

AGA | A Member of The Linde Group

## Streamlining processes and collaboration



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**AGA**

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Northern Europe  
[www.aga.com](http://www.aga.com)

Leading gas company and device manufacturer uses Adobe® Acrobat® to streamline complex review processes, accelerating project collaboration by as much as 50%

AGA is the leading gas company in northern Europe, with operations in Scandinavia and the Baltic region. A member of The Linde Group—with 600 affiliated companies in over 100 countries—AGA delivers gas application technology, process know-how, and associated equipment and services to customers worldwide. Industrial gases from AGA play a crucial part in environmental protection, metallurgical processes, and a wide array of industries—such as food, medical and pharmaceutical, glass and electronics, construction, and research and development.

Delivering such essential, even volatile, products and services often requires long, complex development processes, with final products being heavily regulated in many countries. As a result, all product documents must be closely managed. Whether it's a marketing brochure, a building plan designed with specialized CAD software, or a customer proposal written in a word-processing application, all versions, reviewers, and feedback must be fully tracked.

For example, if an AGA engineering team is working to create a medical device that healthcare providers will eventually use to administer gases to a patient, then every aspect of product development from start to finish requires internal documentation and review—followed by testing and then certification by the appropriate regulatory agencies.



### Challenge

- Streamline complex review processes
- Comply with regulatory agency documentation requirements
- Preserve documents, annotations, and e-mails for long-term archiving
- Better protect sensitive information and regulatory documentation
- Accelerate capturing survey feedback from dispersed teams

### Solution

- Standardize on Adobe Acrobat and dynamic PDF for improved collaboration
- Use Acrobat.com to distribute PDF surveys
- Create PDF Portfolios to increase clarity and context of communications and better manage project-related information

### Benefits

- Completed complex document review cycles twice as fast
- Enabled employees worldwide to easily collaborate on documents, regardless of originating application
- Reduced document administration costs
- Established reliable, long-term archive and document tracking to address product development and regulatory requirements

### Toolkit

Adobe Acrobat 9 Pro and Standard  
Adobe Acrobat X Pro and Standard

"We rely on PDF to collaborate because it is a reliable, global standard," explains Torbjörn Åsberg, IT license manager for AGA. "A project manager on a customer site may not have AutoCAD, but everyone has Adobe Reader". Plus with so many versions of different software applications out there, using Adobe Acrobat and PDF really simplifies our collaboration."

### Streamlining complex review processes

Like other product development groups at AGA, members of the Medical Device team often create hundreds of text documents and several hundred CAD drawings for a typical project, with each needing to be reviewed by as many as 20 reviewers. Feedback must be collected and consolidated, including comments, changes, and even the justification for those changes. "We work with project teams worldwide, and using Adobe Acrobat to convert our materials to dynamic PDF files is the best way to make sure that all contractors—wherever they are—can open, review, and comment on critical project documents," says Åsberg.

At the same time, the marketing communications department at AGA relies on Adobe Acrobat to develop and distribute marketing content internally, gathering all necessary feedback and approvals. They can then use the same PDF files to deliver finalized marketing materials to potential customers.

Project teams at AGA have been using Acrobat for several years to help control lengthy review processes. Engineering, test, and other project documents are converted to PDF and sent for review via e-mail to teams worldwide. Digital comments are made directly on the PDF files, collected from all contributors, and merged into a single document. AGA also uses the approval stamp in Acrobat to show who has reviewed and approved a given document, and the time stamp function to track when the review was conducted.

"When you have a document that takes a half-hour to review, and multiply that by 20 reviewers, that's a lot of hours per document," says Anders Palm, director, medical devices, regulatory, and compliance at The Linde Group. "We want to avoid any unnecessary steps in our review processes. By using Acrobat to convert materials to PDF for improved collaboration, we've cut document review cycles in half."

PDF Portfolios also help to reduce complexity and improve the quality of final documents shared with external teams, enabling AGA to help ensure it has submitted all required documents at once. The company uses internal linking within PDF Portfolios for added efficiency and to further improve how recipients review final documents.

### Maintaining control over critical documents

AGA uses digital signatures during internal review processes to help ensure approved documents haven't been compromised. "We can better control and streamline our review processes because we can see who reviewed documents, as well as their associated comments," Åsberg says.

By utilizing Adobe Acrobat and PDF, AGA has reliable access to more secure product documents, which can be used to support development or shared with government agencies that need more product information.



*"We want to avoid any unnecessary steps in our review processes. By using Acrobat to convert materials to PDF for improved collaboration, we've cut document review cycles in half."*

**Anders Palm**  
Director of medical devices, regulatory, and compliance,  
The Linde Group

Once the internal review process is completed, documents are finalized and, if needed, submitted as PDF files to regulatory agencies worldwide. At the same time, they are archived in PDF and made available for future reference. With the archived documents in PDF, which include digital comments made by multiple reviewers along the way, AGA has reliable access to more secure product documents that can be used by teams to support future development or shared with regulatory agencies wanting more information about product cycles and modifications.

An essential benefit of using Acrobat for collaboration is the ability to effectively track and manage all feedback from reviewers. This is critical because all phases of product development, including changes, must be tracked, and if needed, shared with regulatory agencies when requested. "Keeping track of changes to product development documents was traditionally a burden," explains Palm. "Fortunately, Acrobat makes this much easier."

### **Mapping solutions to business needs**

More recently, Åsberg has begun using Acrobat.com to distribute survey forms in PDF to hundreds of AGA employees, letting them know about the availability of new software releases and getting their feedback about their upgrade needs. "If someone wants new software, an employee can just complete the PDF survey form, digitally return it to me, and then I send the documents to colleagues in other regions for approval," he explains. The PDF forms can be quickly completed, with the streamlined process not only accelerating employee access to software but also providing a good audit trail of which employees have responded, who wants an upgrade, and which upgrades are approved.

"Using Adobe Acrobat to generate dynamic PDF files offers us tremendous flexibility in how we collaborate inside and outside our company," says Åsberg. "We can easily generate reliable PDF files from standard business and technical applications to help ensure that everyone everywhere can easily work together. We've definitely seen improvements in everything from better document tracking and audit trails for government regulators to completing document review cycles twice as fast."

### **For more information**

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