

FROM MANUAL TO HIGH-TECH OPERATIONS: I-PRO AMERICAS  
DIGITIZES THE PROCESSING OF SALES ORDERS WITH AFI ORDER

# i-PRO

### Challenge:

- » Excessive manual effort in customer service and little time for essential activities, such as improving customer satisfaction.

### Solution:

- » AFI Order automates the processing of incoming sales orders and ensures maximum efficiency in the Customer Service Center.

### Benefits:

- » AI-powered order processing
- » 360-degree overview of all sales orders
- » Significant reduction of data entry efforts
- » Trainability of the system



# From Manual to High-Tech Operations: i-PRO Americas Digitizes the Processing of Sales Orders with AFI Order

With over 60 years of technological experience and innovative quality solutions, i-PRO sets highest standards in the world of video data analysis. The US company provides state-of-the-art cameras and analytics tools that are used in security, medical, manufacturing, retail, and public service. These technologies transform data into valuable information, optimize workflows, improve decision-making processes, and increase the efficiency of companies worldwide.

To take its own internal processes to the next level, i-PRO has decided to digitize and automate its sales order processing with AFI Order. In the interview, Rohan Ponnekanti, Manager Business Systems and Head of Americas SAP IT at i-PRO, explains how the use of this solution drastically reduces manual effort and makes business processes more efficient in the long term.

## 1 Why were you looking for a new solution for the digital processing of all incoming sales orders?

Rohan Ponnekanti: "We received many purchase orders as PDF documents by e-mail, which had to be processed manually by our customer service team. Some of the purchase orders contained thirty to forty items. For large orders in particular, the process was very time-consuming and prone to errors, since the first step was to check material availability. Only after this check could the orders be forwarded to the warehouse team and the goods shipped to the customers.

Executive management realized the potential for streamlining when the customer service team reported that a great deal of time was being spent on manual data entry and checking, and that these precious resources could be better utilized in customer care. The logical consequence was to automate

the process. So we set out to find a solution for automating incoming sales orders."

## 2 Why did you opt for the AFI solution and what was it that convinced you?

Rohan Ponnekanti: "When we evaluated various solutions, we had a clear concept: we wanted to find a service provider that specializes in the automation of orders. It was important for us to work with a company whose solution is already established and has been tried and tested over the long term. This way, we could be sure that the solution would work reliably and could be quickly integrated into our processes. In addition, we needed a flexible tool that could be well adjusted to our specific requirements.

Peter Schulte, our Operations Director, drew our attention to AFI Solutions. He had previously worked at Vahle and

Bosch and already had positive experiences with the SAP add-on AFI Order. He was overly impressed, especially since Bosch has one of the most complex order processing systems, while our requirements are much simpler. When we then heard that the implementation period would be noticeably short, we finally settled for the AFI Order solution."

### 3 How many sales orders do you process at i-PRO?

Rohan Ponnekanti: "i-PRO processes over 12,000 sales orders per year."

### 4 Which requirements did you have for the new solution and processes?

Rohan Ponnekanti: "The biggest challenge was to ensure that the system reads the orders automatically in a way that is error-free and splits them if necessary. By this I mean that we sometimes have to send an order as two parts to two different addresses. The AFI Solutions customer service was extremely helpful during the configuration. The flexibility of the solution was a decisive advantage for us.

We also noticed that data recognition from the PDF document was not always completely error-free, particularly in the case of complex purchase orders. Thomas Rundel (Sales AFI Solutions) then introduced us to the great solution AFI Order Training Client, which enables our customer service team to easily train the system. As a result, it recognizes the data error-free for future orders and automatically creates them. This feature makes us completely independent, as we do not have to rely on AFI customer service. Instead, our team can take care of training themselves. And that's a great solution!"



### 5 Which improvements do you see in day-to-day work with the AFI solution?

Rohan Ponnekanti: "The customer service team benefits greatly from the AFI Order solution. Our overall efficiency in order processing has improved. Thanks to automated order creation and the reduction of manual tasks, customer service has more time for essential activities. And our warehouse team now receives purchase orders much faster than before, which truly helps us."

### 6 What is the most important advantage from your point of view?

Rohan Ponnekanti: "The main advantage is that the customer service team has more capacity to improve the customer experience instead of spending a lot of time on manual order processing. In my opinion, this is the most important aspect."

### 7 How high would you estimate the measurable savings achieved by the AFI solution?

Rohan Ponnekanti: "70% of all new orders were previously processed manually and are now handled mostly automated via the AFI solution and its embedded learning tool. This enables i-PRO to ship out most order confirmations on the same day they were received."

### 8 What do you think is the main advantage for your department?

Rohan Ponnekanti: "The customer service team often turned to the internal SAP team for manual order creation when there were discrepancies or gaps in the order creation. They needed our help to complete incorrect orders. Now that AFI Order has been implemented, incoming sales orders are created automatically. And if there are discrepan-



cies, the solution uses intelligent assistants to highlight them. This enables the customer service team to solve the problems independently, without intervention from our SAP team or other departments, which has significantly reduced our workload.”

### 9 What do you think is the main advantage for your company?

Rohan Ponnekanti: “At the company level, orders are processed much faster, which improves the customer experience. As soon as a purchase order arrives, customers immediately receive their purchase order number and all relevant information. The integration in our e-commerce system ensures that the purchase order number is automatically transferred. This means that the respective order status can be tracked online without having to consult customer service. This has greatly reduced the number of queries by phone and provides significant added value.”

### 10 Were there any individual adjustments as part of the solution implementation?

Rohan Ponnekanti: “This solution was

implemented almost entirely in the standard solution. The greatest adjustment was the splitting of orders when they had to be sent to several delivery addresses. During the implementation of the solution, there were some minor adjustments depending on the type of order, but these were not complicated. The adjustments were necessary to meet the specific requirements of our orders and our customers.”

### 11 And how do you benefit from these adjustments?

Rohan Ponnekanti: “First and foremost, the adjustments save time. Previously, customer service had to manually enter and split the orders, a task now handled by the system. The team simply has to check whether the split orders have been created correctly before they are forwarded.”

### 12 Is your team satisfied with AFI Order?

Rohan Ponnekanti: “The team is very satisfied with the solution! There are neither problems nor complaints. The solution is efficient and works perfectly. The system’s trainability in particular

has helped the customer service team to ensure that purchase orders are processed correctly. There is no redundant work: once set up, the system automatically recognizes the template the next time and creates the order information correctly. The customer service representatives are so accustomed to the AFI solution that they almost panic if the system fails for 10 minutes. As one employee said: *We don't want manual purchase orders back; the AFI solution does everything for us.* This shows how much the system has simplified their daily work.”

**“WE WANTED TO FIND A SERVICE PROVIDER THAT SPECIALIZES IN THE AUTOMATION OF ORDERS.”**

i-PRO Co., Ltd. is a leading provider of sensing solutions in the fields of Security Surveillance, Public Safety and Medical Imaging. Established in 2019 and built on Panasonic's 60-year legacy of advanced technology and innovation, i-PRO supports professionals protecting and saving lives and contributing to a safe, secure society.

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AFI Solutions GmbH is a leading solution provider for the digitization and optimization of document processes around SAP. The solutions cover the entire purchase-to-pay and order-to-cash process.

AFI Solutions is the only software manufacturer on the market that offers everything from a single source: With the AFI RedPaperCenter as a managed service, companies can easily outsource the digitization of a wide variety of paper documents. In process optimization, AFI scores with SAP-integrated software solutions. The cloud-based AFI DocumentHub as software as a service (= SaaS) completes the unique product portfolio.

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