

User Guide

Odoo 19.0

Core features

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CHAPTER 1

About IROKOO

1.1 A team of experts who get your industry

IROKOO has been an Odoo Gold partner since 2022, specialising in the implementation and optimisation of Odoo solutions. Our team brings together a core of permanent staff and independent consultants who have worked with us for years: the same faces from scoping through to day-to-day operation, under a single point of responsibility, ours.

Between them they cover organisational, functional, technical, industrial, accounting and management experience, and they know the practical constraints of your sector. A wider partner ecosystem steps in when your project calls for a niche skill.

We work with companies of 10 to 500 employees, in industry, wholesale and distribution, services, transport and the wine sector.

Note

As an Odoo Gold partner, IROKOO guarantees a level of expertise recognised and validated by the publisher, and with it the quality of our implementations.

1.2 Our services

1. **Odoo integration**: a tailored implementation, fitted to your processes and your sector.
2. **Odoo / ERP consulting**: scoping the requirement, analysing existing processes and choosing the path forward.
3. **Odoo training**: bespoke sessions for every level of user.
4. **AI services**: designing intelligent agents to automate and optimise your business processes.
5. **Electronic invoicing**: bringing you into compliance with the reform and connecting you to an approved platform (see chapter 13).
6. **Technical support**: ongoing support, incident resolution and further development.

Methodology

Our Odoo implementation methodology aims at projects delivered on time, on budget and to a high standard of quality:

1. In-depth analysis of your needs and of your existing processes.
2. Design of a solution aligned with your strategic objectives.
3. Configuration and customisation suited to your line of business.
4. Training of your teams for successful adoption.
5. Ongoing support after go-live, to maximise the return on investment.

1.3 Our Odoo expertise

With more than 10 years of experience in Odoo implementation and more than 20 years in ERP integration, our team brings you:

- a thorough understanding of Odoo best practices;
- real functional experience inside companies, for a field-based approach;
- a strategic view to optimise your business processes;
- the technical command required for bespoke development and integration;
- knowledge of sector-specific requirements, to adapt to your line of business;
- skills in artificial intelligence applied to the ERP.

Our experience in figures

- more than 190 Odoo projects implemented;
- more than 10 years of experience in Odoo implementation;
- more than 20 years of experience in ERP integration;
- 35 certified experts dedicated to your projects;
- nationwide presence: Tours, Rouen, Paris, Montpellier, Bordeaux, Avignon, Blois, Le Mans, Nantes, Lyon.

1.4 Why choose IROKOO

1. **Technical excellence**: a certified team whose skills are validated by Odoo.
2. **A pragmatic approach**: realistic solutions suited to your context.
3. **A long-term view**: support that goes beyond the initial go-live.
4. **Commitment to results**: a demand for satisfaction founded on concrete objectives.
5. **Skills transfer**: an emphasis on making your teams self-sufficient.

Tip

IROKOO favours a collaborative approach that involves your teams throughout the project, which leads to better adoption of the solution and to an effective transfer of skills.

1.5 Contact us

To start your Odoo project or to find out more about our services:

- Website: www.irokoo.fr
- Email: info@irokoo.fr
- Telephone: 07 55 53 66 15

Book a personalised demonstration or an assessment of your needs by visiting our website.

CHAPTER 2

Introduction

2.1 About this guide

This guide supports both the first steps and the daily use of Odoo 19. It covers the core features and the essential processes you will meet in your work: the interface and the actions common to all applications, configuring the database, access rights, customer relationship, catalogue, purchasing, stock, sales, invoicing and electronic invoicing, accounting, manufacturing, projects, analysis, artificial intelligence, automation, import/export and customisation.

Each procedure is described step by step, from the menu path through to the expected result.

Tip

The document reads equally well from cover to cover, as part of a training course, or one section at a time, to find a specific operation again. The chapters stand on their own.

2.2 What is Odoo?

Odoo is a suite of management applications covering the whole range of an organisation's needs: sales, customer relationship, purchasing, inventory, accounting, manufacturing, project management, human resources, website and online commerce. These applications share the same database, which guarantees the consistency of information from one end of the system to the other.

Odoo comes in two editions:

- **Odoo Community**: the free open source edition, covering the essential features.
- **Odoo Enterprise**: the subscription edition, including advanced features, official support and guaranteed updates.

Note

The procedures in this guide explicitly flag the features reserved for the Enterprise edition or requiring an additional application to be installed.

2.3 The fundamentals

2.3.1 A modular approach

You install the applications you need and add others as your business develops. Technical dependencies are handled automatically at installation.

2.3.2 Hosting options

Three hosting modes are offered:

1. **Odoo Online (SaaS)**: hosting provided by Odoo. Immediate go-live, automatic updates and maintenance, subscription including the hosting. Suited to organisations wishing to start without technical infrastructure.
2. **Odoo On-Premise**: hosting on your own servers. Full control of the environment, unrestricted customisation of the code, direct integration with your internal systems, control over the update schedule.
3. **Odoo.sh**: a managed hosting platform. Development, test and production environments, Git integration, automated deployment, branch and version management. Suited to projects involving specific developments.

Note

> The choice depends on your customisation needs, on your in-house technical resources and on your security or data confidentiality constraints.

2.3.3 Architecture and access

- A responsive web interface, usable on computer, tablet and phone.
- A progressive web application, recommended by Odoo, and store applications for iOS and Android.
- An external API allowing integration with other systems.
- Offline consultation of what has already been displayed during the session; data entry, on the other hand, requires the connection to be restored.

2.3.4 Integrated workflows

The applications are designed to work together without re-keying:

- a confirmed quotation generates the delivery order for the goods ordered, provided the **Inventory** application is installed;
- a receipt of goods feeds the quantities to be invoiced by the vendor, when the product is controlled on received quantities;
- a posted invoice feeds the general ledger, and its payment settles the receivable;
- a subscription generates the recurring invoices (**Subscriptions** application, Enterprise).

Note

> This integration avoids double entry, reduces the risk of error and gives full traceability of transactions.

2.3.5 Customisation

Odoo is configured at several levels, from the simplest to the most technical:

- configuration through the standard interface;
- assistance from the built-in artificial intelligence (Enterprise), which generates content and automates decisions within processes;
- Odoo Studio (Enterprise), to add fields and change views without writing code;
- automation rules with conditional triggers;
- reports and dashboards, whose modification belongs to the Enterprise edition;
- development of bespoke modules, for very specific needs.

2.3.6 Collaboration

- A chatter on every document.
- Management of activities and reminders.
- Real-time discussions and topic channels.
- Sharing of attachments from the chatter, with the document's access rights.
- Shared calendars and synchronisation with external agendas.

2.3.7 Compliance and localisation

- Pre-configured charts of accounts by country.
- Automated tax handling.
- Electronic invoicing compliant with local regulations.
- Export formats compatible with official filings.

2.4 How to use this guide

2.4.1 Structure of the document

The guide is organised into chapters covering the functional areas:

Chapter	Contents
3	Interface and navigation
4	Operations common to all applications
5	Initial configuration of the database and of the users
6	Access rights, scopes and partitioning
7	Customer relationship: pipeline, leads and opportunities
8	Customer relationship: automation and analysis
9	Catalogue of products and services
10	Purchasing and replenishment
11	Contacts, quotations, orders and deliveries
12	Invoicing and payment follow-up
13	French electronic invoicing and e-reporting
14	Bookkeeping, closing and financial statements
15	Inventory and logistics
16	Routes and rules governing the movement of goods
17	Manufacturing and subcontracting
18	Project management
19	Analyses, reports and dashboards
20	Intelligent assistance, agents and automated decisions
21	Process automation
22	Import, export and data migration
23	No-code customisation with Studio

Three appendices complete the guide: keyboard shortcuts, frequently asked questions and the glossary.

Tip

If you are new to Odoo, start with chapter 3 and chapter 4: they describe the navigation and the actions common to all applications, and they make the business chapters lighter to read.

2.4.2 Conventions

To make reading easier, this guide applies the following conventions:

- **App → Menu → Submenu** indicates a navigation path.
- **Label** designates an interface element: button, field, tab or checkbox.
- `Value` indicates a value to be entered.
- Step-by-step procedures are presented as numbered lists.
- Each chapter opens with an objectives block announcing what it will enable you to do.
- Figures are numbered by chapter: *Figure 7.3* designates the third figure of chapter 7.

Note

A path describes where an entry sits, not the number of clicks. In Odoo's drop-down menus, the intermediate levels appear as grey group headings, and the entries they contain are listed directly

underneath. A four-level path is therefore usually walked in three clicks: the application, the section of the menu bar, then the entry you want under its heading.

Note

Accounting paths are given with the **Accounting** application. Where only **Invoicing** is installed, read that name at the first level of the path: the rest is identical and the screens are the same. What really sets the two apart is detailed in section 12.1.

Four kinds of box punctuate the text:

Note

Important information to bear in mind for the rest of the procedure.

Tip

Advice that allows you to work more efficiently.

Watch out

A point to watch: a frequent mistake or an irreversible consequence.

Feature

A key point to know about the module under discussion.

2.4.3 Further resources

- Official documentation: www.odoo.com/documentation/19.0
- IROKOO training: www.irokoo.fr/formations-odoo

CHAPTER 3

A tour of the interface

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER

- find your way around the screen and move between applications;
- use the command palette and question the built-in assistant;
- choose the view that suits what you are trying to do;
- filter, group and keep your searches as favourites.

Every Odoo application shares the same interface and the same actions. Master them once and you will not have to learn them again application by application.

3.1 Logging in

1. Open a recent browser: Chrome, Firefox, Edge or Safari.
2. Enter the address of your Odoo instance.
3. Fill in the email address and the password.
4. Click **Log in**.

If you have forgotten it, the **Reset Password** link sends a reset email to the account address.

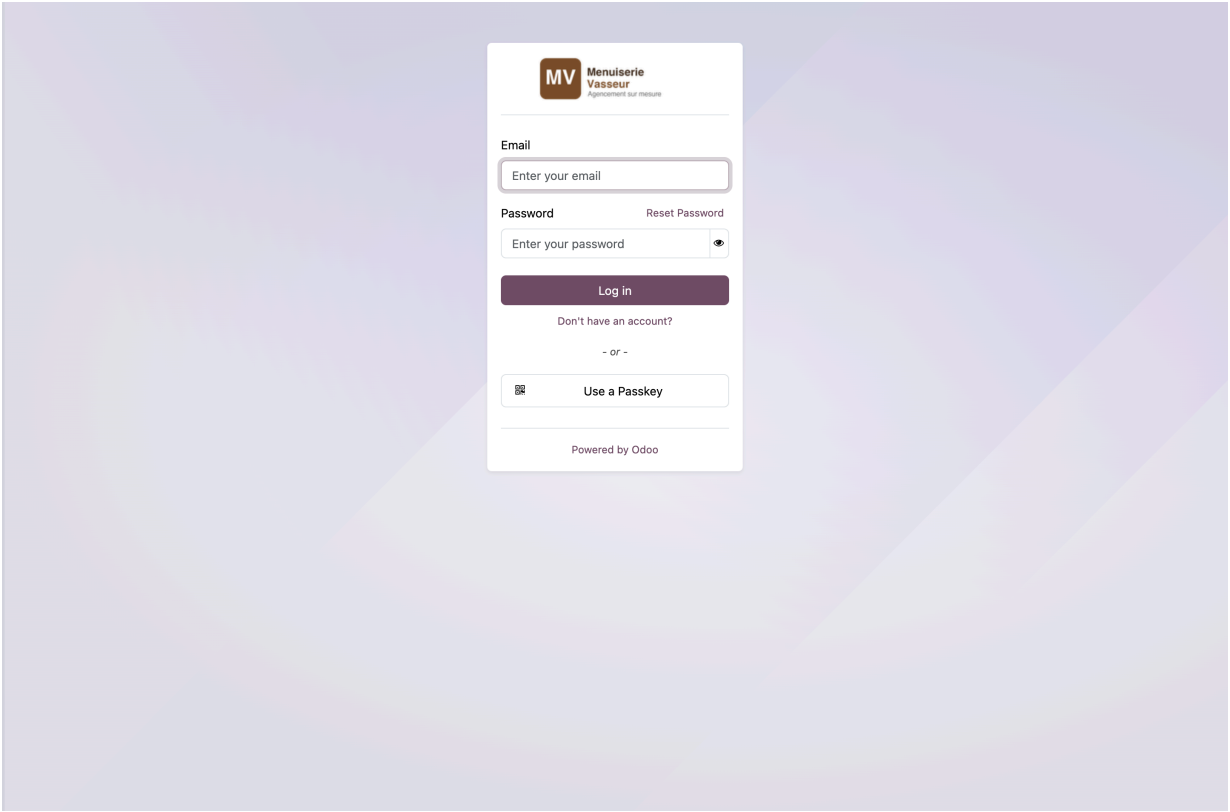


Figure 3.1: The login screen

3.1.1 From a mobile device

The web interface adapts on its own to phone and tablet screens: a browser is enough. For daily use, Odoo can in addition be installed as an application, by two routes that are not equivalent.

The progressive web application, recommended. It installs from the browser, without going through a store, and stays up to date at the same time as the database.

1. Open the database in the phone's browser and log in.
2. On **Android**, open the browser menu and choose **Install**.
3. On **iOS**, open the share menu in Safari and choose **Add to Home Screen**.
4. On a **computer**, click the install icon at the right of the address bar.

Odoo then appears as an application: its own icon, full-screen opening, push notifications.

The store applications, available on Google Play and the App Store. They accept several accounts, but they carry a limitation that is decisive in a business setting.

Watch out

The store applications do not support single sign-on. If your users log in through a corporate Google or Microsoft account, those applications will not work: the progressive web application is the one to choose.

Tip

For a field fleet (warehouse staff, technicians, travelling sales representatives) have the progressive web application installed during the training itself. It removes the need to type the address at every connection, which is the main reason mobile access gets abandoned.

3.1.2 Working without a connection

When the network link is interrupted, Odoo keeps displaying what has already been consulted during the session: the screens and records that were opened remain accessible, served from a local cache. This capability is aimed at field use, where network coverage is irregular: data entry in the workshop, stocktaking in the warehouse.

Watch out

This is a **read-only** mode, not a data-entry mode. A record consulted offline cannot be modified: there is no queue that would send the entries through when the network returns. Work resumes when the link comes back.

Tip

If you expect an outage, open beforehand the screens you will need: only what has been displayed during the session stays available for consultation afterwards.

3.2 Structure of the screen

The interface is made up of six constant areas:

Area	Role
Top bar	Access to the applications, global search, notifications, user menu.
Application menu	The sections of the active application, to the left of the top bar.
Breadcrumb	The path travelled; lets you go back to the previous screen without losing the context.
Search bar	Filters, groupings and favourites of the current view.
Main area	The content displayed: list, form, kanban, chart.
View switcher	Switches between the available representations, at the top right.

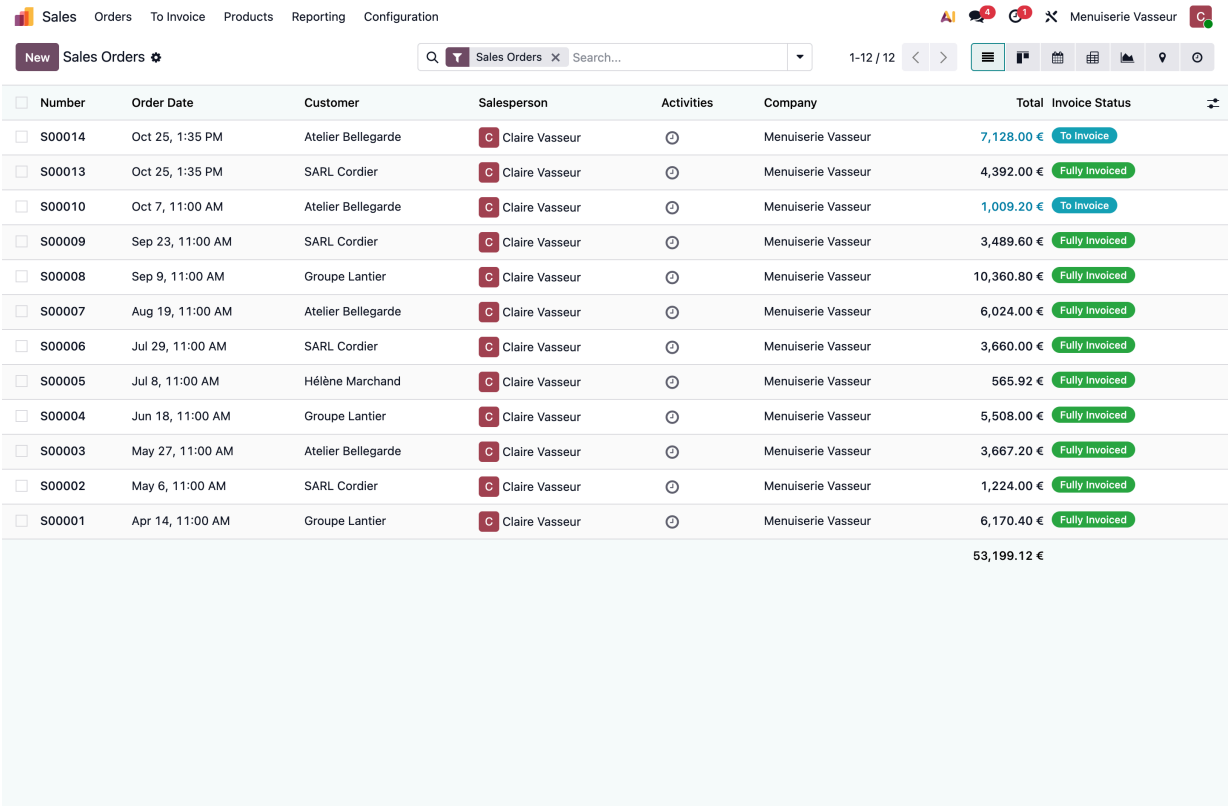


Figure 3.2: Home screen and areas of the interface

3.3 Getting around

3.3.1 Moving from one application to another

Click the menu icon at the top left to display the grid of installed applications, then choose the one you want.

The order of the tiles can be changed, which lets you put the ones you use every day at the front.

1. Click the tile to be moved and **hold the button down** for half a second, until it comes loose.
2. Drag it to its new place, then release.

Note

Holding is essential: an ordinary click opens the application. It is that delay which distinguishes the two gestures, and it explains why moving a tile often seems impossible to someone who does not know about it.

The resulting order is specific to each user: it does not affect what the others see.

3.3.2 The command palette

The command palette is the fastest way to reach any point of the database.

1. Press `Ctrl` + `K`: `Cmd` + `K` on a Mac.
2. Type the term you are looking for directly, or precede what you type with a character to narrow the field of search:

Prefix	Searches
/	Applications and menu entries
@	Conversations: people and channels
?	Knowledge base articles

Prefix	Searches
$	Hidden knowledge base articles

1. Confirm with `Enter`, or `Ctrl` + `Enter` to open the result in a new tab: this last gesture only applies to results of the menu or application kind.

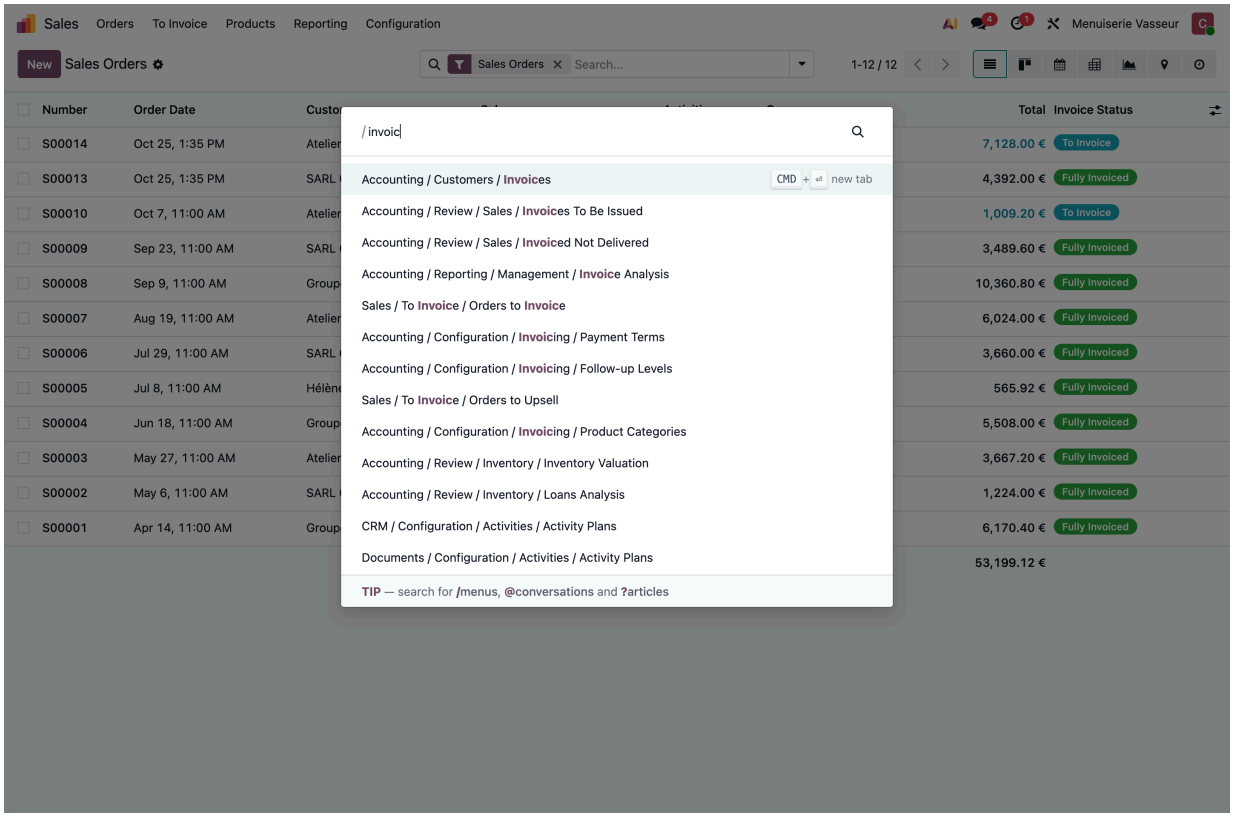


Figure 3.3: The command palette, open

3.3.3 Questioning the assistant

From the command palette, a question phrased in plain language can be put to the built-in assistant, which answers, opens the requested view or drafts a piece of content.

1. Open the palette with `Ctrl` + `K`.
2. Type the request out in words.
3. Click the assistance icon, or confirm with `Enter`.
4. The answer appears in a conversation window.

Hovering over the answer offers three actions:

- **Send as Message**: opens a pre-filled email containing the answer;
- **Log as Note**: records the answer in the document's chatter;
- the copy icon: places the text on the clipboard.

Note

This feature belongs to the Enterprise edition. The assistant is configured never to display a technical error message: when it cannot handle a request, it simply answers that it did not manage to satisfy it.

It does distinguish two cases, however, and the nuance is useful:

- *I could not*: the request was too vague, or beyond the reach of its tools. Rephrase it.
- *I am not allowed*: the operation exceeds your access rights. Rephrasing will change nothing: it is the administrator you need to approach (see chapter 6).

Watch out

The assistant's answer is a draft written from the context of the document. It is neither checked nor validated: read it again before sending it to a customer or filing it in a case.

3.3.4 Setting up access to the assistant

The assistance functions do not all rest on the same prerequisite, and that prerequisite depends on the hosting mode.

Hosting	Prerequisite
Odoo Online	**Nothing to configure**: the assistance functions can be used as they are. A personal key may be supplied, without any obligation, to keep control over the authorisations or over the version of the model.
Odoo.sh and on-premise hosting	**An access key is mandatory.** Without it, the assistance functions do not work.

To fill in a key:

1. Open the **Settings** application, **General Settings** pane, and scroll down to the integrations section.
2. Enable **Use your own ChatGPT account** or **Use your own Google Gemini account** depending on the provider chosen.
3. Paste in the key obtained from that provider.
4. Save.

Note

The setting is reserved for the administrator of the database. The providers offered are OpenAI and Google: Odoo calls their service directly, with no intermediary. Configuring the agents and the default instructions, on the other hand, requires the **AI** application to be installed, which is covered in chapter 20 the writing assistance functions can be used without it.

Watch out

The service is billed by usage by the model provider. On odoo.sh and on-premise hosting, the key therefore commits an account whose costs your organisation bears: this point is to be settled before opening the feature up to the teams.

3.4 The types of view

3.4.1 List view

Each row is a record, each column an item of information.

- Click a column header to sort.
- Tick the boxes on the left to select several records; an **Actions** menu then appears, to process them in bulk.
- On the lists that allow it, change a value directly in the list: click the cell, type, then save. Elsewhere, a click on the row opens the record.

