms are surprisingly expensive, in part because of labor costs resulting from redundant manual interventions and time spent fixing human errors. Paper and storage costs also rapidly accumulate, especially given that forms quickly become obsolete. According to a 2004 study conducted by GISTICS, a UK-based analyst firm with expertise in digital asset management, a paper-based form costs the typical global enterprise US$75,000 per year in labor and materials — and most companies use 400 forms or more.

At the same time, manual, paper-based processes are inefficient, create bottlenecks, and make it difficult to take advantage of automation built into enterprise applications. For example, hiring managers often require a senior executive's signature before forwarding a job requisition to HR. In a paper-based scenario, the job requisition may be delayed in interoffice mail, sit on an executive's desk under a pile of paperwork, or be inaccessible to the executive during a business trip. At best, this causes frustrating delays; at worst, it hinders organizational performance when key positions are unfilled. Your company may use the mySAP™ ERP application to support its HR functions, but it can't make the most of the software to fully automate approval processes if paper forms continue to be central to your business processes.

Paper-based forms make it difficult for remote, mobile, and casual users to access up-to-date forms and complete them in a timely fashion. They also make it nearly impossible for your company to compile, access, track, and audit data. Without a centralized means of storing, updating, distributing, or controlling forms – or a way to easily capture the data contained in them – collaboration is hindered, and you can't extend enterprise applications to partners, customers, and suppliers without necessitating manual data entry and forms processing. Nor can you ensure provable audit trails or deploy the read/write controls and secure archiving necessary to comply with government mandates, such as the Sarbanes-Oxley Act or Basel II.

To address these challenges, many organizations have implemented HTML-based forms, which enable electronic data capture. But HTML forms can't support offline use, are awkward to use, don't resemble the forms they mean to replace, and are difficult to print.

## Transforming Forms Processes

In response, SAP and Adobe Systems partnered to create a solution that enables enterprises of any size to quickly and easily develop interactive, digital forms that can be directly integrated into business processes. This joint solution – which leverages the SAP NetWeaver® platform – specifically integrates Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) forms directly into any business process supported by Web-based SAP® applications.

With SAP Interactive Forms software by Adobe, users can easily engage in automated business processes by completing forms, such as purchase requisitions; personnel and cost-center change requests; expense reimbursement requests; internal requisitions; and online recruiting documents. The software builds a direct bridge between the highly structured transaction data stored within enterprise applications and the unstructured, document-based information and processes that exist outside of those applications. This direct interaction enables your organization to reduce operational costs and increase business process agility via automation and increased data accuracy. You can boost customer and employee satisfaction with faster, more efficient forms-driven business processes, and you can collaborate with suppliers, customers, and partners without requiring that they understand the intricacies of your back-end system.

Adobe technology is tightly integrated into the powerful SAP NetWeaver development environments for Java and the ABAP™ programming language – enabling fast, easy forms design and modification to meet the specific ways that your enterprise,
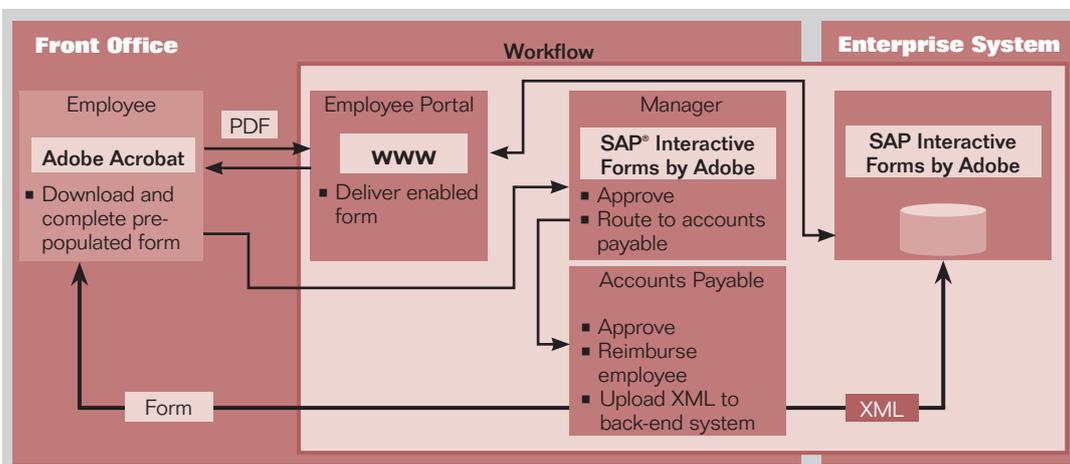


Figure 1: Self-Service Functions Reduce Manual Intervention in Common Business Processes

partners, and customers work. This infrastructure also ensures that any application leveraging SAP NetWeaver – whether SAP delivered or custom developed – can take full advantage of SAP Interactive Forms.

### Faster Business Processes for Greater Agility

By leveraging both Adobe and SAP technologies, you can use automation to reduce redundant and inaccurate data and boost the speed with which your organization responds to customer needs and changing business requirements. For example, when manufacturing companies need to fulfill large, unexpected customer orders, plant managers need to procure materials. With a paper-based process, they need to locate the requisition form, complete and sign it by hand, and forward it to the appropriate manager via in-house mail for approval and fulfillment. And they have no way to ensure it reached its destination or when the manager might approve it.

