




EBSCO Industries Achieves Business Digitalization with Intelligent SAP Integration and Microsoft 365®



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EBSCO Industries, a large privately held American conglomerate wanted to increase their pace towards business digitalization. This means focusing on replacing existing legacy custom coded applications and creating a modernized environment that is sustainable and easily scalable. EBSCO teamed up with VersaFile to implement an end-to-end solution to ensure their SAP business-critical attachments were securely stored, integrated across systems, and always available.

“Our solution with docuflow, Microsoft 365 SharePoint Online, and Collabware is solid. After over a year of use and an enormous content migration, it is still just humming along!” said Alexa Napoleon, Senior Manager Architecture & Innovation, Corporate IT - EBSCO Industries.

Extremely satisfied, EBSCO is looking to extend the solution to solve other business challenges.



THE JOURNEY TO BUSINESS DIGITALIZATION

[EBSCO Industries](#), a large privately held American conglomerate with over 40 multi-industry business units in manufacturing, commercial services, information services, publishing, real estate, employs over 5,000+ people and wanted to increase their pace towards business digitalization.

A major goal was getting a solution in place to ensure their SAP business-critical attachments were

securely stored, integrated across systems, and always available.

EBSCO teamed up with VersaFile to replace a custom-coded SAP attachment process. The end solution used Microsoft 365 SharePoint Online, along with a content governance solution from Collabware. The end-to-end content integration with SAP was made possible with [docuflow for SAP](#).



UNCOVERING THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

EBSCO was using SAP as their enterprise resource planning (ERP) tool along with a custom in-house built accounts payable (AP) tool storing SAP linked attachments on a file server.

Problems often occurred with the custom storage components, housed on aging infrastructure, making the accounts payable application unreliable. This was interrupting the business and consuming significant IT resources to sustain and support. The file server used for the custom archiving solution was old and close to being out of support. Upgrading the server required significant rework of the custom solution. Doing nothing was not an option as the overall solution was in a high-risk red zone.

Knowing ample Microsoft SharePoint Online licenses were available and the Microsoft O365 platform was supported by IT, the decision was between the cost of rebuilding a new solution in-house vs the cost of implementing a modern commercially available solution. The choice had to not only get EBSCO back to the green zone, but also had to be efficient, improve productivity and minimize cost of sustainment.

- **Legacy systems out of support**

EBSCO found their legacy content systems were fragile, constantly breaking down, and unable to update. Their in-house custom coded accounts payable application was difficult to maintain as the original coders were retired. The cost of maintaining the systems was constantly rising and provided limited integration between systems.

- **High-Risk Quotient**

Not only were their legacy systems expensive to maintain and scale, but their security risk was in the red zone. They were vulnerable to damage, security breaches, data loss and system failures causing downtime. It was important to securely migrate all business-critical content to a secure sustainable content system.

- **Lack of efficient content searchability**

With over 4.5 million SAP-related documents amassing to 4TB of storage, thousands of invoices generated monthly, inconsistent SAP integrations, and no metadata, document searchability was almost impossible.

- **Heavy Ticketing on IT Team**

Breaking legacy systems, costly custom coded applications, and manual data entry processes were causing a constant frustration to IT teams with increasing support tickets for IT to resolve.





STRATEGIZING THE SOLUTION

After careful evaluation, EBSCO realized that moving all SAP business-critical attachments to a sustainable cloud content storage system with tight SAP integration and advanced metadata capture for easy content searchability would increase productivity while greatly reducing security risks. However, they still wanted to retain some parts of their user front-end application that was customized for specific business needs.

EBSCO evaluated solutions from several vendors but none of them were cost effective and the long-term implementation projects were daunting.

While continuing their search for a solution to their now pressing high-risk business critical problem, the EBSCO team came across a webinar by VersaFile and Collabware on 'How To Manage SAP Records with SharePoint'. This session showed how VersaFile's docuflow for SAP solution provided a Modernized SAP ArchiveLink solution for SAP content migration, archiving, linking, and process automation. Already having existing SharePoint Online subscriptions, this topic intrigued the EBSCO team and they reached out for a demo on the docuflow and Collabware solution for document synchronization between SAP and SharePoint.

After in-depth evaluation and cost benefit analysis, EBSCO was convinced of the docuflow, SharePoint, Collabware solution to meet their business needs.

VersaFile replaced EBSCO's existing legacy content storage system with SharePoint Online and docuflow, an off the shelf solution that integrates Microsoft 365 with SAP.

docuflow's built-in migration tools provided automated SAP link replacement and enhanced metadata synchronization with no change for SAP End-Users. The Collabmail plugin was implemented to transfer SAP-related documents quickly and easily from EBSCO's email inbox to SharePoint and the Collabspace platform provided a solid foundation for fully secure infrastructure, scalability, future development and integrations. This supported EBSCO's goal of not only archiving and linking SAP content, but potentially automating SAP workflows in the future starting with Accounts Payable Process Automation.

“VersaFile brought their A Team to this project with deep knowledge, technical expertise, and business process understanding. The level of support and engagement was beyond expectation.”