Tip

To apply the same value to several records, when the list allows it, select them and change the value on one of the selected rows: the change is offered for the whole selection.

3.4.2 Form view

The form view presents a complete record, organised into groups of fields and into tabs.

- The action buttons are at the top left.
- The smart buttons, in the middle of the top band, between the breadcrumb and the navigation arrows, give access to the linked documents and display counters.
- The navigation arrows let you move to the next record without going back to the list.
- The chatter, to the right of the form on a large screen and at the bottom otherwise, brings together messages, notes and activities.

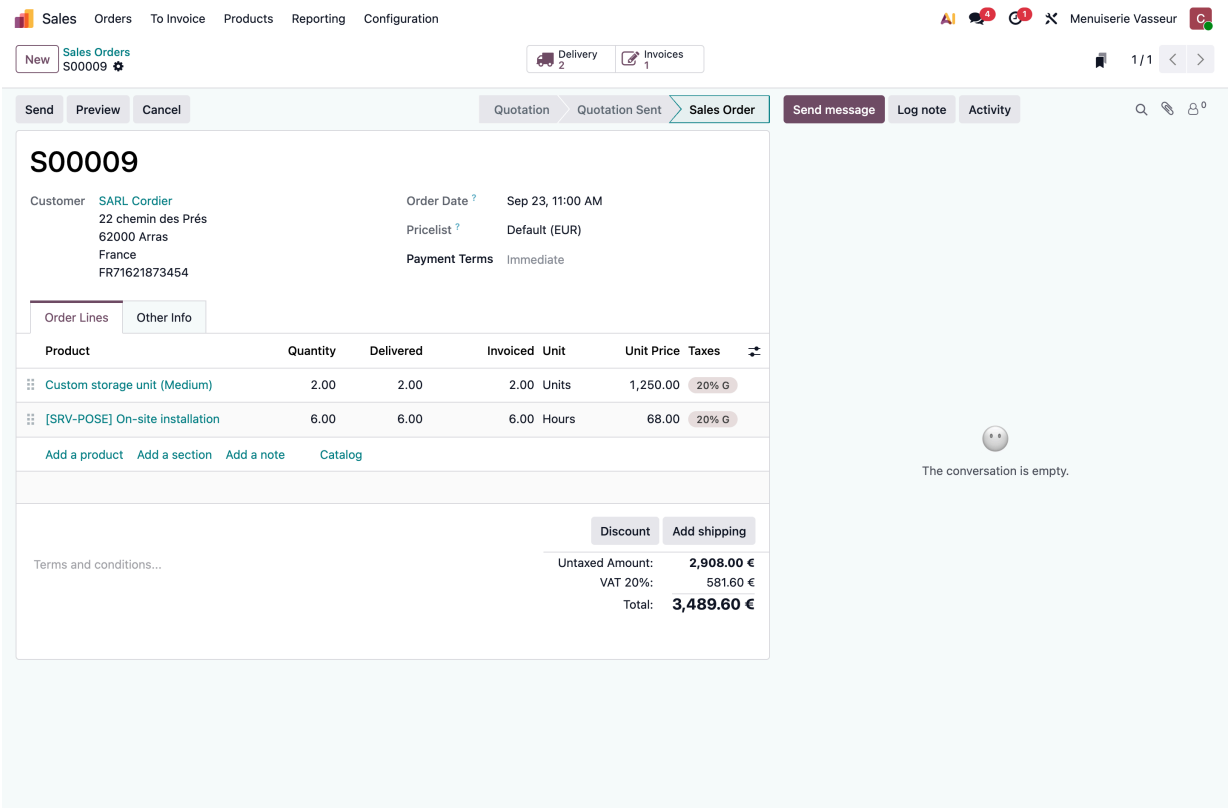


Figure 3.4: Form view and smart buttons

3.4.3 Kanban view

Records appear as cards spread over columns. Dragging and dropping from one column to another changes the stage. This is the working view for processes: sales pipeline, project tasks, recruitment.

3.4.4 Other views

- **Calendar**: places the records in time.
- **Graph**: bars, lines or pie.
- **Pivot**: a cross-tabulation with measures.
- **Gantt**: scheduling and dependencies (Enterprise).
- **Activity**: organises the records by planned activity.

The view switcher, at the top right, only offers the views available for the current screen.

3.5 Filtering, grouping, finding again

3.5.1 Filters

1. Click in the search bar, then on **Filters**.
2. Select a predefined filter, or build a custom filter with your own conditions.
3. Combine several filters: two filters of the same kind add up with “or”, two filters of different kinds with “and”.

3.5.2 Groupings

Click **Group By** and choose a criterion. The records are spread over collapsible sections carrying the subtotals. Several levels of grouping can be stacked.

3.5.3 Favourites

A search you have refined (filters, groupings, sort, columns) can be kept.

1. Compose the search.
2. Click **Favorites** then **Save current search**.
3. Name the favourite.
4. Tick **Default filter** so that it applies every time the screen is opened.
5. Click **Save**. To share the favourite, click **Edit** instead: the favourite's record opens, where the **Shared with** field designates the beneficiaries.

In the list of favourites, your own unshared searches appear first; shared searches, whoever created them, are in a second section.

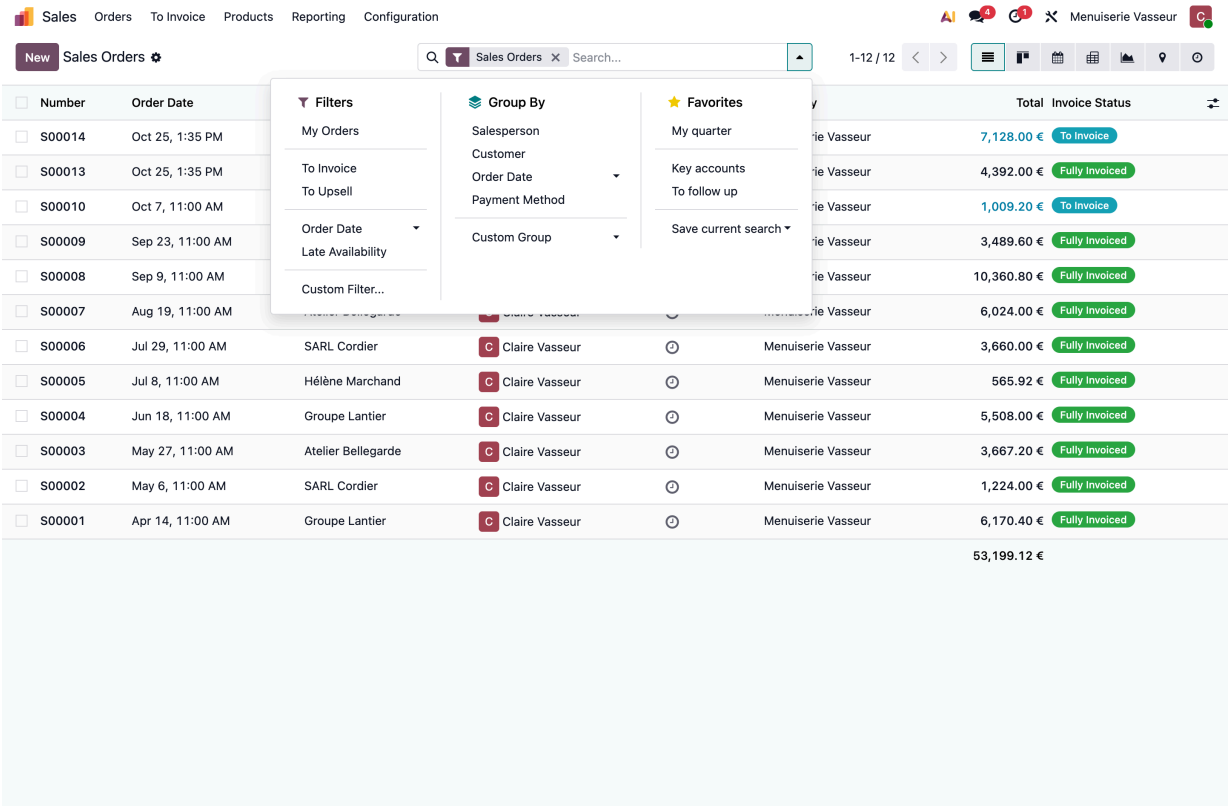


Figure 3.5: List of search favourites

To change a favourite: hover over it in the list and click the pencil icon. The favourite's record opens, where the name, the sharing, the default status and the domain are set. Archiving and deleting are done there from the form's action menu.

Note

Adding an extra filter while a favourite is active refines the search without altering the saved favourite. To change its conditions for good, go through the pencil icon.

3.5.4 Comparing two periods

Comparing periods is not a gesture of the general interface: it belongs to the accounting reports, where it is the normal way of reading. A profit and loss statement is judged against the previous financial year, not on its own.

On those reports, the **Comparison** filter offers:

- **Previous Period**: the period immediately before, of the same length;
- **Same Period Last Year**: the matching period of the previous financial year, which neutralises the effects of seasonality;
- a custom comparison, between two chosen dates.

The report then displays the two periods side by side, with the variance as a percentage. That column only appears if the report provides for it and if a single period is being compared. The subject is covered in chapter 14.

Note

Elsewhere in Odoo (lists, pivot tables, charts) putting two periods side by side is built differently: by grouping on a date, which produces one column or one series per month, per quarter or per year. The result is the same, the manoeuvre differs (see chapter 19).

3.6 Common actions

3.6.1 Creating, editing, deleting

- **Create**: the **New** button at the top of the screen.
- **Edit**: click directly in the field to be changed, then save with the cloud icon next to the breadcrumb.
- **Archive**: hides the record without destroying it. It stays available through the **Archived** filter and can be restored.
- **Delete**: the **Actions** menu, then **Delete**.

Watch out

Prefer archiving to deletion. A deleted record takes with it the history attached to it, and deletion is refused as soon as an accounting document refers to it.

3.6.2 Importing and exporting

Every list view lets you extract the displayed records to a spreadsheet, and load records in from a file. Export is started with **Actions** then **Export** import with the gear icon then **Import records**. chapter 22 covers both in detail.

3.7 Personal preferences

1. Click your avatar, at the top right.
2. Choose **My Preferences**.
3. **Preferences** tab: set the **Language** and the **Email Signature**.
4. **Calendar** tab: set the **Timezone**.
5. Save.

Watch out

A wrongly set time zone shifts the times displayed on activities, meetings and histories. It is the first thing to check when a user reports inconsistent times.

3.8 Help and developer mode

3.8.1 Documentation

The **Help** entry of your avatar menu opens the Odoo support page. In the settings screens, some options additionally carry a link to the documentation page that concerns them.

3.8.2 Enabling developer mode

Three routes lead to the same result; the third is the most convenient in practice.

Through the settings.

1. Open the **Settings** application, **General Settings** pane.
2. Scroll down to the **Developer Tools** section.
3. Click **Activate the developer mode**. The **Deactivate the developer mode** option then appears in the same place.

Through the address. Add `?debug=1` at the end of the address in the browser bar, and `?debug=0` to switch it off. This route works from any screen, without going through the settings.

Through the command palette. Open the palette with `Ctrl` + `K`, then type `debug`. This is the quickest manoeuvre, and it does not cost you the screen you are on.

Tip

For anyone who switches often, the **Odoo Debug** browser extension adds a button to the toolbar that turns the mode on and off in one click. It is published on the Chrome Web Store and on the Firefox add-ons site, and referenced by Odoo's official documentation.

It is a third-party tool, separate from Odoo: it only reaches the browser display, but installing it falls under your organisation's IT policy.

3.8.3 What developer mode gives you

Once it is active, a bug-shaped icon appears in the top bar. It opens the tools corresponding to the current screen: technical name of the fields, view in use, filters, action triggered.

Administrators additionally get a technical menu in the settings, which gives access to the structure of the database, to the security rules and to the scheduled actions.

Note

Two variants exist, intended for troubleshooting: `?debug=assets` reloads the interface files uncompressed, which makes the browser's error messages readable; `?debug=tests` adds the resources needed by the test tours. They slow the display down appreciably and serve diagnosis only.

Watch out

Developer mode exposes screens capable of changing the behaviour of the database in depth. It is switched on for the duration of a diagnosis and switched off afterwards.

CHAPTER 4

Essential features

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER

- use the chatter and the activities to follow a case;
- write formatted content in the editor;
- add a piece of information to a record without development;

This chapter brings together Odoo's cross-cutting mechanisms: the chatter, activities, the content editor and property fields. They work identically in every application. Data exchanges, which follow the same cross-cutting logic, are the subject of chapter 22.

4.1 The chatter

Every document (contact, quotation, invoice, task, manufacturing order) carries a discussion thread that gathers the history of exchanges and changes.

4.1.1 Writing a note or a message

1. Open the document.
2. In the chatter (to the right of the form on a large screen, at the bottom otherwise), choose the writing mode:
   - **Log note**: visible to internal users only;
   - **Send message**: sent to the document's followers, including external ones.
3. Write the text, attach files if necessary.
4. Send.

Watch out

The distinction between a note and a message is not cosmetic: a message really does go out to the customer following the document. Before writing an internal comment on a sensitive case, check that the **Log note** mode is indeed selected.

4.1.2 Managing followers

The followers icon, at the top of the thread, displays the list of the people who are notified. You can add people, remove them, and restrict the types of notification each of them receives.

4.1.3 Mentioning a colleague

Type `@` followed by a user's name in a message or a note: that person receives a notification.

Note

Mentioning someone does not make them a follower of the document. For a person to follow the rest of the exchanges, they must be added explicitly to the followers.

4.2 Activities

An activity is an action to be carried out, with a date and an assignee. It is Odoo's internal follow-up mechanism.

4.2.1 Scheduling an activity

1. Open the document concerned.
2. In the chatter, click **Activity**.

3. Choose the type from the badges offered: call, meeting, email, to-do, document, or any type defined for your organisation. This field has no label.
4. Fill in the **Due Date** and the **Assigned To** user.
5. Summarise the action expected.
6. Click **Save**.

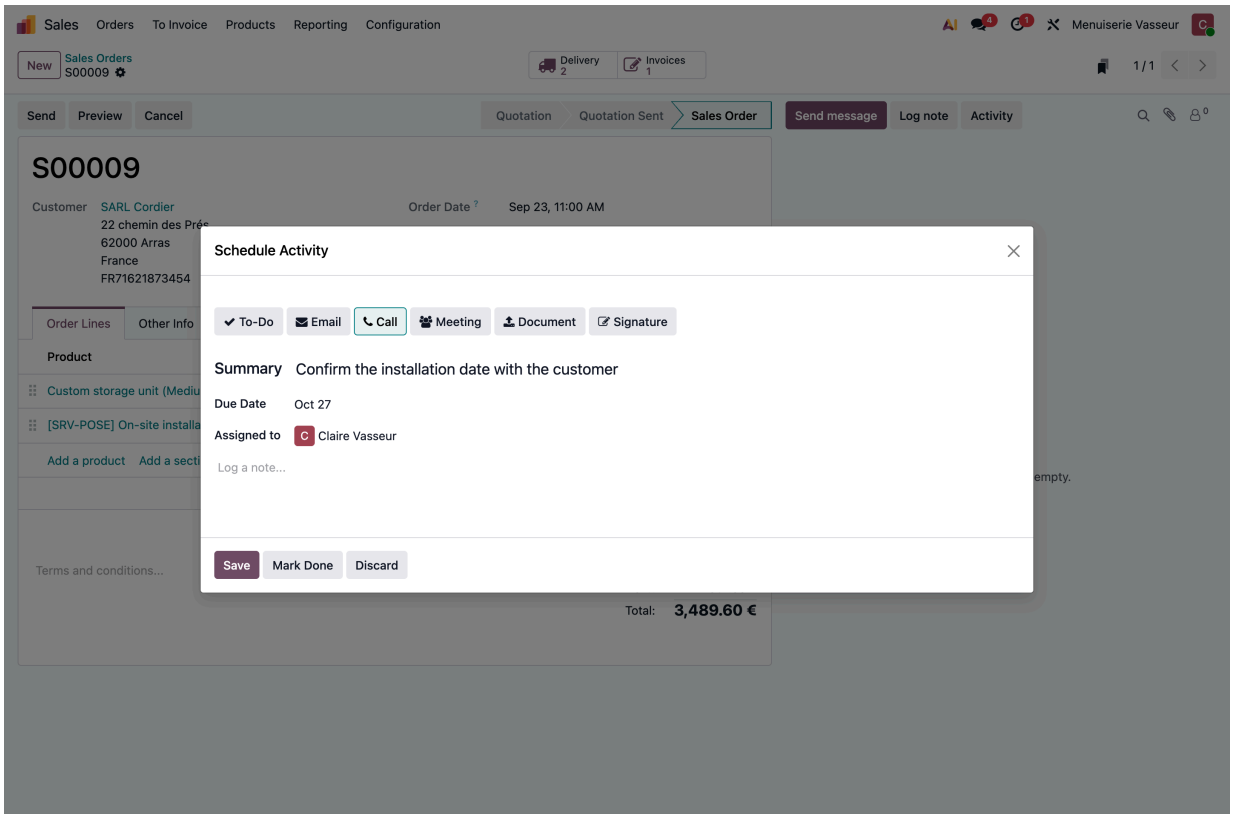


Figure 4.1: Scheduling an activity

4.2.2 Following your activities

The clock icon in the top bar brings together all your activities, sorted into overdue, today and upcoming. They are grouped there by application; a click opens the filtered list of the records concerned, not the document itself.

In the applications that offer it, the **Activity** view presents the records in columns by activity type, which gives an immediate reading of the workload ahead.

Tip

Activities are of no use if they are not closed. Get into the habit of clicking **Mark Done** and moving straight on to the next one: it is that gesture, and not the initial scheduling, that makes the follow-up reliable.

4.3 The content editor

The rich editor is used everywhere formatted text is expected: descriptions, emails, notes, articles, terms and conditions.

4.3.1 Formatting

Selecting text brings up a toolbar: bold, italic, underline, colour, list, link, alignment.

Typing `/` at the start of a line opens a menu for inserting a block: heading, table, image, separator, quote, callout, button.

Tip

`Ctrl` + `K` (`Cmd` + `K` on a Mac) inserts a link on the selected text without leaving the keyboard.

4.3.2 Writing or rewriting with the assistant

The assistant is called from the editor, in both directions: producing a text, or reworking an existing one.

To produce a text from nothing:

1. Place the cursor where you want it.
2. Type `/` to open the insertion menu, then choose **AI** in the **AI Tools** category.
3. Describe the text expected, then insert the proposal.

To rework a passage: shorten, lengthen, change the tone, correct, translate:

1. Select the text concerned.
2. Choose the assistance action in the toolbar, which appears with the selection.
3. State the transformation expected.
4. Compare the proposal with the original text, then accept or reject it.

Note

This feature belongs to the Enterprise edition and requires, depending on the hosting, a prior configuration (see section 3.3.4). The proposal replaces the selected text: read it again before accepting, particularly on contractual documents.

4.4 Property fields

A property field adds a piece of information to a record without changing the data model or resorting to development. It is defined at the level of a parent record and applies to its children: for example a field added on a project and available on all its tasks.

1. Open the record.
2. Open the form's actions menu (gear icon next to the breadcrumb) and choose **Edit Properties**.
3. Click **Add Property**, below the standard fields.
4. Name the field and choose its type: text, number, date, selection, relation, tags, checkbox.
5. Save.

The field becomes available on the linked records, and usable as a filter and grouping criterion.

Note

Property fields suit information specific to a context: a characteristic followed on a single project, a detail asked for by a single customer. For information useful across the whole database, a field created with Studio is more appropriate (see chapter 23).

4.5 Searching for a contact

Contacts are the most heavily used data in the database.

1. Open the **Contacts** application.
2. Type a fragment of a name, a company, an email address, a phone number or a tag in the search bar.
3. Choose the field the search should bear on from the list offered.

The groupings offered, by **Salesperson**, by **Company** or by **Country**, quickly give a usable segmentation.

4.6 Tracking changes

On sensitive documents, the history of value changes is recorded in the chatter: who changed what, when, and what the previous value was.

Note

This tracking only covers the fields declared as tracked, and the scope varies from one application to another. On a sales order, the total and the salesperson are tracked; on an invoice, neither the total nor the due date is. If you are in doubt about a specific field, the only way to know is to change it and see whether the chatter records it.

CHAPTER 5

Initial configuration

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER

- fill in the identity of the company and install the applications you need;
- create the users and grant each of them the level of access that matches their job;
- open portal access to an outside party;
- set up a multi-company structure.

This chapter covers the settings to be made before opening the database to users: company identity, language, applications, user accounts and access rights.

5.1 Filling in the company details

The company information feeds the header of every printed document (quotations, orders, delivery notes, invoices) as well as the legal statements.

1. Open **Settings → Users & Companies → Companies**.
2. Click the existing company to open it.
3. Fill in the identity: **Company Name**, full address, **Phone**, **Email**, **Website**.
4. Fill in the legal identifiers: **VAT** and the **Company ID**. As soon as the company is French and the localisation is installed, this last field gives way to **Siren/Siret**.
5. Upload the logo by clicking the image area at the top left of the form.
6. Check the company's **Currency** and **Timezone**.
7. Save.

Note

The **Siren/Siret** field covers French requirements and does not apply to other countries. In every other case the field stays **Company ID**, and takes the identifier used in the country of registration.

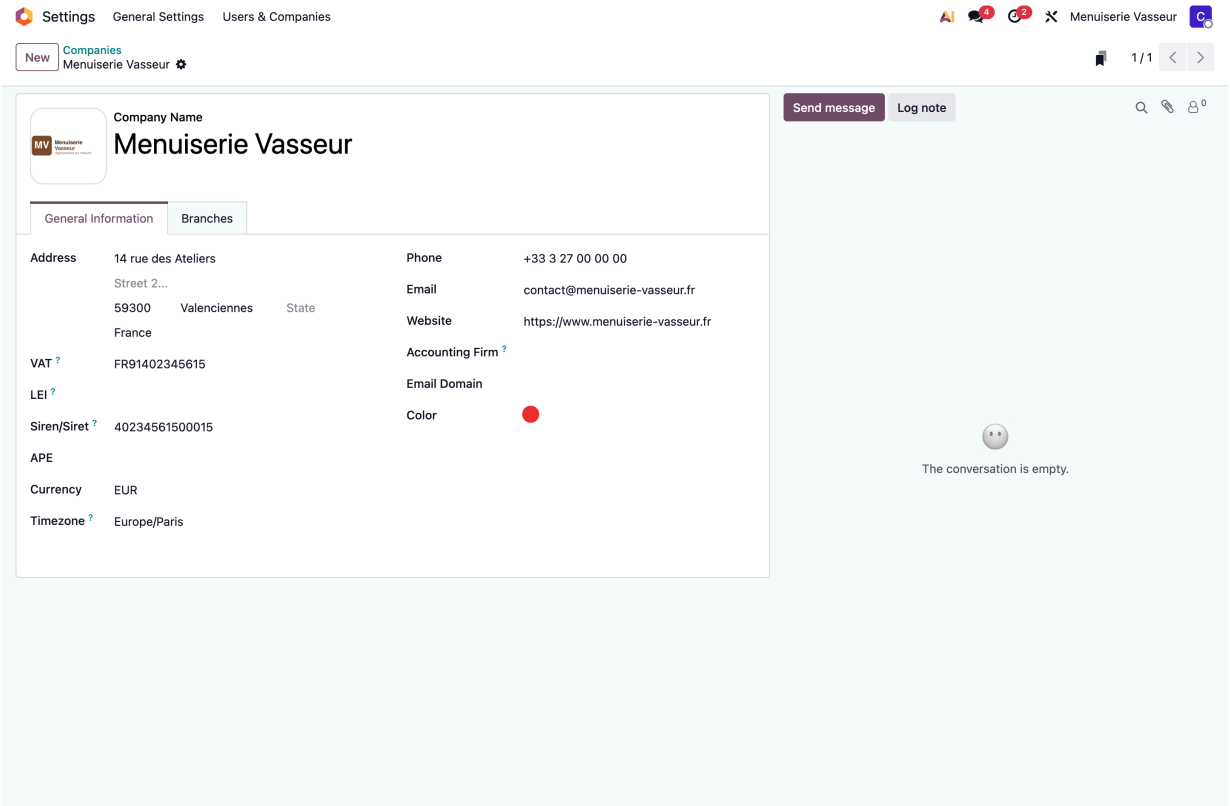


Figure 5.1: A completed company form

Tip

The logo is carried over onto every PDF document. A PNG file with a transparent background, at least 300 pixels wide, gives the best result in print.

Watch out

The company's currency determines the currency the accounts are kept in. Changing it after accounting entries have been recorded is not a trivial operation: this choice is made before go-live.