With SAP Interactive Forms, you can easily streamline and automate this process. After logging onto a portal, a supervisor can instantly access the latest PDF-based requisition form – already filled in with the appropriate personal and role-based data like name, location, and cost center. The supervisor can quickly complete the remaining information online and submit it to mySAP ERP with a simple mouse click. The workflow embedded into mySAP ERP immediately pushes the form through the next step in the process, preventing process latency, and the supervisor can monitor progress in real time from within the portal.

### Minimize Errors and Offer Easier Data Access

SAP Interactive Forms minimizes opportunities for data errors by prefilling form fields and by providing built-in error-checking functions. You can also link data fields in forms to SAP applications for automatic data capture, centralization, and distribution to databases, business processes, departments, and other forms. This minimizes costly data entry errors, shortens the time required to execute business processes, and provides timely access to information that can be leveraged within and outside of the organization. And by using e-mail to route forms according to

predefined workflows, the software decreases the potential for forms illegibility or loss – which is so common with fax transmissions. And access control prevents accidental deletion of data or documents, as well as unauthorized changes to content.

By centralizing forms and data, SAP Interactive Forms helps ensure access to the most current versions of all enterprise forms. Your staff can update one form, distribute it to a central location, and be confident that all users – whether they are on-site or off – are using the correct version.

### Designed for the Way You Work

Instead of offering a one-size-fits-all approach, SAP Interactive Forms enables you to tailor forms around your unique business processes and make it easy for all users – including casual internal employees, customers, suppliers, and partners – to view, complete, and submit forms, regardless of their operating system platform. And because the software supports multiple languages, you can deploy it all over the world.

### Support for Mobile Workers

Support for mobile workers enables users to complete forms on the fly while not actively connected to a back-end system, such as the mySAP Customer Relationship Management (mySAP CRM) application. Users can upload forms via e-mail, instantly updating the back-end system and speeding business process execution.

For example, a sales professional can download prefilled forms, such as inventory requisition forms, to a mobile device prior to making a customer visit. The sales professional can then complete the form offline with the customer, print a copy of the form as a receipt, and submit the data back to mySAP CRM via an embedded e-mail link. Adobe XML technology extracts and integrates the data into SAP software, which automatically launches the next step in the process – such as updating order quantities, performing returned materials authorizations, or generating a prefilled service order and sending it to a service engineer. As this example illustrates, mobile staff no longer need

to carry bulky laptops to customer sites; lengthy gaps in business process execution are eliminated; and access to real-time data is always available.

**Collaborate with External Partners**

With the powerful development environment of SAP NetWeaver, you can easily capture relevant business process data from disconnected external partners. Using simple forms customization procedures, you can incorporate customer and partner forms into your business processes, bridging geographical and organizational boundaries to forge more cooperative relationships while boosting efficiency.

**Create, and Customize Forms**

Adobe LiveCycle Designer, which is tightly integrated into the SAP NetWeaver Developer Studio tool, allows you to import, customize, and create interactive forms according to your specific needs. You can integrate existing forms – such as those mandated by government or other regulatory bodies – or create new ones. You can define the look and feel of forms, bind forms to an SAP data model, define the business logic of the form, and assign the form's usage model – whether print, interactive, or both.

**Key Benefits: Lower Costs and Increased Automation**

SAP Interactive Forms streamlines forms-based processes by enabling you to fully leverage the business process automation enabled by your existing SAP applications. You can realize the following benefits:

- Reduced operational costs and increased business process agility via automation
- Increased customer and employee satisfaction by enabling faster, more efficient forms-driven processes
- Increased efficiency, fewer errors, and enhanced collaboration
- Flexibility to customize forms for your enterprise and its partners and customers

- Assured document integrity via controlled read/write/access rights
- Tools to track end-to-end project status and identify bottlenecks for remediation
- Resources to simplify the use of industry- and government-mandated forms
- Support geographically distributed environments with multilanguage versions

**For More Information**

Contact SAP to learn more about how SAP Interactive Forms software can transform and automate your forms-based business processes. Or for more information, visit **www.sap.com/solutions/netweaver, sdn.sap.com/irj/sdn/adobeforms,** or **service.sap.com/adobe**.

**Powered by SAP NetWeaver**

SAP Interactive Forms is powered by the SAP NetWeaver platform. SAP NetWeaver unifies technology components into a single platform, allowing organizations to reduce IT complexity and obtain more business value from their IT investments. It provides the best way to integrate all systems running SAP or non-SAP software.

SAP NetWeaver also helps organizations align IT with their business. With SAP NetWeaver, organizations can compose and enhance business applications rapidly using enterprise services. As the foundation for enterprise service-oriented architecture (enterprise SOA), SAP NetWeaver allows organizations to evolve their current IT landscapes into a strategic environment that drives business change.

**THE BEST-RUN BUSINESSES RUN SAP™**