- Alexa Napoleon | Corporate IT, EBSCO





IMPLEMENTING THE SOLUTION

The EBSCO team took charge of the implementation with constant support from the VersaFile and Collabware teams throughout the implementation. VersaFile promised and delivered on a quick implementation and a sound sustainable cost-effective solution to EBSCO's business challenge.

docuflow, an SAP certified solution for SAP Archiving, Linking and Process Automation was found to be the ideal off-the-shelf fit for integrating Microsoft 365 and automating SAP workflows providing the following:

- Migration of 4TB content from custom coded file system application to SharePoint Online.
- Inbound and outbound storage and linking of content along with two-way enhanced metadata transfer between SAP and SharePoint Online for easy document searchability.
- Intelligent capture of e-mail attachments and storage into SharePoint Online through Collabmail plugin along with SAP linking and back population of metadata from e-mail attachments.
- Automated SAP link replacement to new location of content in SharePoint Online.
- Maintained custom user front end financial application with no to minimal change for end users.
- Flexible architecture that is easy to configure, customize and scale with internal EBSCO staff.

“The approach to this project by the VersaFile and Collabware teams was that we’re all one team. This was a huge plus for us, and we didn’t feel like we were working with external vendors.”

- Alexa Napoleon | Corporate IT, EBSCO





OUTCOMES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The EBSCO team was able to stabilize their Accounts Payable solution, ensure security compliance and enable accurate discovery across their organizational content. The beauty of this project is that EBSCO now has the ability to take this initial implementation and extend it themselves to other business areas based on documentation and training provided by the VersaFile team, saving them additional implementation costs in the future.

- **Migration to a Scalable Cloud Content Platform**

EBSCO moved all SAP business-critical content to SharePoint Online fully utilizing their license while saving costs by reducing dependency on high maintenance legacy and custom-built solutions. With a secure backup of the old servers, migrating content to SharePoint became less stressful and saved cost.

- **Reduced Risk from Red to Green**

Moving all SAP business-critical content from fragile legacy systems to a secure cloud content platform reduced the security and data loss risk from the Red zone to a Green zone.

- **Seamless Modernized SAP Integration**

A modernized SAP ArchiveLink solution automated capture, storage and linking of incoming content into SAP. In addition, the solution saves end-user time by eliminating multiple steps with linking attachment into SAP.

- **Enhanced Content Search Capabilities**

With advanced automated metadata capture, and SAP content linking, teams are able to search and retrieve content quickly and securely inside and outside of SAP.

- **Reduced Burden on IT**

Moving content to a solid cloud content platform reduced IT maintenance work and cost. Ability to query content directly from SharePoint Online with the help of advanced metadata capture vs run custom query reports reduced IT support tickets to virtually none.

- **Minimum Business Disruption**

Maintaining the same front-end SAP user application and replacing only the backend ensured minimum business disruption.

- **Intelligent Process Automation**

The solution opened doors for greater digital transformation starting with financial process automation potentially including - Accounts Payable, Journal Entries, Accounts Receivable, General Ledger, Customer Onboarding, Vendor Onboarding, and Vendor Master data. Savings also came from reduced implementation and customization costs with the future ability to extend the solution to other business areas using internal EBSCO teams.





DRIVING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION WITH VERSAFILE



4TB Migration



Integrated Systems



Risk Red to Green

The implementation of SharePoint Online, Collabware and docuflow to replace the legacy and custom storage with seamless SAP archiving, linking and process automation took a few weeks with no change management required. Extremely satisfied, the customer is looking to extend the solution application to other business units.

VersaFile® is a Vancouver-based technology services and software company providing intelligent content and process automation solutions. This includes managed services, strategic consulting, implementations, and commercial software. Our purpose is to generate outcomes that make a difference by making our solutions easy, highly functional, and quick to value.

Need help with your next project? Get in touch for a no-cost, no-obligation Automation First Workshop.

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Cut through the jargon and acronyms and get down to creating real business value from your content with easy, seamless archiving, linking and task & process automation. Our no-cost Automation First Workshop is designed to help you identify actionable business use cases where you can drive the most value quickly. We take a two-step approach...

1. EXECUTIVE BRIEFING

In this 30 - 90-minute session, we give your executive stakeholders an overview of our Intelligent Automation framework and the value it'll drive for your business. We'll take a look at where there's the quickest, biggest upside to automating your workforce and pinpoint two to three business areas where we can create outcomes that make a real difference to the way your teams work, freeing them up to drive value instead of spending time on tedious, manual, error-prone tasks. The inputs and outputs of Executive Briefing form the foundation for the half-day Automation First workshop.

2. AUTOMATION-FIRST WORKSHOP

Our half-day workshop allows project teams to dig deeper into the two to three business areas identified in the Executive Briefing by gaining a deeper understanding of current workflows & specific challenges, as well as business-specific considerations that need to be taken into account. The teams will assess the feasibility and complexity of the business objectives and start to plan some high-level solutions. Following the workshop, we'll provide you with a high-level recommendation and a proposal to set you on your Intelligent Automation journey so you can deliver outcomes that make a difference for your business.

SCHEDULE MY WORKSHOP

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