Note

Selling or buying in a foreign currency does not require the company's currency to be changed. Each pricelist carries its own, and the documents drawn up with it are denominated in that currency (see section 9.6.1). The company's currency remains the one the accounts are kept in.

5.2 Setting out the documents

Quotations, orders, invoices and delivery notes share a single presentation, which is set in one place. It is what gives its look to everything the customer receives.

1. Open the **Settings** application, **General Settings** pane.
2. In the **Companies** block, click **Configure Document Layout**.
3. Adjust the presentation in the window that opens; the preview updates with every change.
4. Click **Continue**.

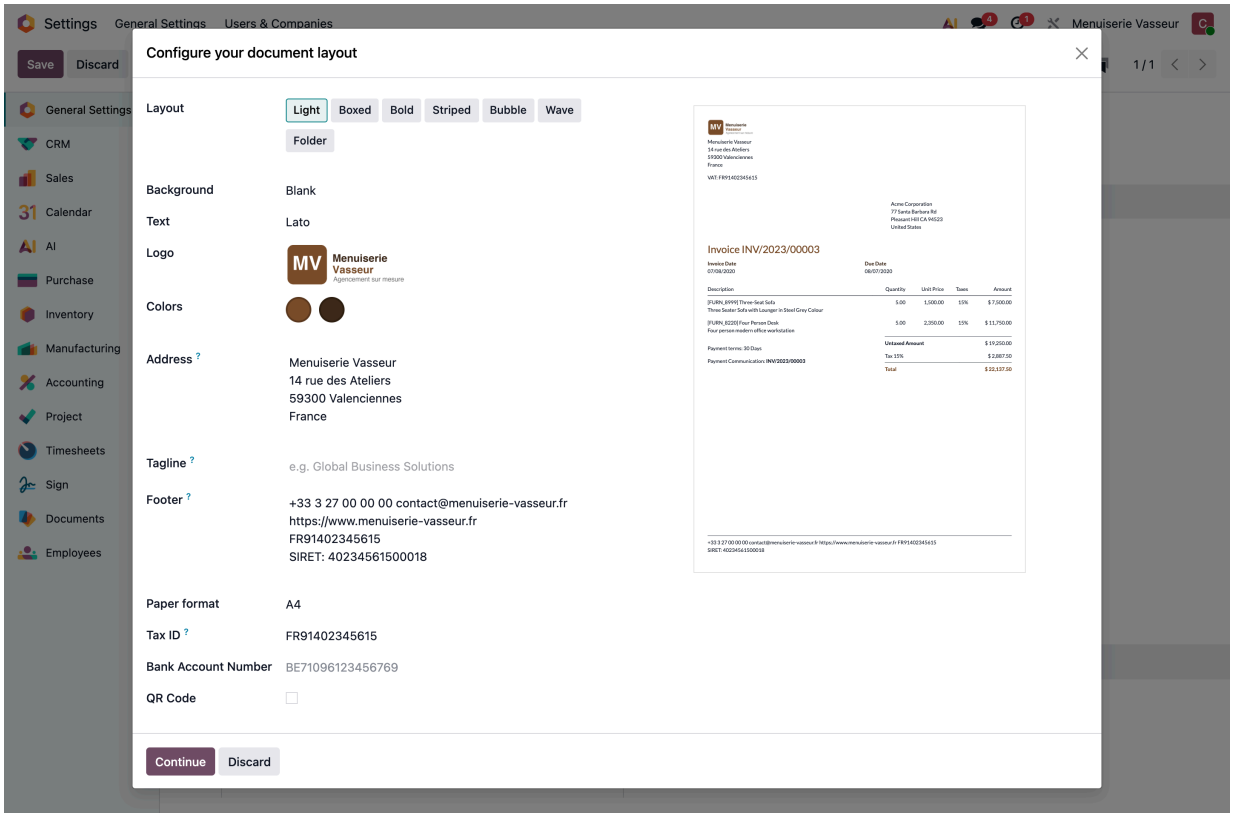


Figure 5.2: The document layout configurator

Setting	What it governs
Layout	The overall arrangement. Seven models are offered (**Light**, **Boxed**, **Bold**, **Striped**, **Bubble**, **Wave** and **Folder**) from the plainest to the most pronounced.
Background	A page background, or none. A background image weighs the printing down and gets in the way of reading tables of amounts.
Text	The typeface of the documents.
Logo	Taken from the company record, and editable here.
Colors	Two shades, primary and secondary, applied to headings and rules. Odoo derives them from the logo, and they can be corrected by hand.
Address	The identity block printed at the top, taken from the company record.
Tagline	A strapline placed under the identity. Optional.
Footer	The legal statements at the foot of the page: telephone, website, VAT number, company registration number (SIRET in France), legal form.
Paper format	A4 or US Letter, depending on the country the documents are going to.

Watch out

The **Footer** carries the statements that are mandatory on invoices: legal form, share capital, registration number, intra-Community VAT number. Have it approved by your accountant before the first invoice: an invoice issued with incomplete statements is corrected by a credit note, not by reprinting it.

Note

The list of mandatory statements above covers French requirements and does not apply to other countries. Fill the **Footer** with whatever the country of registration requires.

Tip

Test the result on a real document before go-live: draw up a trial quotation and print it. The preview in the window carries fictitious data, and some defects (a logo that is too large, a footer that spills onto a second page) only show up in an actual printout.

Note

In a multi-company environment, the layout is set company by company: each one carries its own logo, colours and statements (see section 5.8).

5.3 Installing the French language

A database created in English can be used in French as soon as the language is activated.

1. Open the **Settings** application, **General Settings** pane, and scroll down to the **Languages** section.
2. Click **Add Languages**.
3. Select `French / Français` then click **Add**.
4. Once the installation is finished, click **Switch to French (Français) & Close** to switch the interface over straight away.

Note

The language is a per-user setting: each person can work in their own language from their personal preferences. Installing a language simply makes it available to everyone.

5.4 Installing the applications

1. Open **Apps** from the main menu.
2. Search for the application you want in the search bar.
3. Click **Activate** on the corresponding tile.
4. Wait for the installation to finish: technical dependencies are installed automatically.

The applications covered by this guide are: **CRM**, **Sales**, **Purchase**, **Inventory**, **Manufacturing**, **Accounting**, **Project**, **Dashboards**.

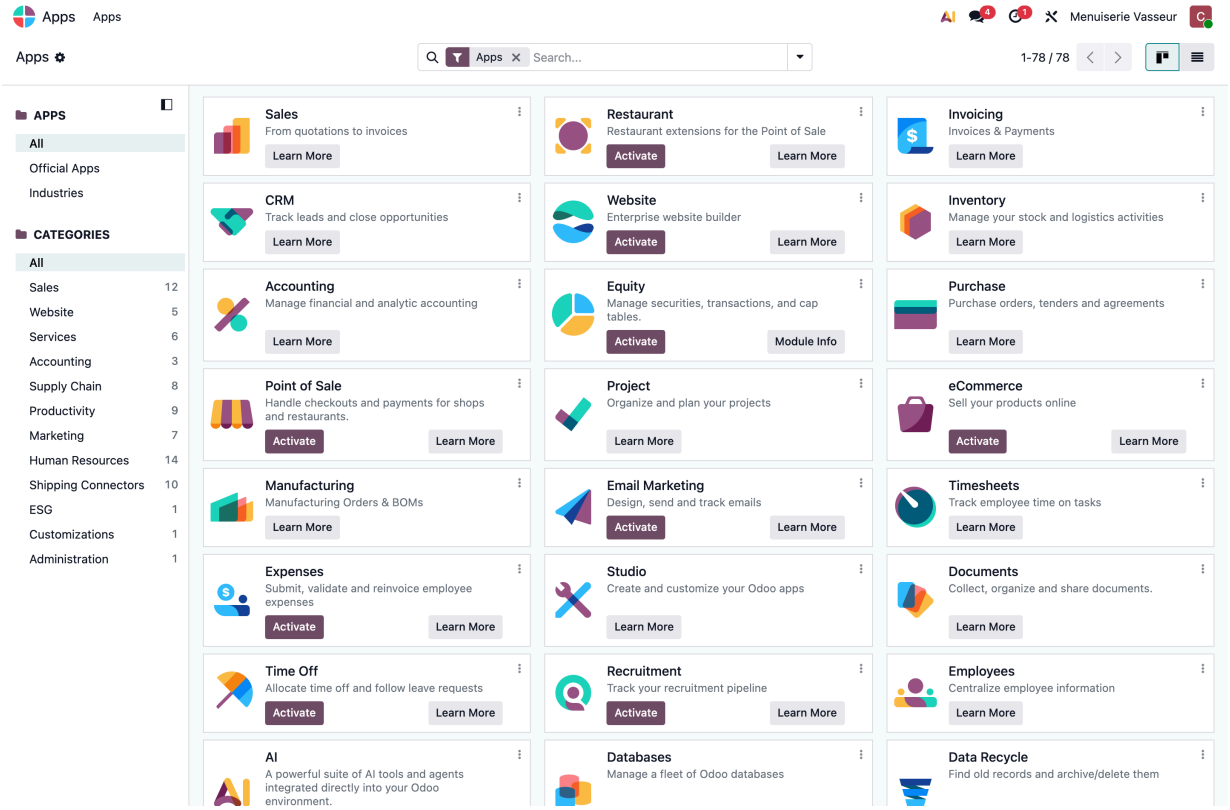


Figure 5.3: The application installation screen

Tip

Install only the applications you strictly need at first. An application added later fits in with the existing data without difficulty, whereas an application installed “just in case” adds menus and fields that weigh the interface down for everybody.

Watch out

Uninstalling an application deletes its data. Before uninstalling, check on a copy of the database what actually disappears.

5.5 Choosing the fiscal localisation

The fiscal localisation installs in one go the country’s chart of accounts, its taxes, its fiscal positions and its statutory reports. It governs all the accounting configuration that follows.

1. Check that the **Invoicing** application is installed: the localisation is part of the base, the accounting extension is not required.
2. Open **Invoicing → Configuration → Settings**.
3. In the **Fiscal Localization** section, select the **Package** matching the country of operation: for France, the French pack.
4. Save and let the installation finish: it creates several hundred accounts and taxes.
5. Check the result in **Invoicing → Configuration → Accounting → Chart of Accounts**.

Note

The French pack given as an example above covers French requirements and does not apply to other countries. Select the package for the country your company operates in; the rest of the procedure is identical.

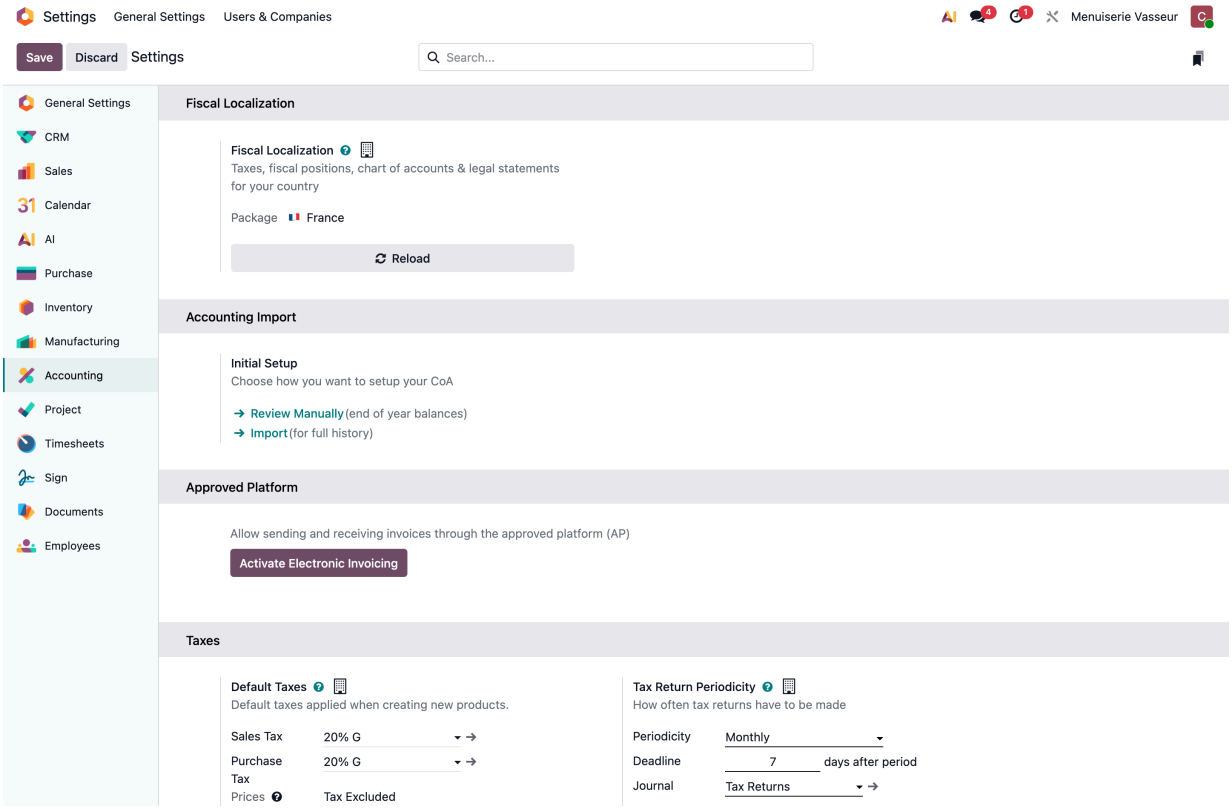


Figure 5.4: Choosing the fiscal localisation package

Watch out

The **Package** field becomes read-only as soon as an accounting entry exists for the company or one of its branches. Past that point, changing the localisation is no longer a configuration operation but a complete accounting migration. This is the setting to make first, before even the smallest quotation is entered.

Note

The localisation is chosen on the parent company and applies to it alone. In a multi-company structure, each entity receives the localisation of its own country (see section 5.8).

Note

The setting requires the **Administrator** role on the database, in addition to access to accounting. A user who cannot see the **Settings** entry does not have that role (see chapter 6).

5.6 Creating the users

5.6.1 Adding a user

1. Open **Settings** → **Users & Companies** → **Users**.
2. Click **New**.
3. Fill in the **Name**, then the email address in the field marked with the envelope icon: it serves as the login.
4. In the **Access Rights** tab, choose the **Role**:
   - **User**: access to the applications according to the rights granted below;
   - **Administrator**: full access to the configuration of the database.

5. Still in the **Access Rights** tab, set the level of access expected for each application, application by application.
6. Open the **Preferences** tab to set the **Language** and the email signature, then the **Calendar** tab for the **Timezone**.
7. Save: an invitation goes out automatically to the address entered, and the user sets their own password from the link they receive. The **Send an Invitation Email** button sends it again if needed.

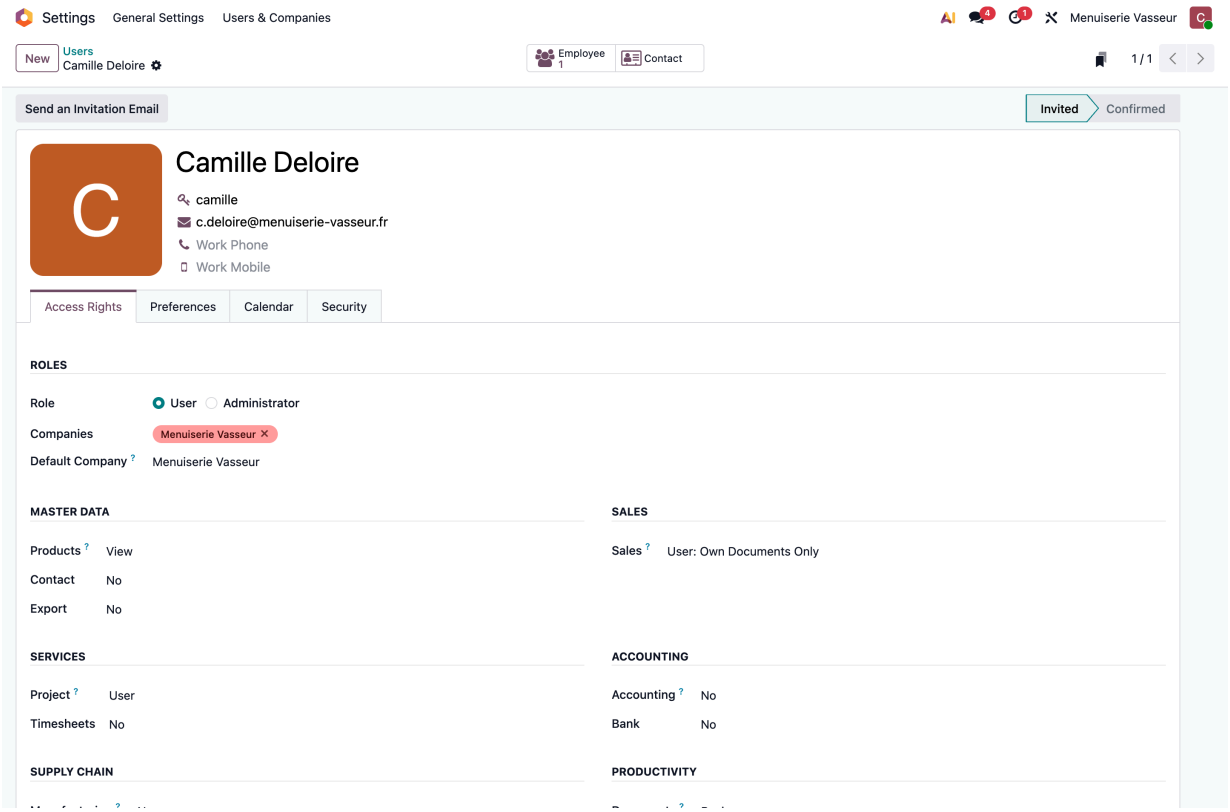


Figure 5.5: The Access Rights tab of a user

Note

The **Administrator** role gives access to the technical settings of the database and to the management of the other users. It is reserved for the people who actually administer the system.

5.6.2 Going beyond the standard levels

The levels offered per area cover the vast majority of needs. Some situations call for a finer setting: a manager with full access to an application, but for whom one specific capability is to be restricted.

That setting is possible, but it requires an understanding of how Odoo combines groups, access rights and rules: an intervention made on a hunch produces effects at a distance, often noticed much later. chapter 6 sets out how this works, and its section 6.1.6 gives the precautions to observe before any change.

Watch out

Grant each user the minimum rights they need. Extending rights later is immediate; working out after the fact who was able to change what is not.

5.6.3 Giving a customer or a vendor portal access

The portal offers an outside partner a view limited to their own documents: quotations, orders, invoices, shared projects. It does not consume a user licence.

1. Open the record of the contact concerned from the **Contacts** application.

2. Click **Actions** then **Grant portal access**.
3. Find the contact's row and check the email address offered.
4. Click **Grant Access**: an invitation is sent to the contact.

Note

The same window lets you withdraw access (**Revoke Access**) or resend the invitation to a contact who did not receive it (**Re-Invite**).

5.7 Setting the general settings

1. Open the **Settings** application, **General Settings** pane.
2. Go through the sections matching the installed applications and enable the features you want.
3. Click **Save** at the top of the screen to apply the changes.

Watch out

The options in the general settings sometimes install additional modules. The first save after enabling one may take a few tens of seconds: do not reload the page during the operation.

5.8 Managing several companies

When the group comprises several legal entities, each one has its own company in the database: its own chart of accounts, numbering sequences, documents and logo.

1. Open **Settings → Users & Companies → Companies** and create the companies you need.
2. Open **Settings → Users & Companies → Users** and select a user.
3. In the **Access Rights** tab, fill in the **Companies** the user has access to and the **Default Company** at the opening of a session.

Note

The user switches from one company to another, or activates several at once, using the selector in the top bar, on the right.

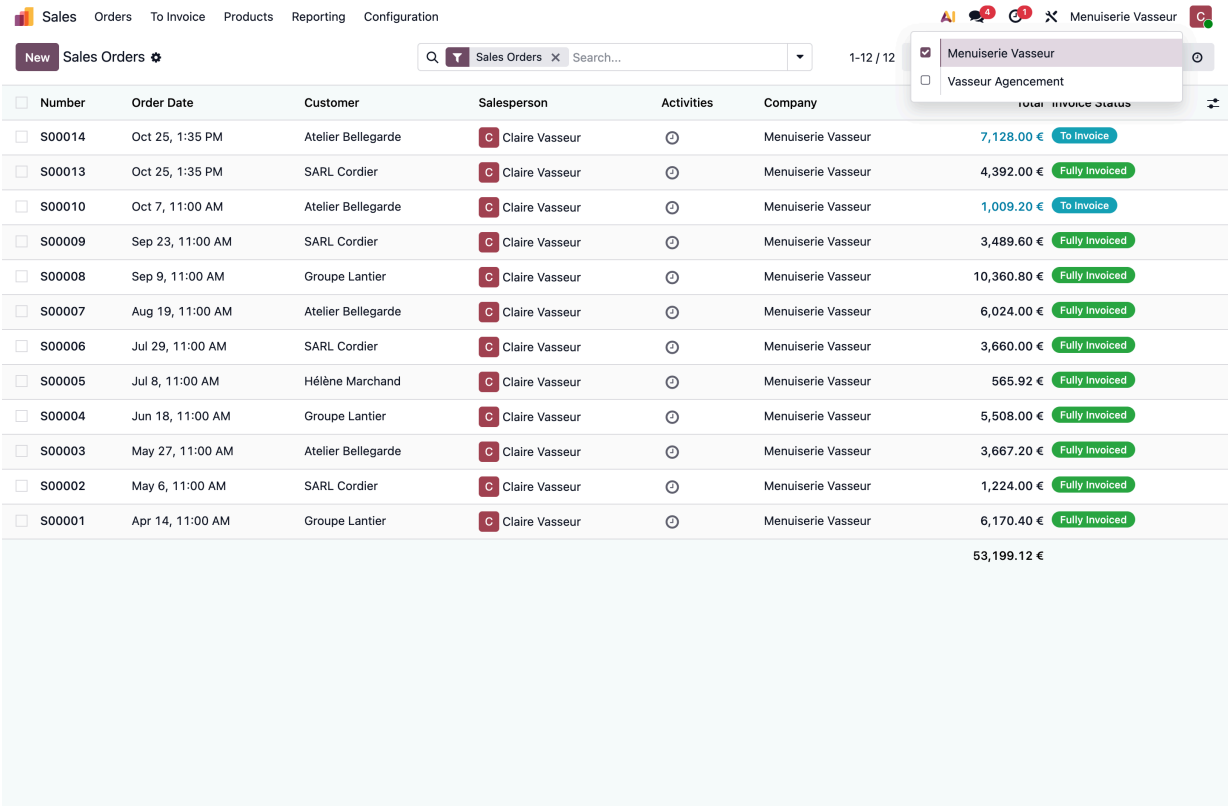


Figure 5.6: The company selector in the top bar

5.9 Points to check before opening the database

Before moving on to configuring the business modules, check that:

- the company information is complete and accurate, logo included;
- the currency and the fiscal localisation match the country of operation;
- the applications you need are installed;
- the key users are created, with the appropriate role and rights;
- if the context calls for it, the multi-company structure is in place.

Note

A carefully done initial configuration avoids costly data migrations and makes it easier for the teams to adopt the system.

CHAPTER 6

Access rights and scopes

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER

- understand how Odoo decides whether or not a user sees a document;
- assign the access levels per area and know what each of them restricts;
- reuse an existing profile by duplicating a user;
- tell internal, portal and public users apart;
- partition data between several companies;
- inspect the rights actually applied to a person.

Creating a user is described in chapter 5. This chapter deals with what comes next: setting finely who has access to what, and being able to diagnose an unexpected situation.

6.1 The principle

Understanding how Odoo decides whether or not a user sees a document saves you from proceeding by trial and error. The model rests on two distinct mechanisms, which should not be confused.

6.1.1 Two questions, two mechanisms

When a user opens a screen, Odoo answers two questions in succession.

Question	The mechanism that answers it
Do they have the right to touch this **type** of document, and to do what with it?	The **access rights**, which authorise reading, writing, creating or deleting on a type of document.
Among those documents, **which ones** exactly?	The **record rules**, which filter on a condition: the salesperson, the company, the team.

If the first answer is negative, the user gets an explicit access refusal. If it is positive but the rules exclude every record, they see an empty screen: with no error message. This difference in symptom already tells you which layer to examine.

6.1.2 Groups

A group is a named set of rights. The user does not receive those rights one by one: they receive groups, and the rights follow.

A group can **imply** another: its members then automatically belong to the implied group, and hold the rights of both. This is what builds the levels within one area: the higher level implies the lower one and adds its own rights to it.

Note

A user therefore often belongs to far more groups than were explicitly assigned to them. The **Groups** button on their record displays the actual list, implications included (see section 6.6).

