



**COMPANY**  
Savers, Inc.

**BUSINESS**  
Thrift Store Retailer

**FINANCIAL SOFTWARE**  
Microsoft Dynamics® GP

“  
doc-link PROVIDES  
A HUGE RETURN ON  
INVESTMENT WHEN IT  
COMES TO RESEARCH.  
WHAT USED TO TAKE US  
1 WEEK NOW TAKES US 2  
HOURS.  
”

Dohn Johnson  
Contoller  
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## SAVERS, INC.

### STREAMLINES ACCOUNTS PAYABLE PROCESSING WITH *doc-link*™

#### Company Background

Savers, Inc., the largest for-profit thrift store chain in the world today, opened its first store in San Francisco, CA, in 1954. On its first day of operation, the store rang up gross sales of \$448. By 1970, Savers had become a chain, moving its corporate headquarters to Seattle, WA. In 1980, it opened its first Canadian store in Vancouver, BC. Today, Savers, Inc. operates 200 Savers, Value Village and Value des Valeurs stores in 25 states, 10 Canadian provinces and Australia. The company currently employs 8,000 employees with revenues of \$400 million.

#### Challenge

Through the years, Savers had developed decentralized accounting practices, which proved to be very time-consuming and costly for the company's corporate headquarters and store managers. Dohn Johnson, Contoller, was tasked by Savers senior management to reinvent the infrastructure of the finance department, turning it from a decentralized environment to a centralized one. "As part of this process, my goals — both at the corporate and store levels — were to initially reduce staff size while the company continued to grow. In addition we wanted to reduce the amount of time spent on research and filing," says Johnson. "I had previous experience deploying document imaging in transaction-based departments with retail organizations. The paperless concept and the savings presented with document imaging were very obvious to me. I knew this was one way to help Savers at both levels."

#### Solution

Johnson, who was searching for an imaging solution that would enable him to meet the company's goals to centralize the finance department, discovered *doc-link*, an integrated document management solution from Altec. *doc-link*, specifically the workflow component, enabled Savers to electronically route invoices through its business for local store approval — paving the way for a centralized AP environment.

In January 2003, Savers implemented *doc-link*, which integrates seamlessly with the company's financial solution, Microsoft Dynamics GP. As vendor invoices are entered into Microsoft Dynamics GP, the invoice image is indexed with the AP transaction data from Microsoft Dynamics GP and stored in the *doc-link* repository.

Prior to *doc-link*, vendor invoices were sent directly to 200 store locations. Two managers at each store were tasked with approving invoices. They spent a considerable amount of time processing and mailing invoices back to Savers' corporate headquarters. Now, store managers can review and approve invoices quickly and easily through workflow. This new process eliminates the need to open mail, manually approve paper documents and ship, saving both time and money. In addition, invoices are no longer lost or misplaced.

#### Benefit

Johnson estimates that Savers realized an ROI within 12 months. With *doc-link* in place, their hard dollar savings related to storage and retrieval services is \$18,000 per year. The productivity increases have provided a savings of \$33,400 in accounts payable and \$60,000 in general accounting processes.

"*doc-link* provides a huge return on investment when it comes to research," exclaims Johnson. "What used to take us 1 week now takes us 2 hours."

"In addition, as we've grown, *doc-link* has allowed us to process greater transaction volume — without adding staff to the department. When we purchased *doc-link*, we were processing 8,000 vendor invoices per month with 6.5 people. Now, we are processing close to 12,000 invoices per month with 5 people. Our store managers, with *doc-link*'s electronic workflow approval process, are saving 2 to 3 hours per week. This time saved can now be used to increase business revenue at the store level."

#### Future Plans

"There are tremendous opportunities using *doc-link*," concludes Johnson. "We plan to expand *doc-link* into other paper intensive departments, such as contract administration, real estate and human resources. We are committed to this project."

