



Customer Success Story | Manufacturing

Columbus Stainless

Future-proofing global expansion with efficient AP information management

The Customer

Columbus Stainless, founded in 1966 and situated in Middelburg in the Mpumalanga Province in South Africa, is the only producer of stainless steel flat products in Africa. The company is able to offer a variety of grades of stainless steel suitable for most applications, and their product can be found in everything from a kitchen sink to a quality wristwatch.

Because of the boundless potential for stainless steel as a metal for the future, Columbus Stainless remains dedicated to becoming one of the leading suppliers of stainless steel locally and in the global arena. The company's products are exported through a well-developed network of agents and group sales outlets operating in Europe, the Americas, the Middle East and the Far East.

The Challenge

Back in 2012, Columbus Stainless was manually processing in the region of 7,500 invoices a month, coming in via post, email attachments or physical delivery. From receiving the invoices, distributing and tracking the invoices for approval, and capturing them on the JD Edwards ERP system, to filing and payment, everything required manual input. The process was very labour intensive, not fully optimised, and the paper-based documents could get lost. Retrieval of the invoices was time intensive, and in some instances the accounts payable clerks handled the same invoice multiple times, particularly in the case of supplier queries.

Columbus Stainless was looking for an accounts payable solution to automate invoice processing, filing and retrieval, with the aim to save time and effort, reduce human intervention with the financial systems, and reduce inefficiencies in paying suppliers. However, Columbus



**COLUMBUS
STAINLESS**
— [Pty] Ltd —

CUSTOMER

Columbus Stainless

INDUSTRY

Manufacturing

LOCATION

Middelburg, Mpumalanga Province,
South Africa

ONBASE INTEGRATIONS

JD Edwards

DEPARTMENTS USING ONBASE

Accounts Payable

Vendor Management

One platform **Unlimited potential**

OnBase[®]
by Hyland



“Columbus Stainless has seen great value in moving accounts payable from manual to digital. Fifty-five percent of the invoices are processed digitally through OnBase, and some invoicing doesn’t even require human intervention.”

-Sinta Spies, Manager - General Finance at Columbus Stainless

Stainless wanted a solution with enterprise-wide capabilities that could address various areas of the business, namely vendor management requirements, human resources and contract management. The ultimate intention was to eliminate information siloes and ensure that all documents reside in one place.

The Solution

Columbus Stainless was introduced to OnBase by Hyland through Interface Systems SA. Following a broad presentation on OnBase and its capabilities, Columbus Stainless decided that it was exactly the solution the company was looking for.

Ease of accounts payable and vendor management

Initially deployed in accounts payable, the workflow solution had a positive impact on the processing and retrieval of invoices. With automated approval routing, automated query identification and routing, and ease of document retrieval, Columbus Stainless has realised time savings, accurate processes and improved supplier relations.

The secondary rollout to vendor management has enabled suppliers to register online and automated the process of validating a supplier.

Integration with existing system

The OnBase solution is integrated directly with the JD Edwards financial system already in use by Columbus Stainless. The integration capability of the system was one of the key reasons for choosing the solution.

A green approach

Not only has the paperless solution given Columbus Stainless the ability to handle high volumes of invoice processing, it has been good for the environment. Printing has come down by 15 percent, and the company is expecting this percentage to increase.

Compliance and business efficiencies

OnBase was set up to route invoice approvals based on the internal compliance framework. The solution complies with SARS requirements for electronic tax invoices and provides an audit trail on all documents.

OnBase is very user friendly and enables self-training. Columbus Stainless staff soon realised the benefits and efficiencies of OnBase, and readily adopted the solution. The team is excited about the future benefits that could be derived from the implementation, and plans to roll out OnBase to other areas of the business, such as human resources and contract management, to achieve efficiencies from processes that are currently still manual.

“Columbus Stainless has seen great value in moving accounts payable from manual to digital,” says Sinta Spies, Manager – General Finance at Columbus Stainless. “Fifty-five percent of the invoices are processed digitally through OnBase, and some invoicing doesn’t even require human intervention. Use of the OnBase system is still evolving as Columbus Stainless is tweaking and fine-tuning the solution, and we expect to see further benefits in the future.”

Learn more at [OnBase.com](https://www.onbase.com) »