6.1.3 Access rights never open less

An access right associates a group, a type of document and four authorisations: read, write, create, delete.

The user obtains an authorisation as soon as **at least one** of their groups grants it. No access right takes anything away: they add up.

Watch out

There is no such thing as a "negative access right". For a person to stop seeing a type of document, you have to **remove the group** that opens it to them, not add something that would forbid it.

6.1.4 Record rules

A rule carries a type of document, a condition (called a domain) and possibly some groups. Depending on whether or not it targets groups, its effect is radically different.

Kind	Effect
Group rule (groups are filled in)	Applies only to the members of those groups. The group rules that concern one and the same user combine with **or**: it is enough for a single one to accept the document for that user to see it. Adding a group rule therefore **widens** the scope.
Global rule (no group filled in)	Applies to everyone, without exception. Global rules combine with **and** with everything else. It is the only mechanism that genuinely restricts.

A user's final scope is therefore: all the global rules, **and** at least one of the group rules that concern them.

Watch out

A rule only restricts the members of the groups it targets. If, for a type of document, **none** of the user's groups is targeted by a group rule, then no group rule limits them any more: they see everything their access rights allow. This is the most frequent cause of a scope that is wider than intended.

6.1.5 A complete example

The two sales levels illustrate the whole model.

Level assigned	What Odoo puts in place
User: Own Documents Only	The corresponding group is targeted by a rule whose condition is "the salesperson is me, or the salesperson is not filled in".
User: All Documents	This level **implies** the previous one (so the user is in both groups) and adds a rule whose condition is always true.

The user at the higher level comes under two group rules. They combine with **or**: "my documents" or "everything". The second wins, and the user sees the lot.

What this example shows

Odoo did not **remove** the restriction in order to widen the scope: it added a rule that neutralises it. That is the pattern of the whole architecture: you widen by adding, never by taking away.

6.1.6 Making changes without breaking anything

These mechanisms dictate a few rules of conduct.

1. **Do not change a rule shipped by Odoo.** It applies to every member of its group, including uses you know nothing about; your change shows up nowhere for whoever comes to diagnose the system later; and depending on the module it is rewritten on update. Create an additional rule instead, targeting a dedicated group.
2. **To widen, add a group rule**, rather than extending the domain of an existing rule. The effect is the same for the people targeted, with no consequence for the others.

3. **To restrict, only a global rule will do**: and it applies to everyone, administrator included. Check it on a real case before leaving it in place.
4. **To withdraw an access, remove the group that grants it.** Looking for something that might forbid it is a dead end: that mechanism does not exist.
5. **Create a dedicated group rather than adapting a standard one**: and really create it, do not duplicate it (see section 6.1.7). A group that belongs to no module is an addition; a modified standard group is a debt.
6. **Have a module carry the lasting additions.** A rule entered directly in the database exists on that database only: it will not be found on the test environment, nor after a restore, nor on a database created later.

Note

The first three rules are enough to cover the bulk of configuration needs. The others concern changes meant to last, which are better entrusted to your integrator.

6.1.7 What duplicating a group does (and does not) copy

Duplicating a group to make a variant of it looks economical. The result is not what you expect: depending on the element, the copy receives independent instances or mere links to the originals.

Element of the group	What the copy gets
Access rights	**Duplicated.** The copy has its own authorisations, which can be changed with no effect on the original group.
Record rules	**Shared.** No rule is recreated: the same rules now target both groups.
Menus and views accessible	**Shared**, on the same principle.
Implied groups	**Shared.** The copy carries the same groups as the original.
Members	**Carried over.** The users of the original group are found in the copy.

Watch out

Duplicating a group therefore does not make its rules independent. Changing the domain of a rule afterwards to adapt it to the variant changes it **for the original group as well** , that is to say, exactly the accident the first rule of conduct sets out to avoid, reached by the route everyone thought was safe.

A second effect: the copy inherits the members of the original. The new group is granted silently to people who were never the target.

Tip

For a variant, create an empty group, attach a rule of its own to it, then add the people concerned. That is three extra operations and no surprises.

6.2 Assigning the access levels

6.2.1 The areas and their levels

The **Access Rights** tab of the user record presents the functional areas grouped by category. Each area is set through a drop-down list offering its levels, from the most restricted to the widest. An area left at **No** (or at whatever label stands in for it) means the user has no access at all to that scope.

Above these areas, the **Roles** group carries the user's general role and, in a multi-company setup, the companies they have access to.

For sales, for example:

Level	Scope granted
No	No access to sales documents. This is the default value of any area not assigned.
User: Own Documents Only	Sees only the quotations and orders on which they are the salesperson.
User: All Documents	Sees all the sales documents, whoever the salesperson is.
Administrator	Full access, including the configuration of the application.

1. Open **Settings** → **Users & Companies** → **Users** and select the user.
2. Open the **Access Rights** tab.
3. For each area that matters, choose the level in its drop-down list; leave the others at **No**.
4. Save.

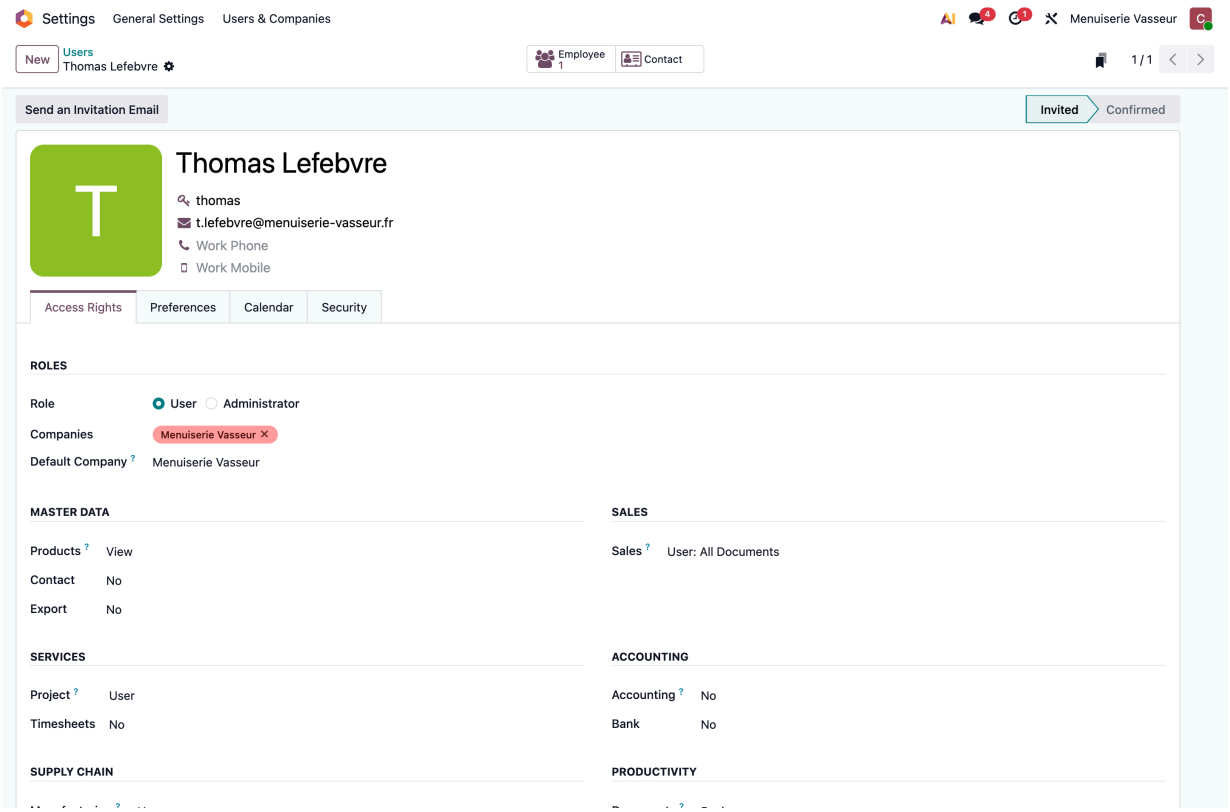


Figure 6.1: Access levels per functional area

6.2.2 What "own documents only" actually restricts

This level is the one that surprises people most. It does not hide an application: it restricts the **records** that are visible to those the user is responsible for.

Watch out

The restriction bears on the document, not on the data it contains. A salesperson limited to their own orders still reaches the complete customer records, the products and the prices, they need them to draw up a quotation. If the confidentiality concerns the customer file itself, this level is not enough.

The field that determines “their” documents varies from one application to another: the salesperson on an order, the assignee on a task, the employee on an expense. In case of doubt, the check is made on a real case rather than by deduction (see section 6.6).

6.2.3 Going outside the standard levels

Some groups belong to no area: they therefore appear in no drop-down list. They are the ones that open the cross-cutting or secondary capabilities: managing several units of measure, reaching the pricelists, working in multiple currencies.

Watch out

In ordinary use, the user record only drives the levels per area: groups outside any area do not appear on it. They become visible and editable only in developer mode.

To grant or withdraw a right outside any area:

1. Enable developer mode (see chapter 3).
2. Open the user’s record, **Access Rights** tab.
3. Scroll down to the **Extra Rights** section, which only appears in developer mode: each right outside an area is a checkbox there.
4. Tick or untick, then save and check the result obtained (see section 6.6).

The operation can also be carried out from the group, which is better suited to handling several people at once: open **Settings → Users & Companies → Groups**, then the **Users** tab of the group you want.

To withdraw a right outside any area, the simplest way is to start from the person rather than hunt for the group:

1. Open **Settings → Users & Companies → Users** and select the user.
2. Click the **Groups** smart button: the list of their groups appears, with the area each of them belongs to.
3. Open the group to be withdrawn.
4. In the **Users** tab, remove the person.
5. Save.

Tip

The group’s **Inherited** tab shows the groups it carries and the groups that carry it. It is the best place to gauge the real reach of a right before granting it: an unassuming group can imply several others.

Tip

Developer mode also adds an information button next to each area. It details what the selected level actually covers, more reliable than deducing it from its wording.

6.3 Reusing an existing profile

Rebuilding a user’s rights by hand for a colleague in the same job is slow and unreliable. Duplication reproduces the profile exactly.

1. Open **Settings → Users & Companies → Users**.
2. Select the user who serves as the reference.
3. Click **Actions** then **Duplicate**.
4. Odoo creates a copy carrying `(copy)` in the name and in the login, with **the same groups and the same access levels**.
5. Replace the name and the email address with those of the new arrival.
6. Check the companies accessible and the default company.
7. Save, then send the invitation.

Note

The password is not copied: the new user sets their own from the invitation link. Duplication therefore passes on no secret.

Note

Duplicating a **user** behaves as you would expect: the copy receives the same groups, and nothing else is affected. It is duplicating a **group** that holds surprises (see section 6.1.7).

Tip

Create one reference user per typical job (inside sales, buyer, accountant) without giving it a personal login, and archive it. It becomes a profile template to be duplicated at every arrival, rather than a profile reconstituted from memory.

Watch out

Duplication faithfully reproduces the profile, including its flaws. If the reference user has accumulated rights over time, the copy inherits them. Check the source profile before making a template of it.

6.4 Internal, portal and public users

Three kinds of user coexist, and the distinction has direct consequences.

Kind	Access and use
Internal	An employee of the company. Reaches the management interface according to their rights. Consumes a licence.
Portal	An outside party: customer, vendor, subcontractor. Reaches only their own documents, in a simplified interface. Does not consume a licence.
Public	An unidentified visitor to the website. Reaches only the published content.

An external user carries an explicit banner at the top of their record, which avoids confusing them with a colleague.

Watch out

Turning a portal user into an internal user consumes a licence and opens up access to all the documents allowed by their groups, not only their own. This switch is decided, it is not done as a stopgap.

The procedure for opening portal access is described in chapter 5.

6.5 Partitioning several companies

When the database hosts several entities, each user has a list of accessible companies and a default company.

1. Open the user's record, **Access Rights** tab.
2. Fill in the **Companies** they have access to.
3. Fill in the **Default Company**, active at the opening of a session.

What the user actually sees

The company selector in the top bar allows several companies to be active at once. The user then sees the documents of **all** the companies ticked, not only of the default company.

Some data stays shared whatever the active company: products and contacts in particular, when they are not attached to any company. Accounting and commercial documents, for their part, are always partitioned.

Watch out

A user with access to only one company will never see the documents of the others, including those a colleague sends them by direct link: Odoo then displays an access refusal that points to a company issue. That is the expected behaviour, not a fault.

6.6 Inspecting the rights applied

Rather than working out the effect of the groups in your head, Odoo displays the result.

1. Enable developer mode (see chapter 3).
2. Open the record of the user concerned.
3. Three smart buttons appear at the top of the form, each carrying its count:
   - **Groups**: the complete list of the groups applied, implications included. It has two columns: **Privilege**, which indicates the area the group belongs to, and **Name**. An empty **Privilege** column flags a group outside any area, one of those the drop-down lists do not offer;
   - **Access Rights**: the read, write, create and delete authorisations, type of document by type of document. The count commonly runs into the hundreds: that is normal, every application contributes some;
   - **Record Rules**: the scope restrictions that apply.

These three screens are inventories: they show the state obtained. They allow neither creation nor deletion, but the values displayed remain editable there: the list of access rights is even editable inline. Treat them as read-only screens: a change made here bears on the general configuration, not on the single user being inspected.

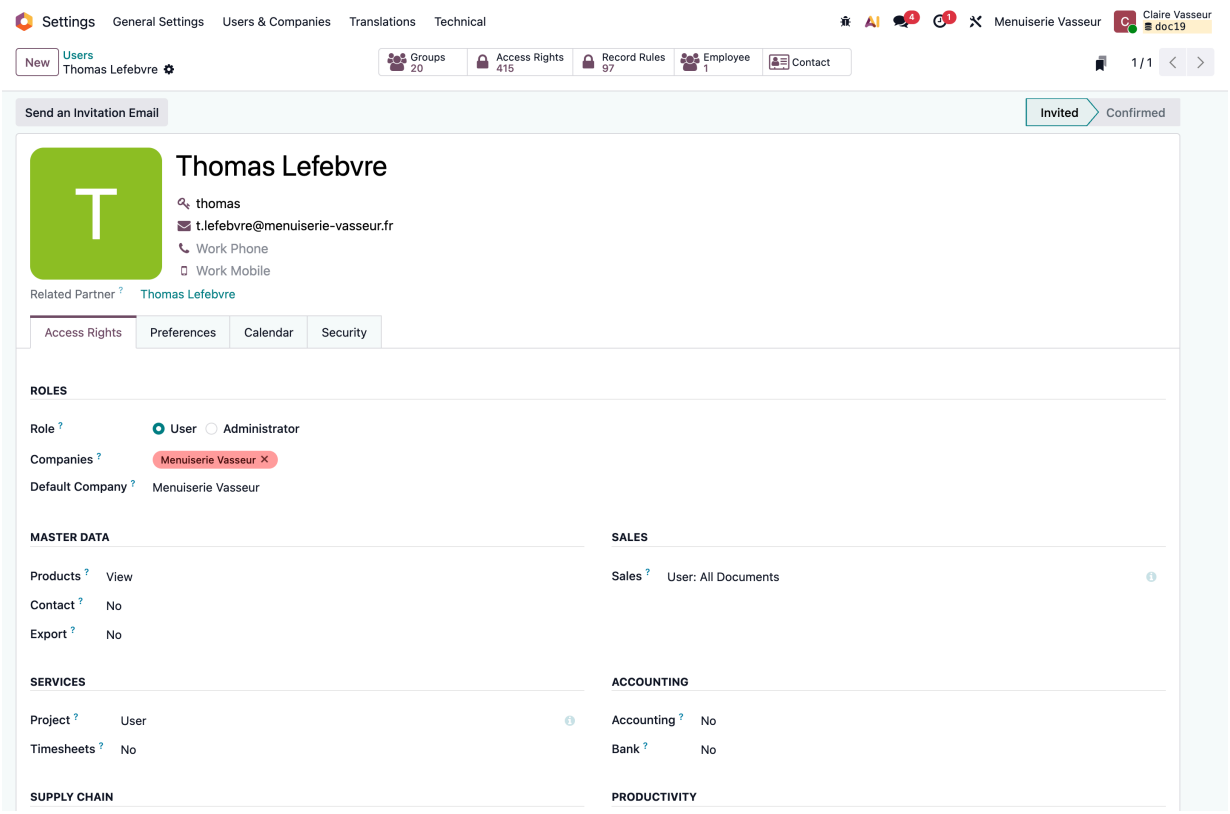


Figure 6.2: Buttons for inspecting a user's rights

Tip

This is the first thing to look at when a user reports that they cannot see a document. The answer reads straight off it, whereas a discussion about which groups are expected quickly turns into guesswork.

6.7 Going further

For a need the standard levels do not cover, the technical screens give access to the three layers themselves. They require developer mode to be active.

Screen	Content
Settings → Users & Companies → Groups	The existing groups, their members, and the groups they imply.
Settings → Users & Companies → Privileges	The functional areas and the order of their levels.
Settings → Technical → Security → Access Rights	The authorisations per type of document and per group.
Settings → Technical → Security → Record Rules	The scope restrictions and their domain.

A record rule reads in three points: the type of document concerned, the groups it applies to: a rule with no group is said to be **global** and applies to everyone , and the domain, which expresses the condition retained.

Watch out

Changing a standard rule or an access right shipped by Odoo produces effects at a distance, often noticed weeks later on a function with no apparent connection. For a lasting need, a dedicated module that adds its own groups and rules holds up over time; a direct change to the standard rules is lost at the first update.

Note

These screens can be consulted with no risk: they explain the behaviour observed. It is the changes that call for precautions.

6.8 Tracing changes

On sensitive documents, Odoo records in the **chatter** (the area for exchanges and history shown to the right of or below every document depending on the screen width, described in section 4.1) who changed what, when, and what the previous value was. The tracking covers the fields declared as tracked, and that scope varies from one application to another (see section 4.1).

For accounting operations, locking the periods completes this tracking by preventing any change prior to a given date (see chapter 14).

6.9 Good practice

Rights that hold up over time

- **Start from the job, not from the person**: reason by function rather than case by case, and give each typical job a reusable template (see section 6.9.1).
- **Grant the minimum**: extending a right takes ten seconds; working out after the fact who was able to change what takes a day.
- **Review at every move**: a change of job should be accompanied by a review of the rights, failing which they pile up.
- **Archive rather than delete**: an archived user can no longer log in, but stays attached to the history of the documents they created.
- **Document the departures from the norm**: write down why a person departs from the template for their job, otherwise the reason is lost and nobody dares touch it.

6.9.1 Giving substance to a typical job

Odoo has no “profile” object: nothing lets you declare a job and assign it in one gesture. Two techniques nevertheless produce that effect, with different properties.

Technique	Properties
A reference user, duplicated at every arrival	No technical notion to create, no developer mode. On the other hand the template is only one record among others: nothing marks it out as the reference, and a change to the template is not passed on to the people already created.
A job group, which implies others	A named object, assigned in one go, and modifiable for everybody at once: adding a right to the group grants it to all its members. Requires developer mode, and is better carried by a module.

For the first, the procedure is the one in section 6.3.

For the second:

1. Enable developer mode (see chapter 3).
2. Open **Settings → Users & Companies → Groups** and create a group bearing the name of the job.
3. In the **Inherited** tab, fill in the **Implied Groups**: the levels and the rights the job is to grant.
4. Assign that single group to the people concerned, from its **Users** tab.

Note

Rights obtained by implication appear on the user record as **implied** and not as explicitly assigned: the drop-down lists of the areas concerned fill themselves in. That is the expected behaviour, and it has the merit of making clear what comes from the job and what has been added for the person.

Tip

The job group quickly becomes the better of the two: a change of organisation is passed on by modifying a single object, instead of going back over every user record created from a template that has become obsolete.

CHAPTER 7

CRM: from lead to won deal

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER

- configure a pipeline and teams that match your sales cycle;
- record a lead, qualify it and convert it into an opportunity;
- move a deal forward and plan the follow-up actions;
- close a deal, won or lost, and analyse your performance.

The **CRM** app organises commercial activity: it records incoming contacts, tracks open deals in a visual pipeline, plans follow-up actions and measures the team's performance.

7.1 Configuring the CRM

7.1.1 Enabling the features you need

1. Open **CRM → Configuration → Settings**.
2. Enable the options that match your organisation:
   - **Leads**: separates raw, unqualified contacts from actual deals. Without this option, everything lands straight in the pipeline as an opportunity.
   - **Lead Enrichment**: automatically completes company information from the professional email address.
   - **Recurring Revenues**: tracks a recurring revenue alongside the one-off amount of the deal.

The **Predictive Lead Scoring** block sits in the same place, but it has no checkbox: scoring is always on. The block is there to review the criteria used and to re-run the computation (see chapter 8).

1. Save.

Note

The **Leads** option suits organisations that receive a lot of contacts to sort through (trade shows, web forms, campaigns). If every incoming request is already an identified project, leave the option off and work directly with opportunities.

7.1.2 Defining the pipeline stages

Stages represent how far a deal has progressed through your sales cycle.

1. Enable developer mode (see chapter 3): without it, the **Stages** entry does not appear in the configuration menu.
2. Open **CRM → Configuration → Pipeline → Stages**.
3. Click **New** to add a stage, or open an existing stage to edit it.
4. Order the stages by dragging the rows by the handle on the left of each name: this dragging sets the display order of the pipeline columns.
5. Fill in:
   - **Stage Name**: the label shown at the top of the column in the pipeline;
   - **Is Won Stage?**: tick this on the stage that marks the deal as closed;
   - **Folded in Pipeline**: hides the column when it is empty;
   - **Sales Teams**: reserves the stage for the designated teams, if cycles differ from one team to another. Left empty, the stage applies to all teams. The field only appears if the database has several teams;
   - **Requirements**: describes the conditions to be met to reach the stage. This text appears in the pipeline when hovering over the column title.

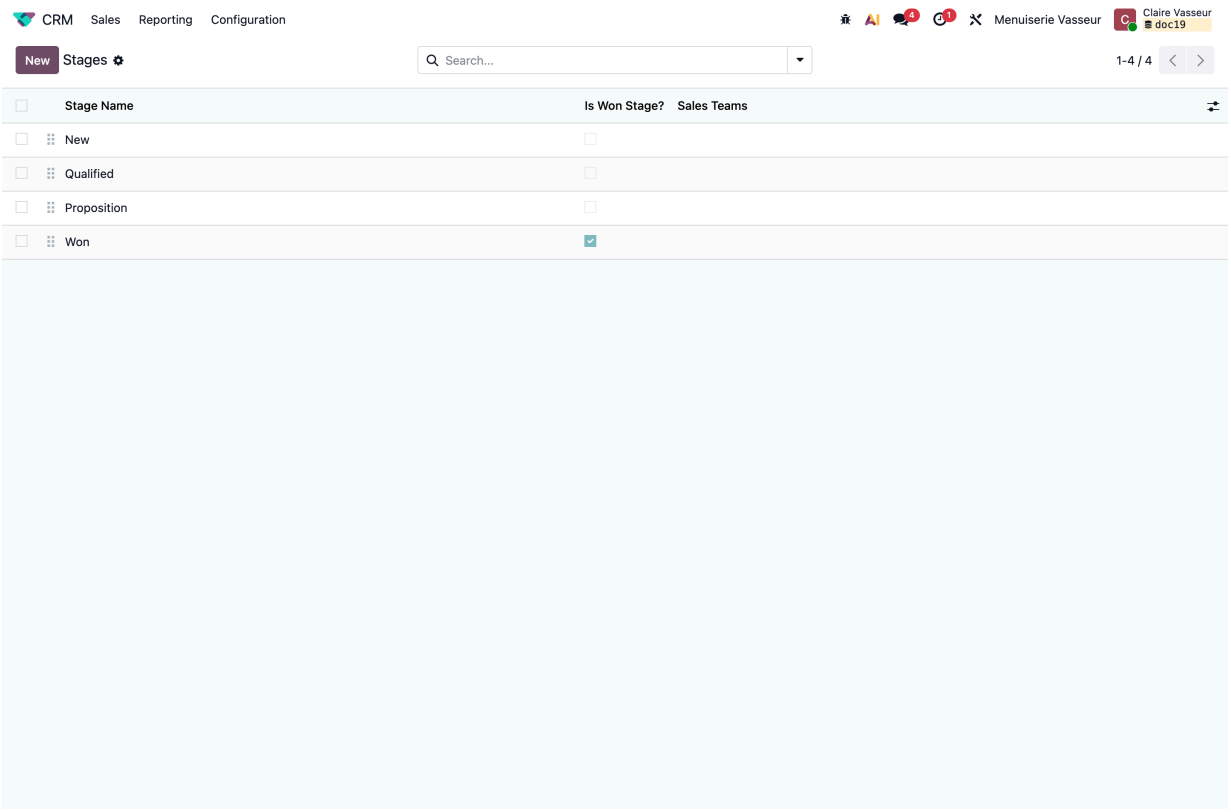


Figure 7.1: Pipeline stage configuration

Tip

Keep to five or six stages. Salespeople do not keep an over-detailed pipeline up to date, and stages left blank distort forecasts far more reliably than a coarse but accurate pipeline.

