# A Perfect Recipe for Simple Document Storage

Food and catering distribution specialists, H.N. Nuttall Ltd. are using an Alchemy Document Management system to electronically file their customer order documentation. The solution has enabled them to reduce their delivery time from three days to next-day and speed up their invoicing process.

### Delivering a complete range of food products directly to caterers

Manchester based H.N. Nuttall Ltd. have been delivering food products to catering establishments for over 70 years. This family-run business retains the personal touch – delivering over 350 orders a day directly to customers, using their own fleet of vehicles and drivers and taking orders over the phone, which is still the preferred order method for the majority of Nuttall's clients. Online and email ordering is also available and orders are despatched from a centralised warehouse on a next-day delivery.

### Storing duplicate copies of orders

The company has used the same order and delivery process for many years; Copies of orders are printed out using a dot matrix printer and passed to warehouse staff, who use the document to individually pick the customer order. The picking list is then used to generate the invoice, which is sent to the customer with the order. A customer signature provides proof of delivery. It's a simple process which works reliably and has never caused any operational problems.

However, storing all of the accumulated paper picking/invoice documents was a problem - They were taking up huge amounts of office space and stored paper is a fire risk.

### The microfilm years

Twenty five years ago, the problem was addressed with microfilm. Each month, a third party bureau converted the paper into microfilm. This saved storage space, but there was a risk of documents getting lost in transit and there was an inevitable delay, making it difficult to respond to any queries if they arose during the conversion period.

### The electronic age

The Bureau partner introduced the company to electronic document storage in the form of Alchemy. They started to use Alchemy to archive documentation in electronic format – scanning the documents and then storing the electronic images within Alchemy's electronic repository (the repository can be an on-premise Alchemy server, in the cloud or on removable media [CD, DVD]).

Images of scanned documents were delivered back to the company on a CD. The CDs had read-only Alchemy client software built in, which enabled staff to look-up their archived documents on the PC.

At this stage, there was no requirement to invest in an on-premise Alchemy solution, but as volumes grew, the company decided to bring the process in-house and installed an Alchemy server.

All orders are now entered into the management system on receipt and a picking-list is generated for each customer. This is still printed out on a dot matrix printer and the hard copy used to individually pick each order.

At the end of the day, picking lists are scanned into Alchemy by warehouse staff. Overnight, duplicate copy invoices are generated, ready to be sent with the delivery the following day. The delivery driver obtains the customer signature to provide proof of delivery. A signed copy is left with the customer and the driver retains the other signed copy, returning it to base, where it is checked and eventually back-scanned into Alchemy.

> "Alchemy has enabled us to improve our efficiency. Orders used to take 3 days to process; we now deliver next day. It's easy to search the picking lists in Alchemy, so customer service is better and paper storage space has been reclaimed."
>
> John Thorp,
> Account Manager, H.N. Nuttall Ltd.

Documents are indexed in Alchemy by date, region and delivery load number. A new folder is created to 'file' each day's deliveries.

### Widening the network

H.N. Nuttall's infrastructure was beginning to creak and groan, so the latest Alchemy update sees a move away from the on-premise server solution, to a WAN install.

This has saved the company further infrastructure investment and brings the benefits of uninterrupted workflow and seamless backup, synonymous with a WAN network, preventing potential loss of data and credibility.