7.1.3 Organising the sales teams

1. Open **CRM → Configuration → Sales Teams**.
2. Click **New**.
3. Fill in the team name, the **Team Leader** and the **Email Alias** if the team is to receive requests by email.
4. In the **Members** tab, add the salespeople concerned.
5. Save.

Note

A team is defined by industry, by geographical area or by product range. It then serves as a filter in every sales report.

7.2 Recording and qualifying a lead

7.2.1 Creating a lead

1. Open **CRM → Leads**.
2. Click **New**.
3. Fill in:
   - the subject of the request in the main field;
   - the **Contact** and the company concerned;
   - the **Email** and the **Phone**
   - the **Sales Team** and the **Salesperson** responsible;
   - the **Tags** that will let you find the lead by topic.

4. In the **Extra Info** tab, **Marketing** block, fill in the **Source** and the **Campaign** so that you can later measure where deals come from. This tab exists only on a lead: it disappears as soon as the lead is converted into an opportunity.
5. Describe the need in the **Notes** tab.
6. Save.

7.2.2 Converting a lead into an opportunity

Once the lead is qualified (the need is real, the contact is the right one, the budget exists) it becomes an opportunity and joins the pipeline.

1. Open the lead.
2. Click **Convert to Opportunity**.
3. In the window that opens, choose:
   - **Convert to opportunity** to create a deal, or **Merge with existing opportunities** if a deal is already open for this customer;
   - the customer to link: select it if it already exists, create one otherwise.
4. Check the **Salesperson** and the **Sales Team** assigned.
5. Click **Create Opportunity**.

Note

Merging avoids duplicates when the same customer approaches you through several channels. The information and the history of both records are kept on the resulting deal.

7.3 Moving an opportunity forward

7.3.1 The pipeline

Open **CRM → Sales → My Pipeline**. Deals appear as cards, spread across columns corresponding to the stages.

- Drag a card to the next column to move the deal forward.
- Click a card to open the deal and complete its information.
- Use the colour dots and the tags to spot priorities at a glance.

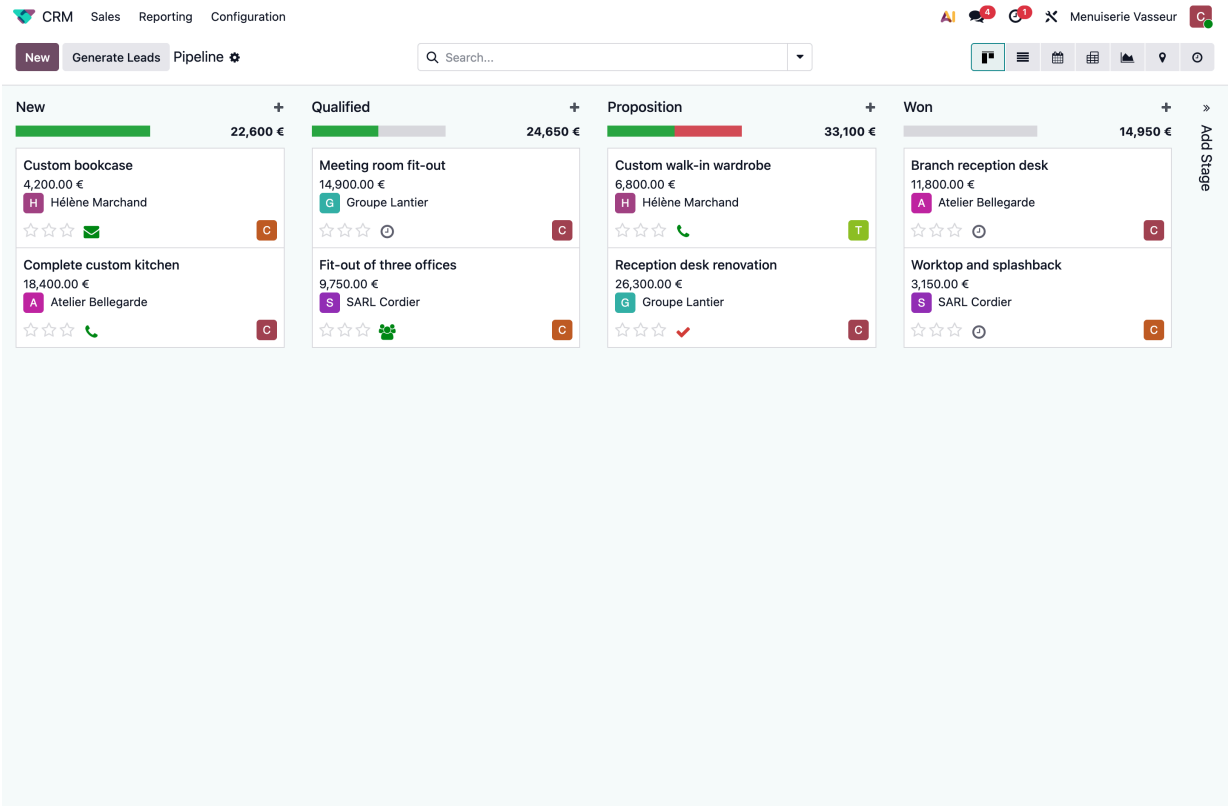


Figure 7.2: Sales pipeline in kanban view

7.3.2 Filling in the steering information

On every opportunity, keep the following up to date:

- **Expected Revenue**: the amount of the deal;
- **Probability**: the chances of closing, as a percentage;
- **Expected Closing**: the date by which the decision is expected.

Note

These three fields feed every sales forecast. An opportunity with no expected closing date is included in the forecast without being attached to any month: it weighs on no period, whatever its amount.

7.3.3 Planning the next action

An **activity** is an action to be carried out, dated and assigned to someone, attached to a document. It is Odoo's internal follow-up mechanism, shared by every app; how it works in general is described in section 4.2.

1. Open the opportunity.
2. In the chatter, at the bottom of the form, click **Activity**.
3. Choose the type among the tiles offered: call, meeting, email, to-do. This field has no label.
4. Fill in the **Due Date**, the **Assigned To** user and a summary.
5. Click **Save**.

Once the action is done, click **Mark Done** and immediately plan the next one.

Tip

The most profitable rule in CRM fits in one sentence: no active opportunity should be left without a planned activity. The **Activity** view lets you check this at a glance.

7.3.4 Tracking the activity workload

From the pipeline, switch to the **Activity** view using the view icons at the top right. The screen is laid out as a table: one row per opportunity, one column per activity type, each header carrying the count of activities of that type. Clicking a cell lets you plan or review the corresponding activity.

The colour dots indicate urgency: overdue activities appear in red, today's in orange, later ones in green. This colour code is the same throughout the database, including on the clock icon in the top bar that gathers your activities across all apps (see section 4.2).

7.4 Closing the deal

7.4.1 Drawing up the quotation

1. Open the opportunity.
2. Click **New Quotation**.
3. The quotation opens, pre-filled with the customer, the salesperson and a reference to the opportunity.
4. Complete the product lines, the payment terms and the expiration date.
5. Save, then send the quotation to the customer (see chapter 11).

The quotation stays attached to the opportunity: the **Quotations** smart button, at the top of the form, shows the number of quotations in progress (draft and sent). Once a quotation is confirmed, a second button shows the untaxed amount of the confirmed orders. Smart buttons give access to the documents linked to the one you are looking at (see section 3.4.2).

7.4.2 Marking the deal as won

1. Open the opportunity, or drag it to the stage marked as won.
2. Click **Won**.

Watch out

Marking an opportunity as won does not confirm the associated quotation. The order only exists once you have opened the quotation and clicked **Confirm**. Until that is done, no delivery and no invoice are triggered.

7.4.3 Recording a lost deal

1. Open the opportunity.
2. Click **Lost**.
3. Select a **Lost Reason** and, if useful, add an explanation.
4. Click **Mark as Lost**.

The opportunity is archived but remains available: it feeds the analysis of lost reasons. To reopen it, display it through the **Lost** filter, then click **Restore**.

Note

Lost reasons are configured in **CRM → Configuration → Pipeline → Lost Reasons**. A short list of mutually exclusive reasons (price, lead time, competitor, no follow-up, out of scope) produces a usable analysis; a long list produces noise.

7.5 Analysing sales activity

7.5.1 The pipeline report

1. Open **CRM → Reporting → Pipeline**.
2. Choose the view that suits the question: graph for a trend, pivot table for figures, list for detail.
3. Use **Filters** and **Group By** to cross period, team, salesperson, stage or lost reason.

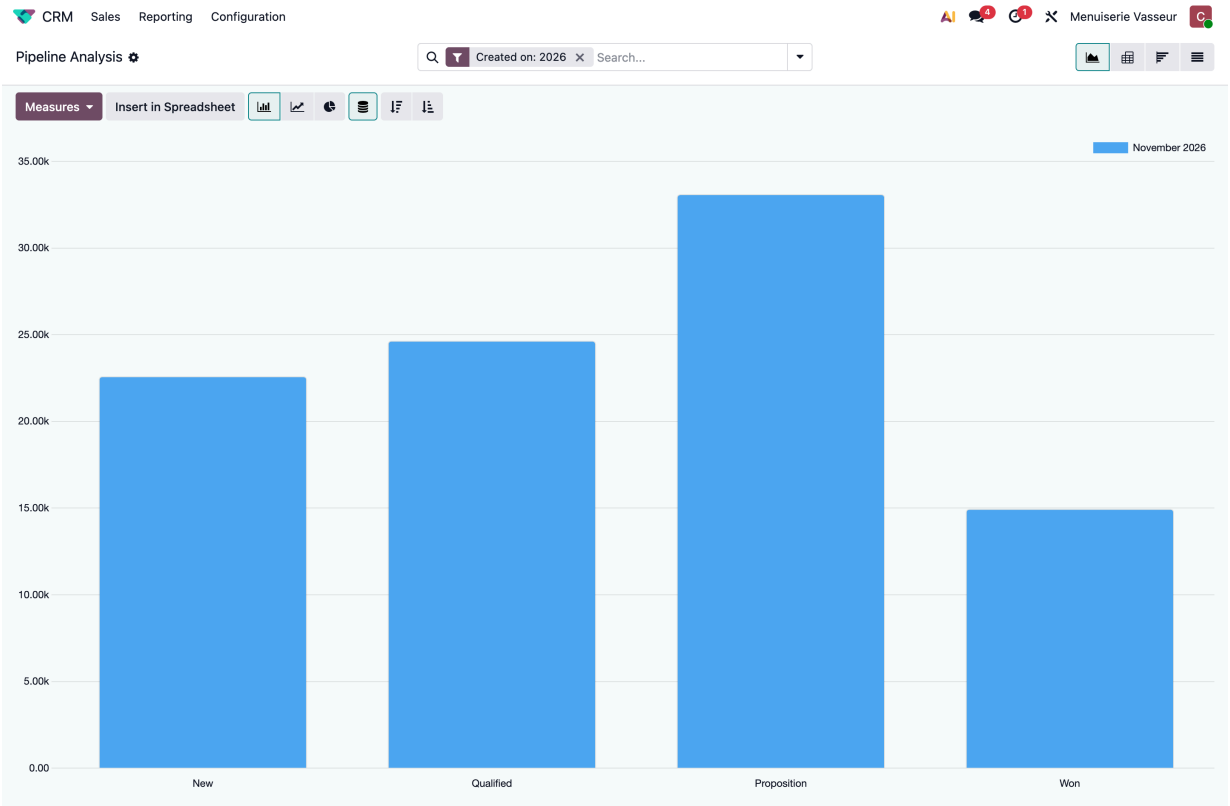


Figure 7.3: Pipeline analysis in graph view

7.5.2 The forecast

Open **CRM → Reporting → Forecast** to project the expected revenue by month, based on the expected closing dates and the probabilities entered.

Note

The reliability of the forecast depends entirely on the quality of the three steering fields. A weekly meeting to update the pipeline is worth more than a sophisticated report built on stale data.

7.6 Good practice

For a CRM that actually gets used

- **Qualification**: set written criteria for moving from lead to opportunity, and stick to them.
- **Planning**: always schedule the next action before closing a record.
- **Traceability**: record exchanges in the chatter of the opportunity, not in personal emails.
- **Updating**: review the pipeline at least once a week, amounts and dates included.
- **Housekeeping**: close deals that have gone nowhere rather than letting them grow old in the pipeline.

CHAPTER 8

Advanced CRM

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER

- distribute deals automatically between teams and salespeople;
- feed the pipeline through enrichment and prospecting;
- adapt sales follow-up to your own qualification criteria;
- build the analyses that actually steer the business.

Day-to-day use of the CRM is covered in chapter 7. This chapter deals with the settings that automate the distribution of work, feed the pipeline and refine the analysis. They are aimed at the sales manager and at the database administrator.

8.1 Distributing deals automatically

Rather than assigning each lead by hand, Odoo can route it to the right team and then to the right salesperson, according to written rules.

8.1.1 Enabling the mechanism

Automatic assignment is first set at app level, once and for all.

1. Open **CRM → Configuration → Settings**.
2. Tick **Rule-Based Assignment**.
3. Choose how it is triggered:
   - **Manually**: assignment only runs on request, through a button on the team record;
   - **Repeatedly**: a scheduled job re-runs it at regular intervals, set by **Repeat every**.
4. Save.

Tip

Start with **Manually**. You test your rules by triggering assignment whenever you want, and you see the result before it happens again on its own. Switching to automatic comes once the domains have settled.

8.1.2 Routing leads to the right team

1. Open **CRM → Configuration → Sales Teams** and select the team.
2. In the **Assignment Rules** block, **Domain** field, click **Add condition**, then **Edit Domain**.
3. In the window that opens, build the criteria a lead must meet to be assigned to that team: country, industry, source, expected revenue, tags.
4. Save.

Tip

The counter shown next to the domain (*n record(s)*) indicates how many leads match at that moment. It updates with every change: use it to test your criteria before saving, rather than discovering the result afterwards.

An information line reminds you where the team stands: *n leads assigned this month on a maximum of N*. The ceiling is the sum of the capacities of its members.

Triggering the assignment is done with the **Assign Leads** button, at the top of the team record. Odoo asks for confirmation, then distributes leads between the members according to their capacities and their own domains.

Note

This button only appears if rule-based assignment is active and if the team handles leads or opportunities. It remains available even in **Repeatedly** mode, which lets you re-run the assignment without waiting for the next scheduled pass.

Note

The **Skip auto assignment** checkbox takes the team out of the mechanism without erasing its domain. That is the setting to use to suspend a team temporarily (holidays, reorganisation) rather than clearing its criteria. It only appears in **Repeatedly** mode, since manual mode has nothing to suspend.

8.1.3 Distributing between salespeople

1. From the same team, open the **Members** tab.
2. Open the record of each salesperson and fill in:
   - the **Capacity**, which caps what will be assigned to them;
   - a **Lead Assignment Filter** of their own, if their scope is narrower than the team's.
3. Save.

Each member then appears on a card carrying a **Leads (30 days)** gauge, which shows their workload against their capacity at a glance.

Note

Capacity is spread per day: each run assigns at most one thirtieth of the capacity, minus the leads received in the last twenty-four hours. A salesperson set to thirty leads therefore receives one a day, not thirty at once. The **Assign Leads** button assigns this daily quota on every click, without taking into account the leads already received that day.

Tip

The **Pause assignment** checkbox removes a salesperson from the distribution without taking them out of the team: their open deals stay with them, they simply stop receiving anything new. That is the right move for an absence.

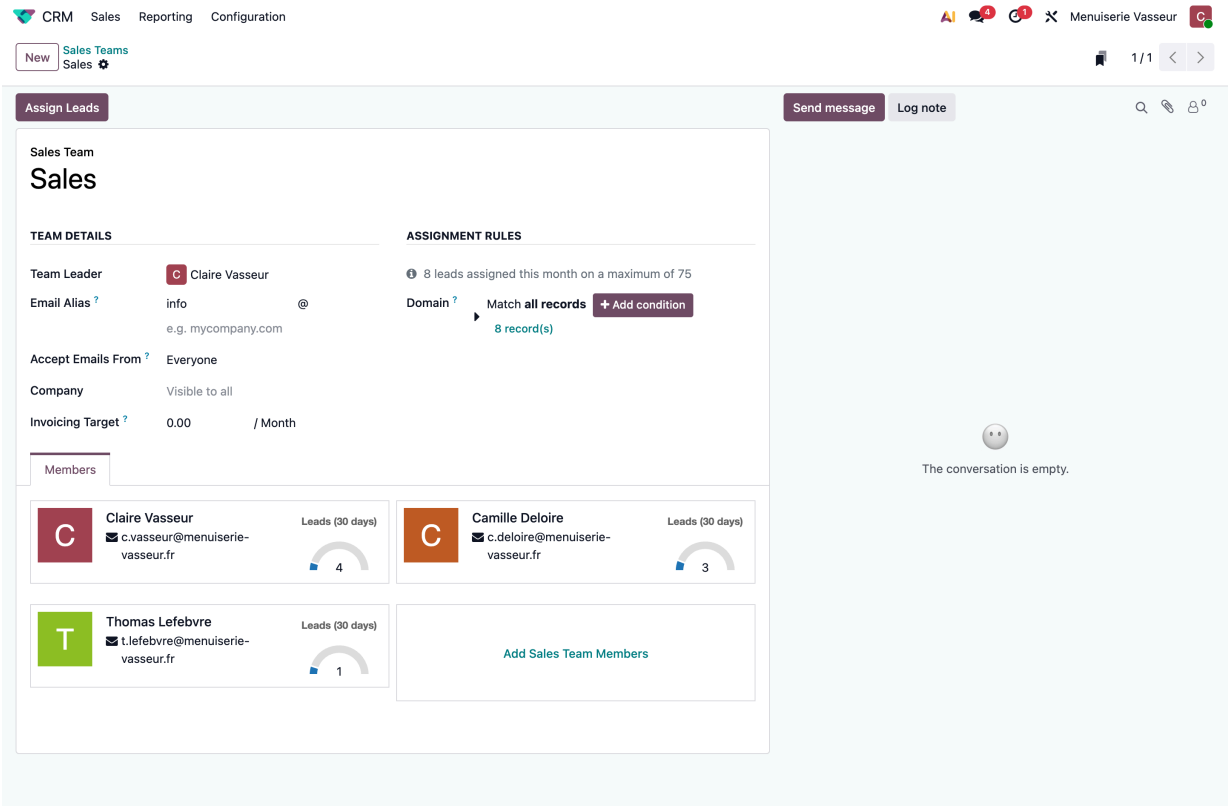


Figure 8.1: Assignment rules of a sales team

Examples of rules

- Leads from the industrial sector to the key accounts team.
- Leads located in northern France to the salesperson for that region.
- Leads coming from the website form to the team in charge of the web.
- Leads whose expected revenue exceeds a threshold to the sales manager.

Watch out

The domains of the different teams must not overlap. Two rules that overlap make Odoo draw lots, for each lead, for the team that receives it, in proportion to the capacities, which produces assignments that are hard to explain to the salespeople concerned.

8.2 Feeding the pipeline

8.2.1 Enriching records automatically

From the domain of the professional email address, Odoo completes the record: company name, postal address, phone, country. The company's industry, headcount and logo are recorded in a note in the chatter.

1. Open **CRM → Configuration → Settings**.
2. Enable **Lead Enrichment**.
3. Choose the trigger: automatic on every new lead, or manual.
4. Save.

In manual mode, open a lead and click **Enrich**.

8.2.2 Prospecting for new contacts

1. Open **CRM → Configuration → Settings** and enable **Lead Mining**.
2. Open **CRM → Leads** and click **Generate Leads**.

3. In the **Lead Mining Request**, set the criteria: country, industry, company size, number of leads wanted.
4. Choose whether to obtain companies alone or companies with their contacts.
5. Fill in the team, the salesperson and the tags to apply to the leads created.
6. Click **Generate Leads**.

Note

Enrichment and prospecting consume service credits billed separately from the Odoo subscription. The counters can be consulted from the settings.

8.2.3 Scoring leads automatically

Predictive scoring computes a probability of success from past deals, comparing the characteristics of the lead (state or region, country, source, tags, language, quality of the email and of the phone) with those of won and lost deals.

It is always on: there is nothing to tick. The **Predictive Lead Scoring** block in the settings merely displays the criteria used and the start date of the history.

Adjusting the computation.

1. Open **CRM → Configuration → Settings**.
2. In the **Predictive Lead Scoring** block, click **Update Probabilities**.
3. Add or remove the fields to be taken into account: **State**, **Country**, **Phone Quality**, **Email Quality**, **Source**, **Language**, **Tags**.
4. Set the date in *Consider leads created as of the*.
5. Click **Update**.

The computed probability feeds the **Probability** field of every opportunity, and therefore the forecasts.

Note

Stage is always part of the computation and cannot be removed from it: it is the foundation of the scoring. The other fields refine it. Removing a criterion that makes no sense in your business (language, if you only work in France) makes the model sharper.

Note

The button re-runs the computation over **all** of the history considered. It only rewrites the probability of opportunities that were still following the automatic value: a probability entered by hand is left as it is.

Watch out

Scoring requires a history that is both long enough and, above all, properly filled in. If lost reasons have never been entered, the model learns from incomplete data and produces misleading probabilities. One year of properly kept history is a reasonable minimum.

Note

Entering a probability by hand on an opportunity switches off the automatic computation for that deal. The salesperson therefore keeps control over what they know better than the model.

8.3 Customising the follow-up

8.3.1 Adding fields

Some qualification information is specific to your business: available budget, decision deadline, competitor in the running, product of interest.

1. Open an opportunity.
2. Click the Studio icon in the top bar (see chapter 23).
3. Drag the field type you want to the place you want it.
4. Name the field and set its properties.
5. Save and leave Studio.

The field then becomes available as a filter criterion, a grouping criterion and an assignment rule criterion.

Note

Studio belongs to the Enterprise edition and installing it has a pricing impact (see chapter 23). Without Studio, a property field can meet a one-off need (see section 4.4).

8.3.2 Email templates

1. Write a message from an opportunity and get it right.
2. Before sending, save the content as a template from the options of the composer window.
3. The template is then offered on every send from an opportunity.

Templates accept dynamic fields (contact name, company, deal amount, salesperson) replaced automatically when the message is sent.

8.3.3 Automating follow-ups

The general mechanism of automated actions is described in chapter 21. Applied to the CRM, it lets you, among other things:

- create a follow-up activity three days after a quotation is sent;
- notify the manager when a high-stakes deal has had no activity for a week;
- send an introductory email to newly qualified leads;
- raise an alert when an opportunity goes past its expected closing date.

Tip

Automation should lighten the salespeople's work, not replace it. Automate reminders and repetitive tasks; keep human contact for the steps that decide the deal.

8.4 Analysing in depth

8.4.1 Won / lost analysis

1. Open **CRM → Reporting → Pipeline**.
2. Filter on the deals closed during the period.
3. Group by lost reason, then by salesperson or by source.

This reading answers three distinct questions: are we losing on price, on lead time or on scope? Are we losing more on certain sources of business? Are we losing at a specific stage of the cycle?

8.4.2 Steering indicators

Indicator	What it tells you
Conversion rate by stage	Pinpoints the stage where deals stall.
Average cycle duration	Measures the time between creation and closing.
Average deal value	Directs sales effort towards the profitable segments.

Indicator	What it tells you
Number of activities per salesperson	Distinguishes a thin pipeline from a lack of activity.
Breakdown of lost reasons	Feeds pricing and product decisions.

8.4.3 Saved reports

An analysis you have got right can be kept in **Favorites** and shared with the team. A weekly sales meeting is better served by two or three stable reports, consulted at every session, than by analyses rebuilt from scratch each time.

8.5 Connecting the CRM to the other apps

- **Sales**: the quotation created from the opportunity keeps the link with the deal it came from.
- **Project**: a won deal can give rise to the creation of an implementation project.
- **Calendar**: meetings scheduled from an opportunity feed the agenda.
- **Email**: messages received at the team address create or feed leads.
- **Accounting**: the customer's outstanding balance and payment delays can be consulted from their record.

8.6 Good practice

Configure without over-complicating

- Write down the sales process before configuring the pipeline, not the other way round.
- Stick to five or six stages, using tags to distinguish cases if need be.
- Standardise the information expected at each stage, and ask only for what is actually used.
- Train the teams on the basic moves rather than on the full range of features.
- Periodically clear dormant deals out of the pipeline: they distort every indicator.

CHAPTER 9

Managing products and services

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER

- create a product or a service and complete its sales, purchase and inventory tabs;
- handle the variations of a single item through attributes and variants;
- structure the catalogue with categories and tags;
- build a pricing policy through pricelists and discounts.

In Odoo, the word **product** covers a physical good just as much as a service. The product sits at the centre of most processes: it is sold, purchased, stored, manufactured and invoiced. The quality of the catalogue therefore has a direct bearing on how effective the sales, purchasing and logistics teams can be.

9.1 Product types

The **Product Type** field offers three values:

Type	Use
Goods	A physical product that you supply: raw material, component, merchandise, finished product.
Service	An intangible service: consulting, maintenance, training, labour.
Combo	A set offered for sale, made up of several combo choices, in each of which the customer picks one item.

For products of type **Goods**, the **Track Inventory** checkbox, in the **General Information** tab and below the product type, distinguishes products whose stock is tracked from those that are not.

Note

It is the **Track Inventory** checkbox (not the product type) that determines whether Odoo keeps stock. A consumable whose quantities you do not want to track stays of type **Goods**, with the box cleared.

9.2 Creating a product

The catalogue can be reached from several apps: **Sales → Products → Products**, **Purchase → Products → Products**, **Inventory → Products → Products** or **Manufacturing → Products → Products**. It is the same catalogue: the path taken only changes the filters offered by default.

1. Open the product list and click **New**.
2. Fill in the product name.
3. Below the name, tick the **Sales** and **Purchase** boxes, which determine where the product will appear. They sit above the tabs, not inside one of them.
4. In the **General Information** tab, complete:
   - **Product Type**
   - **Sales Price** and **Cost**, each followed by the taxes that apply to it;
   - the unit, entered after the price following the word *per*, it only appears when the units of measure option is enabled;
   - **Category**
   - **Reference** and **Barcode**.

5. Complete the **Sales**, **Purchase** and **Inventory** tabs as needed.
6. Save.

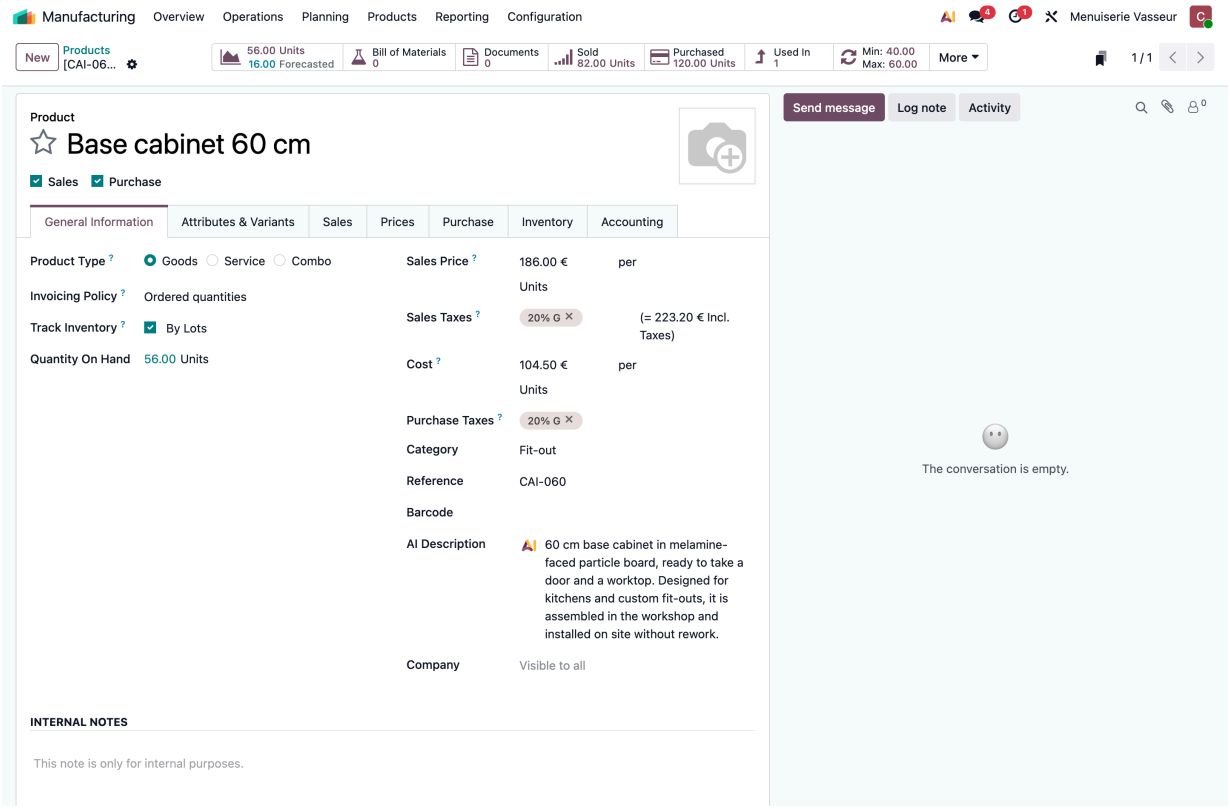


Figure 9.1: Product creation form

9.2.1 Sales tab

- **Quotation Description**: text carried over onto customer quotations and invoices.
- **Packagings** and up-selling or cross-selling products.
- Online sales options, if the website is installed.

9.2.2 Purchase tab

This tab holds the **Purchase Description** (text carried over onto requests for quotation) the bill control policy, and above all the list of vendors referenced for this product.

Note

Taxes are not in these two tabs: sales taxes sit under the **Sales Price**, purchase taxes under the **Cost**, both in the **General Information** tab.

Vendor lines

Each line describes a **purchasing condition**: a vendor, a price, and the context in which that price applies. A single product often carries several: several vendors, or the same vendor with quantity breaks.

Field	Role
Vendor	The party the product is bought from.
Vendor Product Name **Vendor Product Code**	The product's name and reference **on their side**. Carried over onto the request for quotation in place of yours, which saves the vendor from having to translate them. Left empty, your own labels are used.

Field	Role
Quantity	The quantity from which the price on the line applies. It is a **threshold**, not an order quantity.
Unit	The unit in which the quantity and the price are expressed. It may differ from the product's own: buying by the kilo an item stocked by the unit.
Unit Price and **Discount (%)**	The negotiated price, and the discount if any. It is the price after discount that is used for comparison.
Start Date **End Date**	The validity period of the price. Outside that period, the line is ignored.
Lead Time	Number of days between confirmation of the order and receipt. Feeds the computation of replenishment dates.
Product Variant	Restricts the line to one specific variation. Left empty, it applies to all variants.

How Odoo picks the line

When creating a request for quotation or a replenishment, Odoo does not simply take the first line. It first discards the ones that do not fit, then keeps the best of those remaining.

A line is **discarded** if:

- today's date falls outside its validity period;
- the quantity to be ordered is **lower** than its **Quantity**: converted into its unit where necessary;
- it targets a variant other than the one being purchased;
- a vendor has already been imposed and it is not theirs.

Among the remaining lines, Odoo keeps the vendor of the first line in display order (the **Sequence**). Among that vendor's lines, it keeps the one whose **price after discount is the lowest**, all prices brought back to the company currency.

What this means in practice

- **Quantity breaks are entered as separate lines** for the same vendor, with increasing quantities. Odoo picks the applicable break on its own.
- **The order of the lines is an order of preference between vendors**: the vendor placed at the top is kept even if another one is cheaper. Price only decides between the lines of the same vendor. To favour a vendor, place their lines at the top of the list.
- **A line whose minimum quantity is never reached is never used.** That is the usual cause of a price that "will not apply" on an order.

Lines created automatically

Some lines appear without having been entered. When a **purchase order is confirmed**, Odoo adds the vendor to the product record if they are not already there.

The behaviour is worth knowing, because it is narrower than it looks:

- it is triggered when the **purchase order is confirmed**, not on receipt nor on validation of the vendor bill;
- it only acts if the vendor is **absent** from the list. An existing line is never updated, even if its price is zero or out of date;
- it stops as soon as the product has more than **ten vendor lines**;
- the line created receives the price of the order, converted where necessary into the product's unit, the discount applied, a **Quantity** of 1, a **Lead Time** of 0, and is placed **last**.

Watch out

A **Lead Time** of 0 on a line created automatically means “delivered the same day” for the computation of replenishments. On an item with a long lead time, that is wrong and nothing flags it. Go back over the lines created this way and enter the real lead time.

Tip

Since an existing line is never updated, a price renegotiation does not propagate on its own: the new price is entered by hand, or added as a new line with its validity period, the old one being given an end date.

Note

The price on a vendor line must not be confused with the product’s **Cost**, which obeys an entirely different mechanism (see section 9.7.1).

Tip

Always enter at least one vendor per purchased product: without a line, neither the request for quotation nor automatic replenishment knows who to turn to or at what price.

Watch out

The **Lead Time** on the vendor line drives the trigger dates for replenishment. A lead time left at its default value on an item with a long supply time produces orders launched too late, with no alert to signal it.

9.2.3 Inventory tab

The **Logistics** block gathers what follows the goods:

- the **Responsible** for replenishment;
- the **Weight** and the **Volume**, used by the shipping modules;
- the **Customer Lead Time**, which shifts the promised date;
- the **HS Code** and the **Origin of Goods**, for international trade.

Three text areas follow, carried over onto the logistics documents: the description for receipts, the one for delivery orders, and the one for internal transfers.

Note

The **Routes** field also appears in this tab, but only if at least one route is declared as selectable on products: replenish on order or dropshipping, for example. Without them, the line does not appear (see chapter 16).

9.2.4 Prices tab

It gathers the pricelist rules that target this product, covered in section 9.6.1.

9.2.5 Accounting tab

It carries the **Income Account** and the **Expense Account** to be used for this product, in derogation from those of its category.

9.3 Writing a description with the assistant

The built-in artificial intelligence helps write the catalogue texts. There are two very different moves: one occasional, in the editor; the other systematic, through a dedicated field.

Note

The assistant belongs to the Enterprise edition and requires prior configuration: mandatory on odoo.sh and on-premise, optional online. Settle this point before tackling the procedures that follow: see section 3.3.4.

9.3.1 While typing

In any rich text field (the **Internal Notes** block of the product record, an email, a note) the assistant is called directly:

1. Place the cursor in the field.
2. Type `/` to open the insertion menu, then choose **AI** in the **AI Tools** category.
3. Describe the text you want.
4. Read the proposal, then insert it.

To rework an existing passage, select it: an assistance button appears in the toolbar and lets you rewrite it, shorten it or change its tone.

Note

This is the everyday move, and it is enough in the vast majority of cases. The text produced becomes ordinary content, which you are then free to correct. This mechanism works throughout the database and is described in section 4.3.2.

Watch out

The insertion menu only exists in **rich** text fields. On a product record, the **Internal Notes** block benefits from it; the **Quotation Description** and the **Purchase Description** are plain text fields and do not offer this menu.

9.3.2 Through a dedicated field, for a whole catalogue

When the same kind of text has to be produced on hundreds of records, an **AI field** saves repeating the instruction. Its value is generated from the content of the record: name, category, attributes, characteristics.

1. Open a product record and click the Studio icon in the top bar (see chapter 23).
2. From the left-hand panel, drag **AI Field** to the place you want.
3. Choose the **Field Type**: **Text**, **Multiline Text** or **HTML**.
4. Write the instruction describing the text expected, naming the fields to draw on.
5. Save and leave Studio.

The field then appears on every product record and offers to generate its value there.

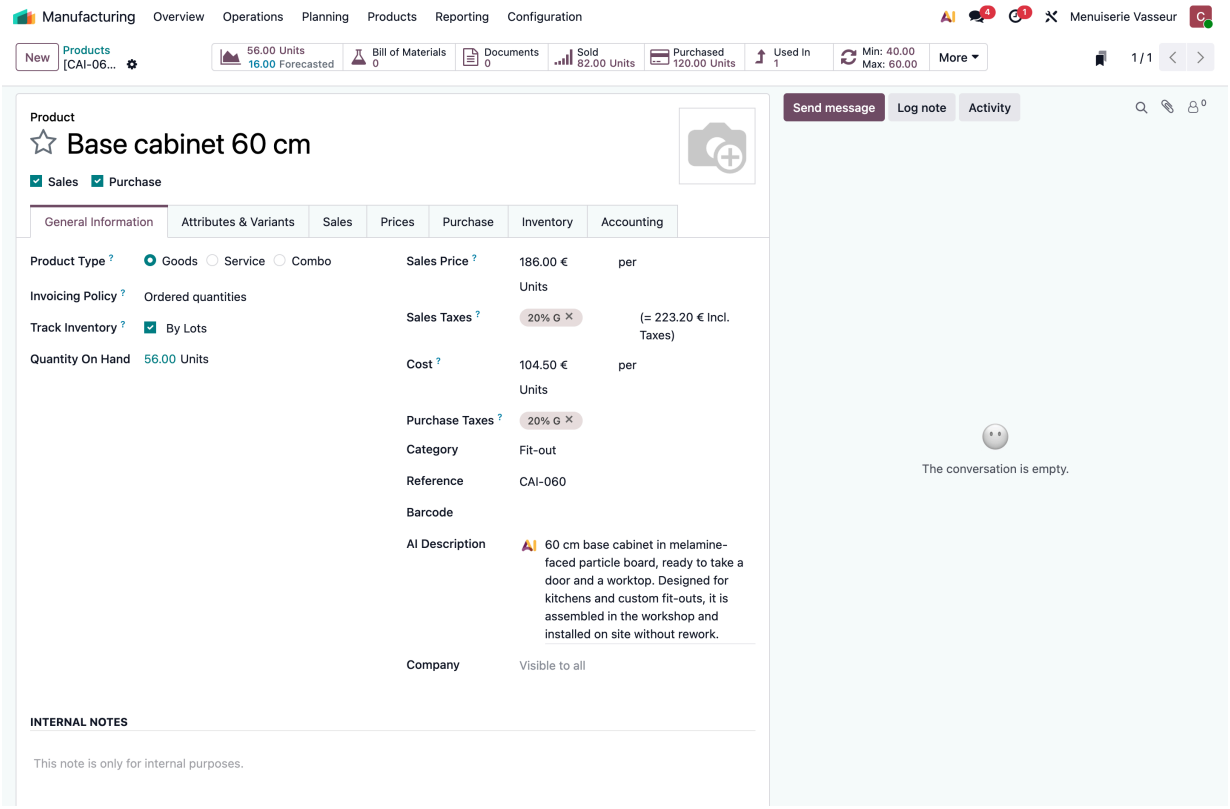


Figure 9.2: AI field generating a product description

Tip

Keep this second route for mass processing. For an isolated record, the editor command gives the same result without adding anything to the form , and a field added by Studio stays visible to everyone, on every record.

Watch out

Installing Studio on a database on the **Standard** plan automatically triggers the switch to the **Custom** plan (see chapter 23).

Watch out

The text produced is a proposal, not an approval: it commits the company as soon as it appears on a quotation. Proofreading remains necessary, particularly on technical characteristics and regulatory statements.

9.4 Managing variants

Variants save you from creating as many records as there are variations of the same item: size, colour, material, finish. A single record carries the catalogue entry, the description and the photos; the variations are told apart by their attributes.

First enable the **Variants** option in **Sales → Configuration → Settings**. It brings up the **Attributes & Variants** tab on product records and the **Sales → Configuration → Products → Attributes** menu.

9.4.1 Choosing the creation mode

This is the decisive setting, and it is made on the attribute, not on the product. The **Variant Creation** field drives what Odoo actually builds:

Mode	Effect
Instantly	All possible combinations are created as soon as the attribute and its values are added to the product. Each variation becomes an item in its own right: stock, cost, barcode, reference.
Dynamically	The variation is only created at the moment it appears on an order. The catalogue stays light, and only the combinations actually sold exist in the database.
Never	No variant is created. The choice is recorded on the order line as an option, and may carry a price supplement, but it does not constitute a separate item: no stock of its own, no reference of its own.

The choice follows from the number of combinations and the need to track them. Three sizes and four colours make twelve items in **Instantly** mode; six attributes with five values each make more than fifteen thousand, and **Dynamically** mode becomes unavoidable. Conversely, an engraving or gift wrapping justifies no separate item at all: that is **Never** mode.

Watch out

The creation mode can no longer be changed once the attribute is used on a product: Odoo refuses to save and lists the products concerned. This point is therefore settled before loading the catalogue, not after.

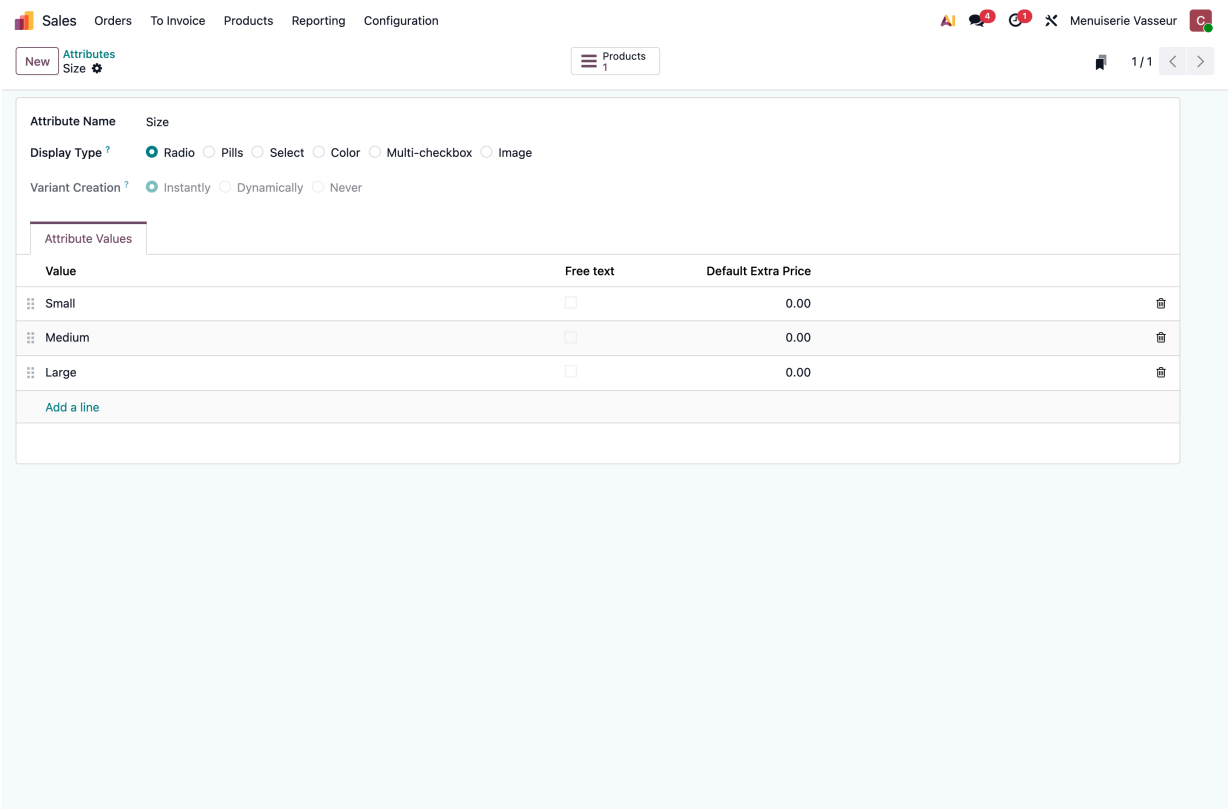


Figure 9.3: Product attribute form

The **Display Type** field (**Radio**, **Pills**, **Select**, **Color**, **Multi-checkbox**, **Image**) determines how the choice is presented to the customer in the configurator and in the online shop. It has no effect on the variants generated, with one exception: choosing **Multi-checkbox** automatically switches creation to **Never**, since several boxes ticked at once cannot designate a single variation.

Tip

Ticking **Free text** on a value lets the customer enter their own: an engraving text, a custom dimension. What they type is carried over onto the order line.

9.4.2 Applying attributes to a product

1. Open the product and select the **Attributes & Variants** tab.
2. Add a line and choose an **Attribute**.
3. Select the **Values** kept *for this product*: an attribute may offer eight colours while a given product only comes in three.
4. Save. Odoo generates the combinations according to the mode set on the attribute.

Watch out

Every change to this list regenerates the whole set of combinations, and the operation is not symmetrical.

Adding a value multiplies the variations: going from three to four sizes on a product already available in five colours takes you from fifteen to twenty items. Beyond a thousand combinations to generate, Odoo refuses the operation and invites you to switch the attribute to **Dynamically** mode.

Removing a value destroys the variations that have become impossible. Those that appear on a sales order, that carry lots or serial numbers, or that are referenced by another document (purchase order, invoice, stock move) are *archived*: the history and the documents stay intact. The others are *deleted*, and their internal reference, their barcode and their reordering rules disappear with them. Restoring the value recreates blank items, without that information.

Tip

Before touching the attributes of a product already on sale, note down the internal references and the barcodes of the variations concerned from the **Variants** smart button. That is the only backup of what regeneration can erase.

9.4.3 Adjusting prices and references

The **Variants** smart button gives access to the list of variations. Each one carries its own internal reference, its barcode and its stock.

The price supplement, on the other hand, is entered from the **Attributes & Variants** tab of the product: the **Configure** button of the attribute line opens the list of values, each with its **Extra Price**, which is added to the sales price on the record. The same attribute can therefore be charged differently from one product to another.

Note

Not every combination is necessarily on sale. Deactivate those that do not exist in the catalogue rather than restricting the attribute values, which may well be used by other products.

9.5 Organising the catalogue

9.5.1 Categories

Categories structure the catalogue and carry decisive settings: stock valuation method, sales, purchase and stock accounts.

1. Open **Inventory → Configuration → Products → Categories**.
2. Create a hierarchy consistent with your business: for example raw materials, components, finished products, consumables, services.
3. Assign each product to its category.

Watch out

A product belongs to one category only. Since the category determines the accounts and the valuation, it is defined with the accountant, before loading the catalogue.

9.5.2 Tags

Tags complement categories with a cross-cutting classification: a product belongs to a single category but can carry several tags: current promotion, end of line, sensitive product, origin. They serve as filter and grouping criteria in every report.

9.6 Pricing

9.6.1 Pricelists

1. Check that the **Pricelists** option is enabled in **Sales → Configuration → Settings**.
2. Open **Sales → Products → Pricelists**.
3. Create one list per pricing segment: list price, reseller, key account, export.
4. Fill in the **Currency** of the list (a field visible as soon as several currencies are active). It may differ from the company's: that is how you sell in a foreign currency.
5. In the rules tab, define for each line:
   - the scope: one product, one category, or the whole catalogue;
   - the calculation mode: percentage discount, fixed price, or a formula based on the sales price, the cost or another pricelist;
   - the minimum quantity that triggers the rule;
   - the validity period.
6. Assign the pricelist to the customers concerned, in the **Sales & Purchase** tab of their contact record, **Sales** block.

Note

A quotation drawn up with a pricelist in a foreign currency is denominated in that currency. Conversion into the company currency happens when the entry is posted, at the rate in force on the date of the document. There is therefore no need (and no benefit) in changing the company currency to sell for export.

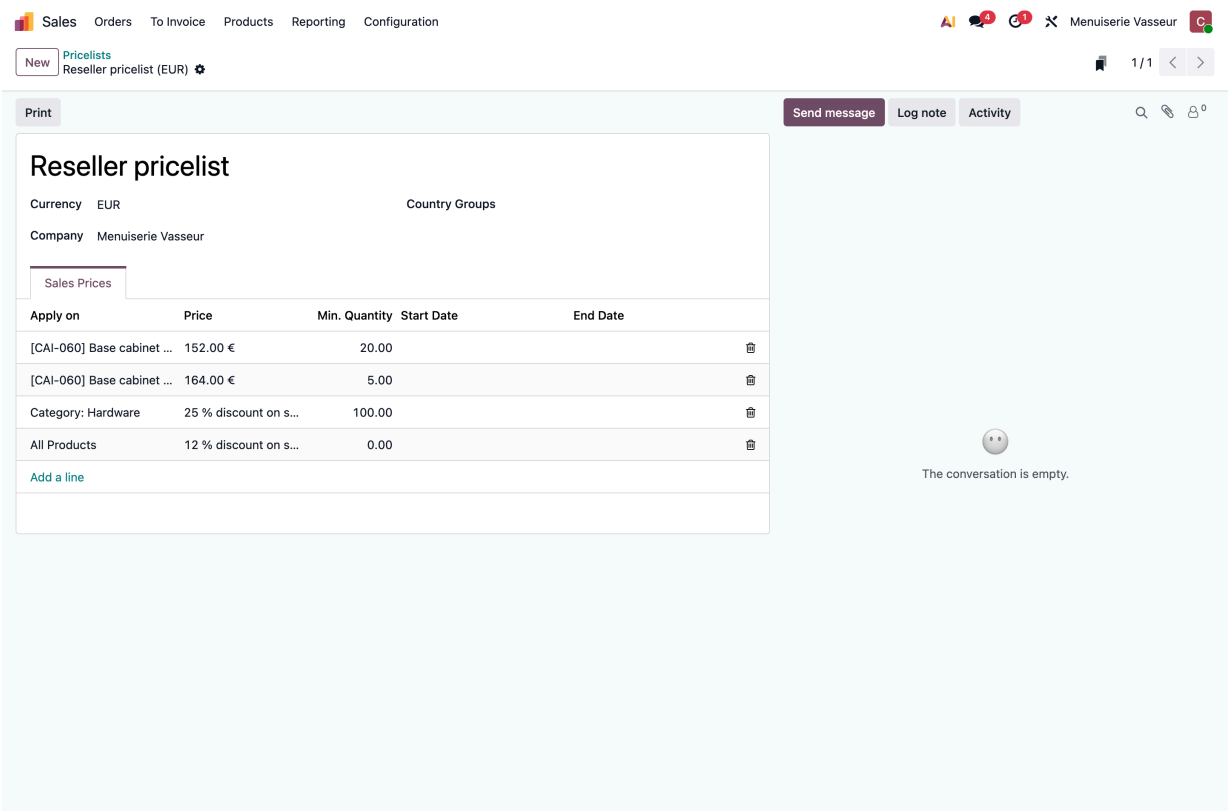


Figure 9.4: Rules of a pricelist

9.6.2 Quantity discounts

To encourage volume, create several rules on the same product with increasing minimum quantities. Odoo automatically applies the rule matching the quantity entered on the quotation line.

9.6.3 Chaining pricelists

A rule does not necessarily start from the catalogue sales price. The **Based price** field offers three starting points: the **Sales Price** on the record, the **Cost**, or an **Other Pricelist**. This third choice lets you build a pricing tree instead of duplicating the same amounts across several lists.

Structuring your pricing

A single price reference, and cascading derivations:

1. **The sales price lives on the product record.** It is the only place where an amount is entered, and the only one to update when prices are revised.
2. **A first, general list is based on that sales price.** It carries the currency and any quantity breaks, without copying a single amount.
3. **The following lists are based on the general list** and express only their difference: reseller discount, key account discount, export mark-up.

A catalogue-wide price revision is then made on the product records alone, and propagates through the whole chain. Each list now contains only what is specific to it (its discount) and becomes readable at a glance.

For the *Reseller* list applying a 20% discount off the *List price* list:

1. Create the *Reseller* list and add a rule to it.
2. In **Apply To**, choose **Product** and leave the product field empty: the rule then applies to the whole catalogue.
3. Choose the **Price Type Discount**, enter `20`, then designate *List price* in the pricelist field that follows.

Note

The cascade stays readable while the quotation is being written: the line shows the price coming from the list, and when the rule used is a **Discount**, the **Unit Price** remains the price before discount and the **Disc.%** column carries the rate. The salesperson therefore sees the reference amount and the difference applied, without having to open the pricelist.

This display assumes the line discounts option is enabled. A rule using **Fixed Price** or **Formula** does not lend itself to it: only the net price appears.

Note

Each link is evaluated in its own currency before conversion. A list in dollars based on a list in euros applies the rate of the day of the document to the intermediate amount, then the discount. Two successive conversions within the same chain can therefore produce a rounding difference on the final price.

Watch out

Odoo refuses a circular chain: a list that, directly or through an intermediary, would be based on itself. Creation is blocked by an error message when saving.

9.6.4 Setting an exception

The cascade sets the framework; exceptions are laid on top of it. The **Apply To** field delimits the scope of a rule, from the widest to the narrowest:

- **Product** with the product field left empty: the general rule of the list;
- **Category**: one family of the catalogue;
- **Product** with an item designated: that item and all its variations;
- the **Variant** field, which only appears if the item designated has at least two variations: a single one of them.

Within a given list, the most specific rule wins. A list can therefore carry a 20% discount across the board, a 5% discount on a sensitive category, and a **Fixed Price** on one particular variant: it is this last one that will apply to it.

Tip

The **Product Variant** level is the right tool for a price that follows no logic at all: a rare finish sold at the price of a common one, an oversize invoiced separately. As long as the difference stays proportional, the **Extra Price** in the **Attributes & Variants** tab is preferable: it applies to every pricelist at once (see section 9.4).

9.7 Tracking costs

The **Cost** field on the product record carries the unit cost of the product. It serves two purposes: computing the margin on sales, and valuing stock.

Valuing stock means translating the quantities held into a financial value: a hundred pieces in the warehouse at fourteen euros each represent one thousand four hundred euros of assets on the balance sheet. That value appears in the company accounts, and Odoo keeps it up to date from the unit cost. Hence what is at stake: the way that cost is established determines what the stock is worth.

It is not set on the product but on its *category*, through the **Costing Method** field:

Method	How the cost behaves
Standard Price	A fixed value, entered manually and revised periodically.
Average Cost (AVCO)	Recomputed automatically on every receipt, weighted by quantities.
First In First Out (FIFO)	Each layer of stock keeps the cost at which it came in.

Watch out

The method chosen drives the value of stock recorded on the balance sheet: it therefore has direct accounting consequences and is chosen with the accountant. It is hard to change once movements have been recorded, since every change requires reworking the existing valuation.

Note

The full configuration (costing method, periodic or perpetual valuation, associated stock accounts) is covered in section 15.8. At the catalogue stage, it is enough to know that the product's category determines how its cost evolves.

9.7.1 Vendor price and cost: two fields not to be confused

The product record carries two purchase amounts, fed by mechanisms that have nothing to do with each other.

Amount	What makes it move
Vendor price (**Purchase** tab)	The price negotiated with a given vendor. It is **never computed**: it is entered, or created once when an order is confirmed. The product category has no effect on it.
Cost (**General Information** tab)	The unit cost of the product in stock. It is **this** one that the method defined on the category drives: never recomputed under standard price, recomputed on every receipt under average cost, on every receipt and every issue under first in first out.

Watch out

What "moves on its own" after a receipt is the **cost**, not the vendor price. An out-of-date vendor price stays out of date indefinitely, even if receipts are made at another price: only the cost follows the reality of what comes in.

9.8 Special products

9.8.1 Services billed on time spent

1. Create a product of type **Service**.
2. In the **General Information** tab, choose the appropriate **Invoicing Policy**: **Prepaid/Fixed Price**, **Based on Delivered Quantity (Manual)**, **Based on Timesheets** or **Based on Milestones** (these last two depending on the applications and options enabled).
3. Link the product to a project if time is to be tracked in the **Project** app (see chapter 18).

9.8.2 Packagings

A product can be handled by full packaging rather than by the unit: a box of twelve, a pallet of forty-eight boxes. Entry becomes faster both on receipt and on shipping, and the documents carry the quantity as the customer or the vendor understands it.

A packaging is a *unit of measure*: the box of twelve is not an object separate from the unit, it is another way of counting the same thing. Units therefore nest inside one another, each defined in relation to another.

1. Enable **Units of Measure & Packagings** in **Inventory → Configuration → Settings**.
2. Open **Sales → Configuration → Products → Units & Packagings**.
3. Create the `Box` unit and fill in the **Quantity** line: `12`, then *Units* in the reference unit field that follows.
4. For a second level, create `Pallet` whose **Quantity** is `48` in *Box*. Odoo works out the equivalent in units on its own.
5. On the product record, add these units to the **Packagings** field.

The packagings declared this way are offered when entering quotation lines, purchase order lines and stock movements. The quantity is still converted into the reference unit for stock and valuation: ordering two pallets does reserve one thousand one hundred and fifty-two pieces.

Note

Nesting is native: a unit is defined in relation to another, which may itself be defined in relation to a third. There is no depth limit, and no particular setting to enable in order to go beyond two levels.

Watch out

Do not confuse the *packaging*, which is a way of counting a product, with the *package*, which is an identified physical container: the box actually sealed, carrying its label, and whose contents are tracked through the operations. Packages are handled from the *Inventory* app and belong to logistics, not to the catalogue.

9.9 Importing a catalogue

Loading the catalogue follows the general procedure described in chapter 22: export a few representative products to obtain the template, complete it, then import it back, testing first.

The order specific to the catalogue is as follows:

1. The **product categories**, on which valuation and accounts depend.
2. The **units of measure and packagings**, if the catalogue uses them.
3. The **vendors**, before the prices that name them.
4. The **products** themselves.
5. The **vendor prices** and the **pricelists**, which reference the products.

Watch out

Variants are not imported as separate products. You import the record and its attributes; Odoo generates the variations according to the creation mode set on each attribute (see section 9.4).

9.10 Good practice

A catalogue that stays usable over time

- Establish a naming and referencing convention before creating the first products.
- Structure the categories according to accounting and logistics needs, not only commercial ones.
- Complete the sales and purchase descriptions: they save back-and-forth with customers and vendors.
- Attach good-quality images to the records intended for customers.
- Review costs periodically to keep margins accurate.

CHAPTER 10

Managing purchases

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER

- reference your vendors and their conditions on the product records;
- draw up a request for quotation and confirm it as an order;
- have the quantities to order computed from observed consumption;
- receive goods, check the vendor bill and record its payment;
- automate replenishment and measure your vendors' performance.

The **Purchase** app covers the whole supply cycle: consulting vendors, ordering, receiving, checking and paying bills. It works together with **Inventory** for stock movements and with **Accounting** for the journal entries.

10.1 Configuring purchases

10.1.1 General settings

1. Open **Purchase → Configuration → Settings**.
2. Set the options according to your internal procedures:
   - **Lock Confirmed Orders**: prevents any modification after confirmation;
   - **Receipt Reminder**: automatically follows vendors up before the expected date;
   - **Purchase Agreements**: lets you consult several vendors for the same need and formalise negotiated conditions over a period;
   - **Warnings**: displays a message when entering an order for a given vendor or product;
   - **Purchase Order Approval**: sends orders above a **Minimum Amount** for approval.
3. Save.

The **Logistics** block gathers two options that connect purchases to sales. It only appears if the **Sales** app is installed.

10.1.2 Replenishing on order

The **Replenish on Order (MTO)** option triggers supply when a sales order is confirmed, rather than by rebuilding stock. Each sale directly generates the operation matching it, and the documents stay linked to one another.

It suits items that would be costly or pointless to stock: made-to-measure products, expensive references, slow-moving or perishable items.

Note

This option does not determine *how* to replenish, only *when*. What gets triggered depends on the route carried by the product: a request for quotation for an item set to **Buy**, a manufacturing order for an item to be produced.

Watch out

The setting merely makes the route available. It still has to be applied product by product, in the **Inventory** tab of their record: ticking the option changes the behaviour of no item at all until the route has been assigned to it.

10.1.3 Direct delivery by the vendor

The **Dropshipping** option has the goods shipped from the vendor to the customer, without passing through your warehouses. When a sales order is confirmed, Odoo draws up a request for quotation whose delivery address is the customer's.

Like the previous one, it then applies product by product. It also combines with it: direct delivery is a particular way of replenishing on order.

Watch out

Ticking this option installs an additional module, an operation that modifies the database and is not undone by simply clearing the box. Keep it for an established need.

Note

Since the goods do not pass through your stock, you check neither their condition nor their conformity before they reach the customer. Reservations on receipt, quality checks and transport disputes are then handled with the vendor, on the customer's word.

10.1.4 Bill control policy

It determines the quantity Odoo carries over onto the vendor bill: the one that was ordered, or the one that was actually received.

This setting is not made in the app settings but **on each product**, in the **Purchase** tab of its record, through the **Control Policy** field:

- **On ordered quantities**: the bill takes the quantity from the purchase order, whether the goods have arrived or not;
- **On received quantities**: the bill only takes what has been received.

Watch out

On purchases delivered in part, billing on received quantities avoids paying for what has not arrived. Since the setting is carried by the product, a single order can mix both behaviours; check the records are consistent before settling your control procedure.

Note

On a product of type **Service**, Odoo sets control to ordered quantities as a matter of course: a service is not received , but the value can still be changed by hand. For goods, the value used when a record is created is received quantities.

Tip

The field only appears for users who have purchase management rights. A buyer without that access level will not see it on the product record (see chapter 6).

10.1.5 What makes a contact a vendor

Odoo has no "is a vendor" box and no "is a customer" box. A single contact serves both roles, and nothing prevents it from holding both: a carrier who invoices you may buy your written-off equipment.

The distinction rests on two counters carried by the record: the **supplier rank** and the **customer rank**. The **Purchase → Orders → Vendors** menu does not display a category of contacts, it filters those whose supplier rank is greater than zero. The customers menu does the same with the other counter.

How the ranks evolve

- **Creating a contact from the vendors menu** immediately raises its supplier rank to one. That is the move that makes it appear in the list. Created from the **Contacts** app, the same contact stays at zero and does not appear there.
- **Posting a vendor bill** increases the rank by one. Posting a customer invoice increases the other.
- The increase happens when the entry is **posted**, not when it is entered: a draft does not count, and neither does a purchase order on its own.
- The rank propagates up to the contact's **parent company**. Invoicing a person attached to a company also credits the company record, which therefore appears in the list itself.

These really are counters, not indicators: a vendor you have worked with for years carries a high rank, an occasional vendor a rank of one. Odoo uses them to offer the most frequently used partners first.

Note

The ranks do not appear on the contact form. They are rarely handled directly: the common case (making an existing contact appear in the vendors list) is settled by recording a first bill in their name, or by recreating them from the vendors menu.

Watch out

Ranks are not copied when a record is duplicated: a duplicated contact starts again at zero on both counters and disappears from both lists, even though its record is identical to the original.

10.1.6 Entering the vendor's conditions

1. Open **Purchase** → **Orders** → **Vendors** or the **Contacts** app.
2. Open the vendor's record.
3. In the **Sales & Purchase** tab, **Purchase** column, fill in:
   - the **Buyer** in charge of the account, carried over by default onto orders;
   - the **Payment Terms** applicable to the bills received;
   - the usual **Payment Method**
   - the **Supplier Currency** if it differs from the company's;
   - the **Receipt Reminder** and the number of **Days Before Receipt**, to follow up automatically ahead of the expected date.
4. Save.

Note

The supply lead time is not set here. It depends on the item as much as on the vendor, and is therefore entered in the **Lead Time** field of each line of the **Purchase** tab of the product record (see section 9.7.1).

10.1.7 Grouping requests for quotation

The **Group RFQ** field determines whether several needs addressed to the same vendor give rise to a single document or to separate documents:

Value	Effect
On Order	Needs are grouped, except those coming from a replenishment on order, which stay linked to their sale.
Daily	Groups the needs whose arrival is expected on the same day.
Weekly	Groups by week. A second list, to the right of the value, sets the reference day: **Expected Date** or a day of the week.

Value	Effect
Always	A single document, whatever the expected dates.

Tip

A vendor who charges shipping costs per shipment is best set to broad grouping. Conversely, a vendor delivering as needs arise is steered more finely with one document per need.

10.1.8 Measuring punctuality

The **On-time Rate** smart button on the vendor record shows the share of quantities received on the promised date, over the last twelve months.

Note

The computation only counts lines actually received on confirmed orders, and leaves out services. A quantity that arrives after the expected date counts as zero, even if delivered the next day: the indicator measures whether the commitment was kept, not the size of the delay.

10.1.9 Linking vendors to products

1. Open the product record.
2. Select the **Purchase** tab.
3. Click **Add a line** and fill in, for each vendor:
   - the vendor's name;
   - the negotiated price and the currency;
   - the minimum order quantity;
   - the delivery lead time;
   - the product's reference at that vendor.
4. Save.

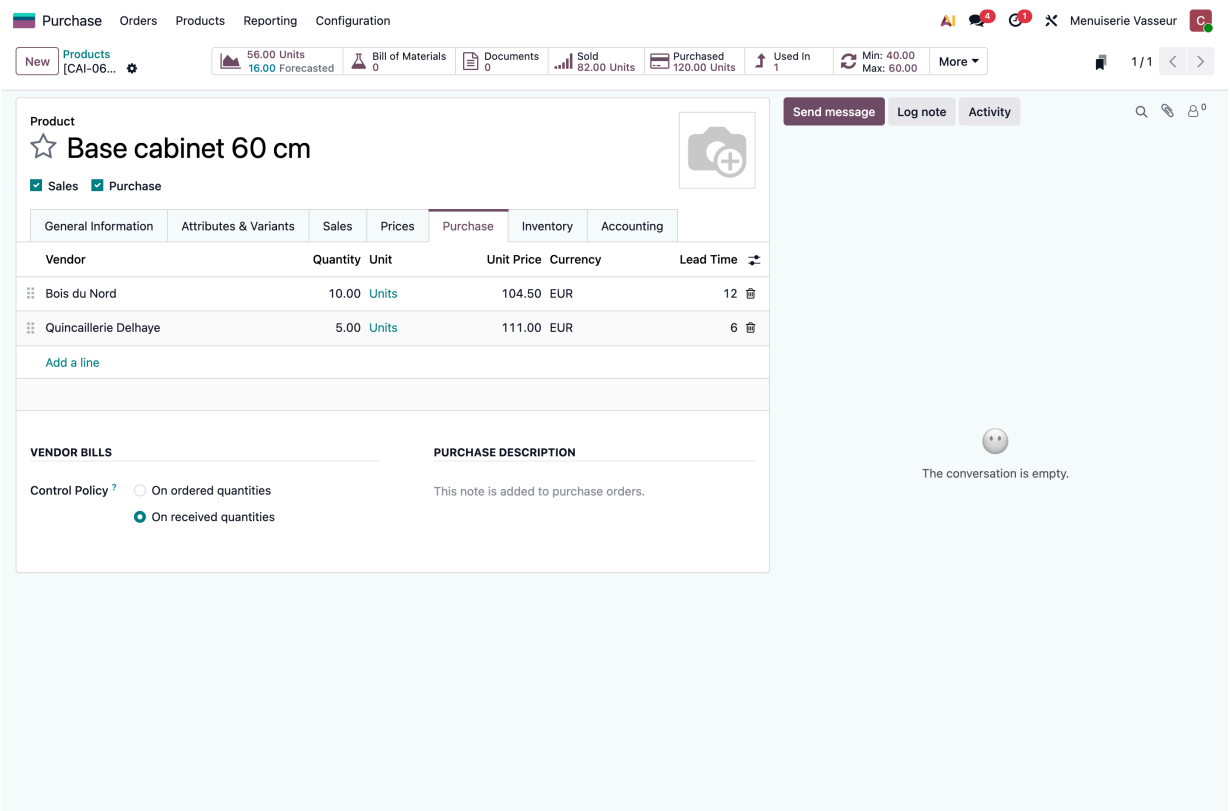


Figure 10.1: Purchase tab of a product record

Tip

Always reference a second vendor for your strategic products. The order of the lines is what counts: Odoo offers the first in the list, but the second stays one click away in case of a shortage.

10.2 Ordering

10.2.1 Creating a request for quotation

1. Open **Purchase → Orders → Requests for Quotation**.
2. Click **New**.
3. Select the **Vendor**: their payment terms apply automatically.
4. Check the **Expected Arrival** date.
5. Add the products, line by line, with the quantities wanted. The price and the lead time come from the product record when the vendor is referenced on it.
6. Save.
7. Click **Send RFQ** to send the request to the vendor.

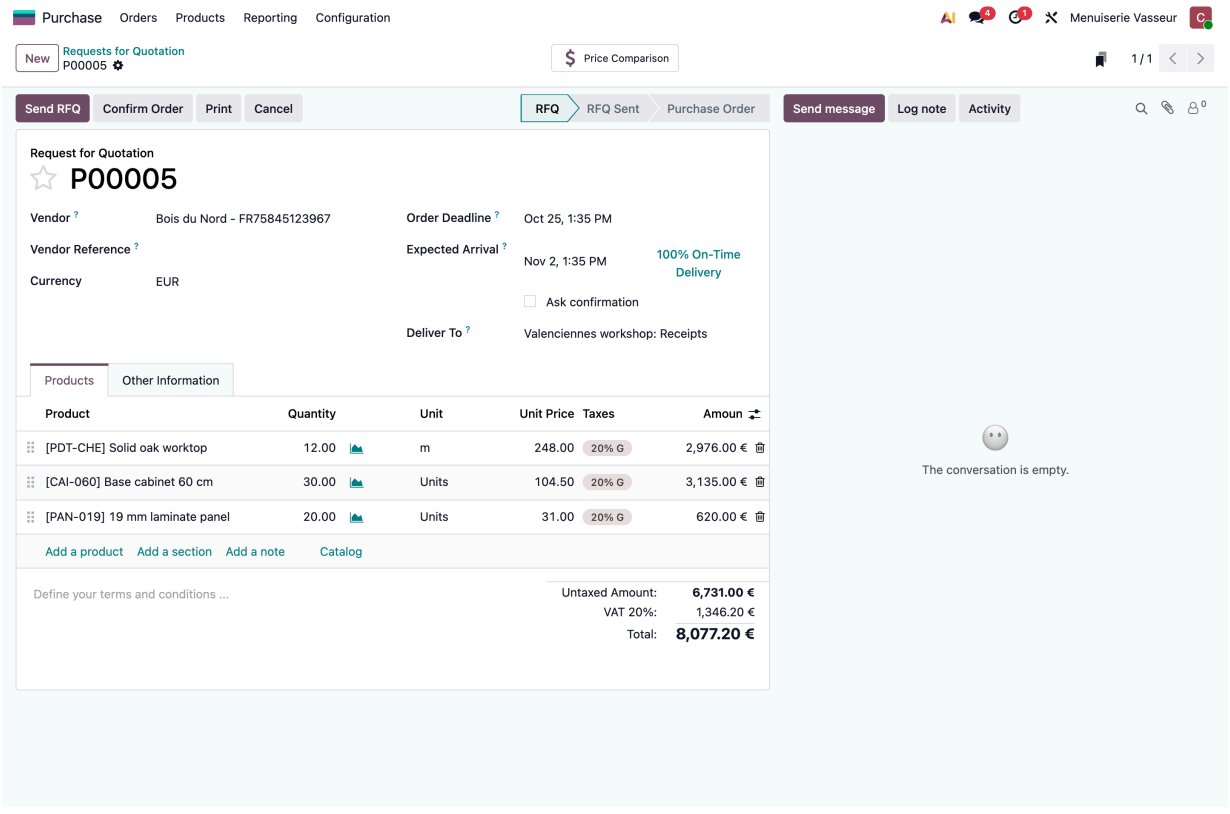


Figure 10.2: Completed request for quotation

10.2.2 Having the quantities to order computed

Rather than entering the quantities by hand, Odoo can propose them from the consumption observed over a reference period. The method suits regular purchases whose demand is relatively stable: consumables, standard components, everyday materials.

1. Create a request for quotation and select the vendor.
2. Click the **Catalog** button, below the order lines.
3. In the side panel, enable **Suggest** and set the three parameters:
   - **Replenish for**: the number of days of consumption to be covered;
   - **Based on**: the reference period: **Forecasted**, **Last 7 days**, **Last 30 days**, **Last 3 months**, **Last 12 months**, then four periods of the previous year designated by their dates: the current month, the next month, the month after, and the quarter formed by these three months;

  - the correction factor, expressed as a percentage: `100` to carry forward the observed consumption, `120` to anticipate a 20% increase.
4. Odoo displays the suggested quantity for each product in that vendor's catalogue.
5. Add each product with the **Add** button on its card, which takes the suggested quantity, or all at once with **Add All**, then adjust the quantities if necessary and close the catalogue: the lines appear on the request for quotation.

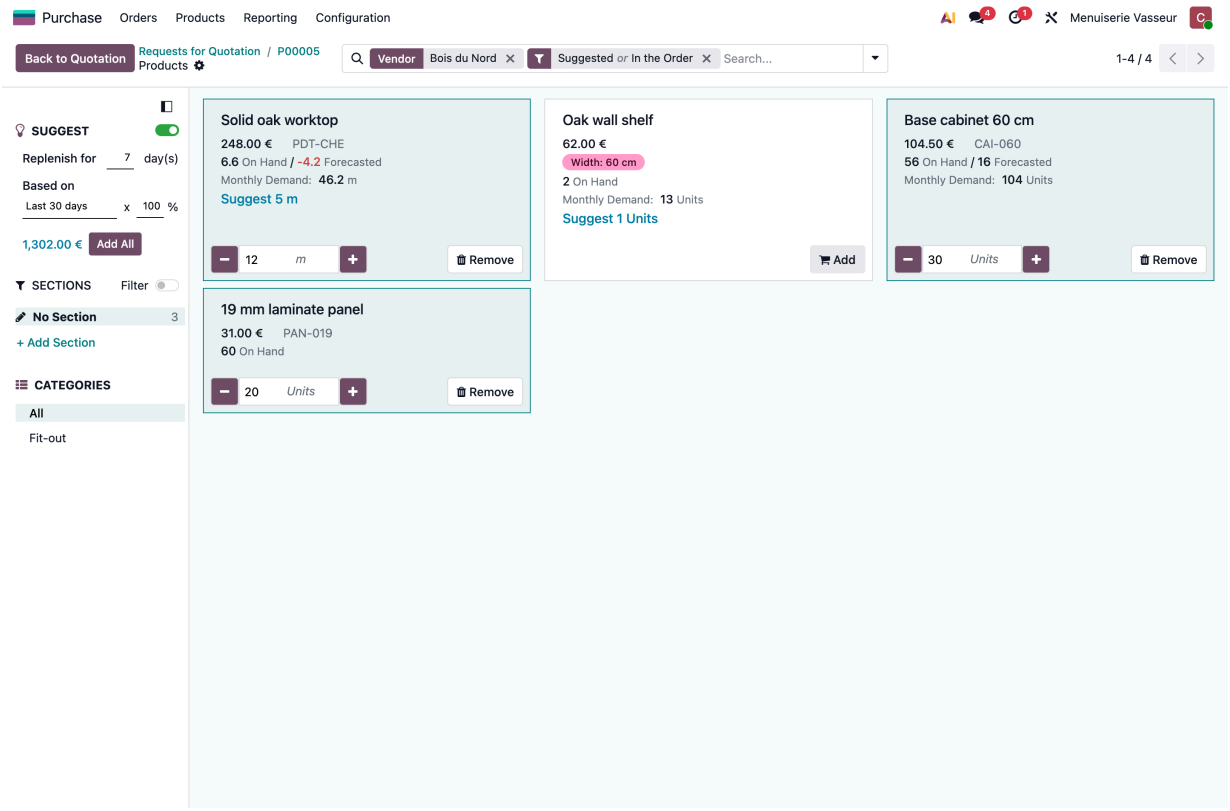


Figure 10.3: Quantity suggestion panel

How the quantity is computed

Over the reference period, Odoo adds up the outgoing movements from the stock of the warehouse concerned: validated deliveries, components consumed in manufacturing and components sent to subcontractors. That total, divided by the number of days in the period and multiplied by the factor, gives the average daily consumption. Multiplied by the number of days to be covered, it gives the estimated need. The quantity proposed is that need less the stock on hand and the receipts already expected.

Note

Only confirmed or reserved movements enter the computation. Quotations and manufacturing orders still in draft are ignored until they are confirmed. In a multi-warehouse organisation, outgoing internal transfers count as consumption for the warehouse of origin.

Watch out

The suggestion carries the past forward. It is unsuited to seasonal products handled over a short reference period, to launches and to end-of-line items. On those items, keep manual entry or choose a reference period covering the previous year.

10.2.3 Confirming the order

1. Open the request for quotation.
2. Adjust the prices and lead times according to the vendor's reply.
3. Click **Confirm Order**.

The request becomes a purchase order. A receipt is automatically created in **Inventory**, reachable through the **Receipt** smart button.

10.3 Receiving

10.3.1 Validating a full receipt

1. From the purchase order, click the **Receipt** button.
2. Check the products and the quantities announced.
3. Click **Validate**.

The quantities enter stock and the purchase order moves to the received status.

10.3.2 Handling a partial receipt

1. Open the receipt.
2. In the quantities column, enter what was actually delivered.
3. Click **Validate**.
4. In the window offered, choose to create a backorder.

Odoo generates a second receipt carrying the missing quantities, which stays pending until the follow-up delivery.

Note

Declining the backorder settles the order on the quantities received: the missing quantities will never be expected. They will not be billed on the products controlled on received quantities; on those controlled on ordered quantities, the bill still includes them (see section 10.1.4). This choice is kept for cases where the vendor has definitively cancelled the remainder.

10.4 Checking and paying vendor bills

10.4.1 Uploading the bill received

The bill starts from the document sent by the vendor, not from a blank draft.

1. Open the confirmed purchase order.
2. Click **Upload Bill** and select the file received: PDF or image.
3. Odoo creates a draft bill taking the lines from the order, with the vendor's document attached to the record.
4. Fill in the **Bill Reference** (the number carried by the vendor's document) and check the **Bill Date** as well as the **Due Date** computed.
5. Compare prices and quantities line by line against the attached document.
6. Click **Confirm**.

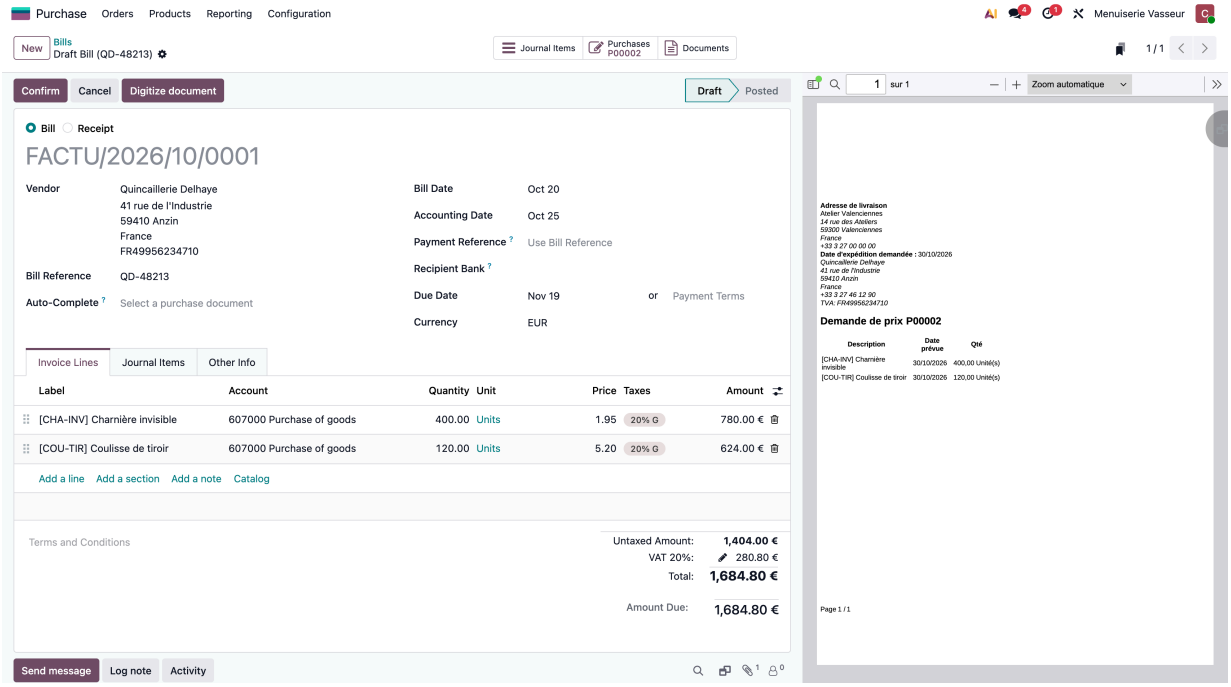


Figure 10.4: Vendor bill uploaded from an order

Note

The quantities carried over are the ones imposed by each product's control policy: ordered or received (see section 10.1.4). On the purchase order, the **Received** and **Billed** columns show at any moment where each line stands.

Watch out

The gap between the price ordered and the price billed is the main source of margin loss on purchases. Checking line by line at the time of entry is quicker than claiming after payment.

10.4.2 Entering a bill without a digital document

When the bill arrives through another channel, or covers several orders at once:

1. Open **Accounting** → **Vendors** → **Bills** and click **New**.
2. Designate the vendor.
3. In the **Auto-Complete** field, choose the purchase order to be taken over. The lines fill in on their own.
4. Repeat the operation to attach a second order to the same bill.

Tip

To handle a batch of orders from the same vendor, select them in the list view and use the **Create Bills** button in the header. Odoo groups the lines onto a single bill per vendor.

10.4.3 Recording the payment

1. Open the vendor bill, in the **Posted** state.
2. Click **Pay**.
3. Fill in the amount, the **Payment Date**, the bank **Journal** and the **Payment Method**.
4. Click **Create Payment**.

The **Amount Due** shown at the foot of the bill follows the payments recorded: it falls to zero once the bill is settled.

Note

The **Pay** button only appears once the bill is posted and as long as it is not settled. On a draft, only **Confirm** is offered.

To settle several bills from the same vendor in a single operation, go through **Accounting** → **Vendors** → **Payments**.

Tip

A posted bill can still be edited through **Reset to Draft**, even once paid, as long as it does not carry a digital fingerprint (journal secured by hashing). Beyond that, correction goes through a **Credit Note**.

10.5 Automating replenishment

10.5.1 The replenishment screen

Inventory → **Operations** → **Procurement** → **Replenishment** brings together everything that is missing: the products whose forecast stock is insufficient, and the quantity that would have to be ordered to put that right.

Each line shows the **On Hand** stock, the **Forecast** taking current orders into account, the **Min** and **Max** thresholds if any exist, and the **To Order** quantity computed.

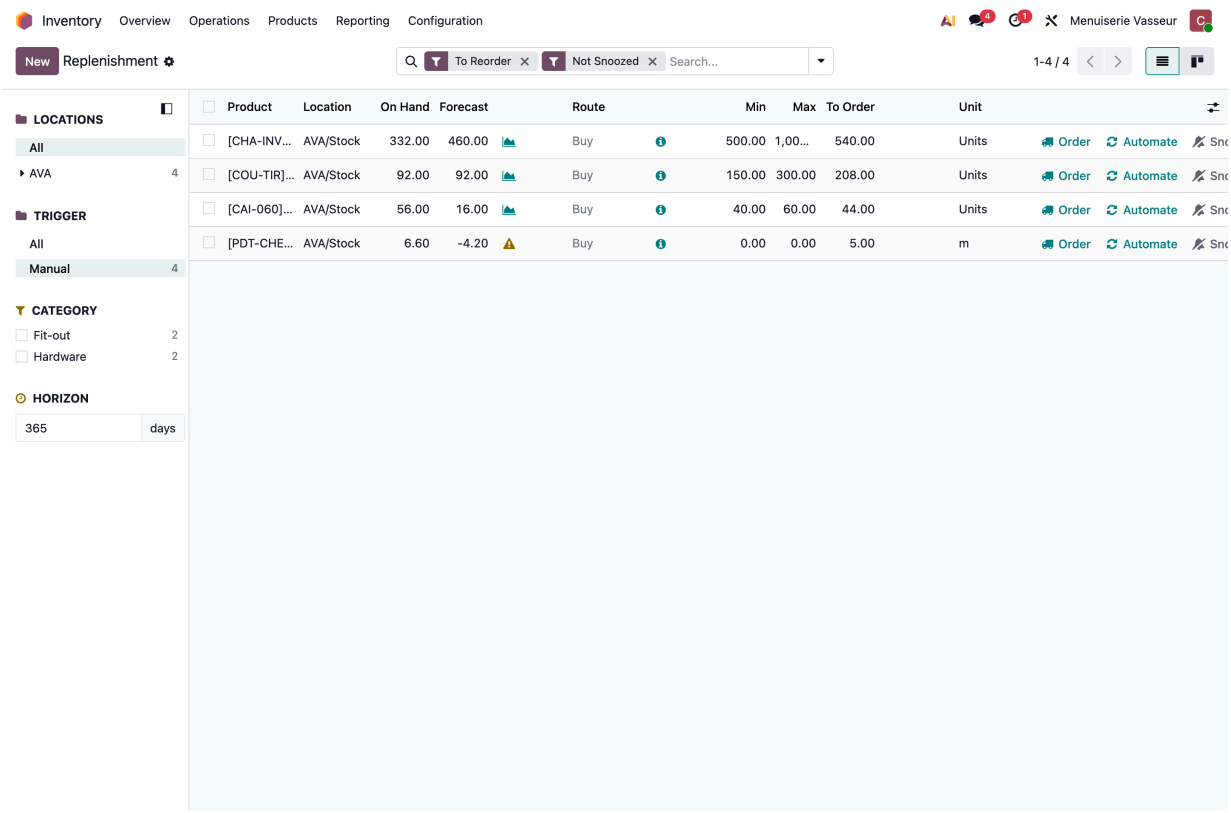


Figure 10.5: Replenishment screen

The **Horizon** field in the side panel sets the depth of the analysis: at three hundred and sixty-five days, the screen takes into account every known need of the year; reduced to thirty days, it shows only the immediate urgency.

10.5.2 Handling a line

Three actions sit at the end of the lines, and act on the line concerned only. **Order** and **Automate** only appear if there is a quantity left to order; **Automate** and **Snooze** only concern rules with a manual trigger.

Action	Effect
Order	Launches supply for that line only: a request for quotation if the product is bought, a manufacturing order if it is produced. The line disappears from the screen, the need being covered.
Automate	Turns this one-off need into a permanent rule, then launches supply. The product will from then on be monitored continuously, without going through this screen again.
Snooze	Hides the line until a chosen date. The need is not handled, merely set aside from the list, useful for a product whose replenishment you know is already under way elsewhere.

Watch out

These buttons act line by line. There is no single button that handles the whole screen: to cover several needs at once, tick the lines you want before acting.

10.5.3 Setting a permanent rule

A product with regular consumption is better monitored continuously than examined on each visit to the replenishment screen.

1. Open **Inventory** → **Operations** → **Procurement** → **Replenishment**.
2. Click **New**.
3. Fill in:
   - the product concerned;
   - the **Min** threshold, below which replenishment is triggered;
   - the **Max** level, to be reached when replenishing.
4. Display the **Trigger** column using the column selector, to the right of the table header: it is hidden by default.
5. Switch the trigger from **Manual** to **Auto**.
6. Save.

Watch out

A rule created from the replenishment screen is born **Manual**, and stays that way until it is changed. It then merely feeds this screen, where the decision has to be taken again on every visit: the thresholds entered trigger nothing by themselves.

Only the **Auto** trigger hands the rule over to the nightly scheduler, which creates the documents without intervention.

Tip

The **Automate** button on a suggestion line does both at once: it switches the trigger and launches supply. It is the quickest way to turn an observed need into a permanent rule.

Note

Odoo does not order as soon as the threshold is crossed: it takes lead times into account so as to launch supply at the latest possible moment, so that the goods arrive for the date they are needed. The detail of that computation and the three levels of lead time that feed it are given in section 15.5.

Tip

Keep automatic rules for references whose consumption is stable and predictable. On a catalogue with irregular turnover, the replenishment screen consulted periodically gives better control than a fleet of thresholds to maintain.

10.6 Analysing purchases

10.6.1 Analysis report

This is the purchase analysis tool, available on any database where the app is installed.

1. Open **Purchase → Reporting → Purchase**.
2. Cross the data by vendor, product, category or period, using **Group By**.
3. Switch between graph view, pivot view and list view as needed.

The measures available cover the amount purchased, the quantities ordered and received, the confirmation lead time and the receipt lead time. Crossed with a grouping by vendor, they give the most useful reading: who weighs most in spending, and who keeps to their lead times.

Tip

An analysis built once can be kept: save the filter and the grouping as a favourite, and it will be offered next time you open the report. The manoeuvre is detailed in chapter 19 and works in every app.

10.6.2 Indicators to follow

- Average delivery lead time per vendor and adherence to the lead times announced.
- Gap between the negotiated price and the price billed.
- Purchase concentration: share of spending made with the main vendors.
- Delivery conformity rate.

10.7 Subcontracting an operation

When all or part of a manufacturing operation is entrusted to a third party, subcontracting combines the **Purchase**, **Inventory** and **Manufacturing** apps: the components are sent to the subcontractor, the transformed product is received like an ordinary purchase. The full implementation is described in chapter 17.

10.8 Good practice

Keeping spending under control

- **Consolidation**: group needs by vendor to obtain better conditions and reduce shipping costs.
- **History**: analyse how prices have moved before renegotiating.
- **Assessment**: track each vendor's service level, not just their price.
- **Anticipation**: rely on reordering rules rather than on individual vigilance.
- **Control**: systematically check that deliveries and bills conform.
- **Alternatives**: keep at least two sources for critical products.

CHAPTER 11

Managing sales and contacts

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER

- keep a clean file of third parties, with their people and their addresses;
- draw up a quotation, enrich it with commercial documents and send it;
- turn a quotation into an order and trigger the delivery;
- apply a discount policy and analyse sales.

This chapter covers the whole sales cycle: keeping the file of third parties, drawing up quotations, turning them into orders and triggering deliveries.

11.1 Managing contacts

In Odoo, contacts cover all third parties: customers, prospects, vendors, subcontractors, institutions. A single database feeds every app, which avoids parallel files and diverging addresses.

11.1.1 People and companies

A radio button at the top of the form, which carries no displayed label, distinguishes two kinds of contact:

- **Company**: a legal entity: business, association, public body.
- **Person**: a natural person. A person can be attached to a company: the **Company** field appears as soon as the **Person** type is selected.

This link builds the hierarchy of people within a single customer: the purchasing department, accounts payable, the technical manager.

Note

Odoo has no “is a customer” box and no “is a vendor” box. The role follows from activity, through two counters carried by the record: posting a sales invoice raises the customer rank, posting a purchase bill raises the supplier rank. The **Customers** and **Vendors** menus only display the records whose corresponding counter is above zero, and the same third party can of course appear in both.

The detail of the mechanism (when the ranks go up, what resets them to zero) is given in section 10.1.5.

Tip

Creating a contact from the **Contacts** app leaves it out of both lists until an invoice is posted in its name. For it to appear among customers straight away, create it from **Sales** → **Orders** → **Customers**.

11.1.2 Creating a contact

1. Open the **Contacts** app and click **New**.
2. Choose the type: **Company** or **Person**.
3. Fill in the name: this is the label that will appear everywhere in the database. The field is mandatory.
4. Complete the **Address**, the email address and the phone number.
5. Fill in the **VAT**, used for tax identification and for checking legal statements.
6. For a person, fill in the **Job Position** held.
7. Add **Tags** to classify the contact.
8. Save.

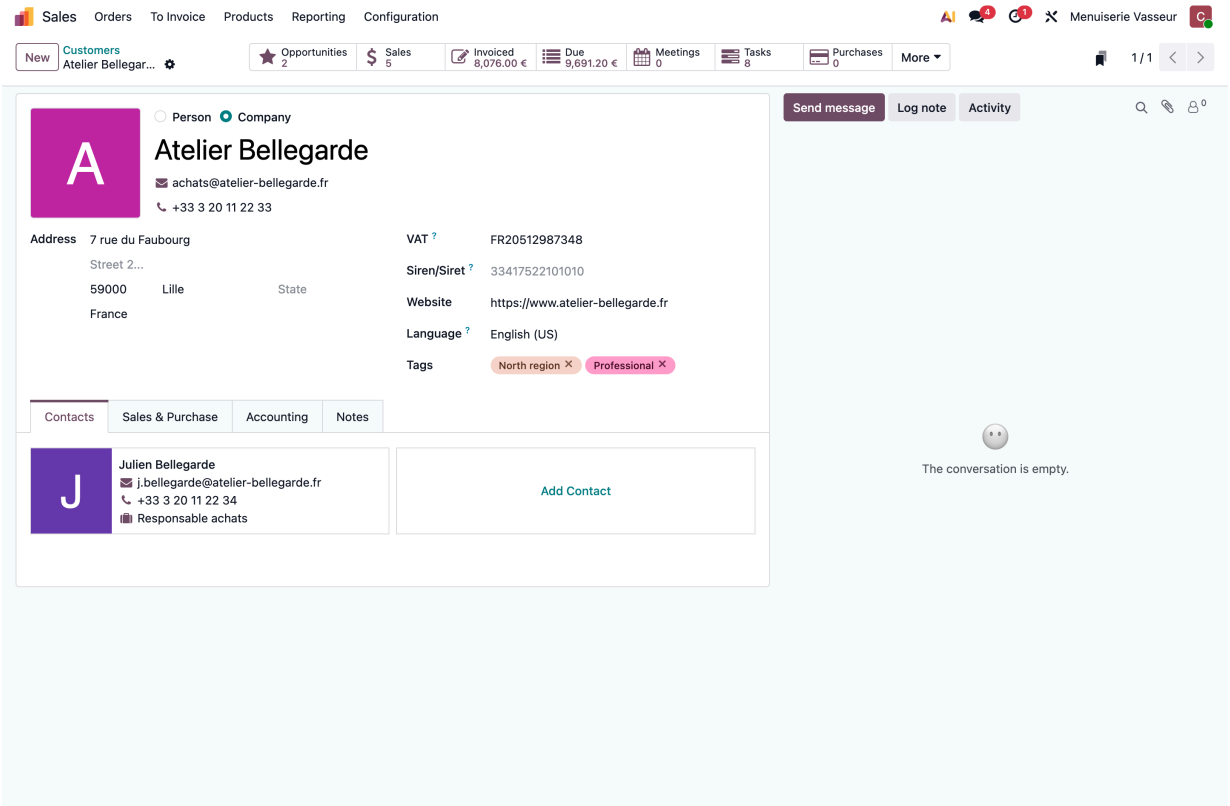


Figure 11.1: Contact record of type Company

11.1.3 Adding people and addresses

A company generally has several people and several addresses: head office, delivery, invoicing.

1. Open the company record.
2. Select the **Contacts** tab.
3. Click **Add Contact**.
4. In the **Create Contact** window, choose the nature of the entry:
   - **Contact**: a named person, with their job position and their direct details;
   - **Delivery**: a delivery address;
   - **Invoice**: an invoicing address;
   - **Other**: any other address.
5. Save.

Note

Delivery and invoice addresses are offered automatically when a quotation is created for this customer, which saves re-entering them and getting the wrong site.

11.1.4 Entering the commercial conditions

The **Sales & Purchase** tab of the contact record carries the settings that will be applied automatically to its documents. It is split into blocks, three of which concern selling.

Sales, what is carried over onto quotations and orders.

Field	What it determines
Salesperson	The salesperson responsible for the account, carried over onto quotations and used as an analysis criterion.
Payment Terms	The credit period granted, which computes the due date of invoices.

Field	What it determines
Payment Method	The usual means of payment: transfer, direct debit, cheque.
Pricelist	The applicable price list, which determines the prices offered on their quotations (see section 9.6.1).
Delivery Method	The carrier and shipping mode used by default.

Fiscal Information: the **Fiscal Position** adapts taxes to the customer's regime: exemption, reverse charge, rate applicable in their country. It is what automatically substitutes the right tax for the product's own. How it works is detailed in section 12.2.4.

Misc: the contact's internal **Reference**, the **Industry** for segmentation, and the link to a **Company** in a multi-company environment.

Tip

Fill in the **Fiscal Position**, the **Payment Terms** and the **Pricelist** as soon as the customer is created. These three fields remove the main cause of errors on documents: an unsuitable tax, a wrong due date or a price outside the scale, spotted after sending.

Note

These settings are default values, not constraints: they are carried over onto the document when it is created and remain editable line by line. Changing a contact's pricelist does not recompute quotations already drawn up.

Note

The **Inventory** block, visible only in developer mode, carries the **Customer Location** and the **Vendor Location**, which designate the virtual locations where goods enter and leave for this third party. They are filled in by default and are only changed in particular logistics setups (see chapter 16).

11.1.5 Merging duplicates

1. Open the contact list in list view.
2. Tick the records to be merged.
3. Click **Actions** then **Merge**.
4. Designate the record to keep and confirm.

The document history of the absorbed records is carried over onto the record kept.

11.2 Configuring sales

1. Open **Sales → Configuration → Settings**.
2. Enable the options you need:
   - **Quotation Templates**: pre-configures recurring offers;
   - **Default Quotation Validity**: number of days after which an offer expires;
   - **Online Signature**: lets the customer accept the quotation from their browser;
   - **Online Payment**: allows a down payment to be made on acceptance;
   - **Discounts**: enables the discount column on the lines;
   - **Margins**: displays the margin on quotations;
   - **Lock Confirmed Sales**: prevents modification after confirmation;
   - **Sale Warnings**: displays a message during entry for a given customer or product;
   - **Delivery Methods**: enables the computation and invoicing of shipping costs;
   - **Units of Measure & Packagings** and **Variants** depending on the catalogue.
3. Save.

11.2.1 Invoicing policy

It determines the quantity Odoo carries over onto the customer invoice: the one that was ordered, or the one that was actually delivered.

The **Invoicing Policy** field in the settings sets the value used when a product record is created : **Invoice what is ordered** or **Invoice what is delivered**. The setting that actually applies is the one carried by **each product**, in its **General Information** tab below the product type: **Ordered quantities** or **Delivered quantities**.

Watch out

Changing the general setting changes nothing on products already created. On an existing catalogue, the change is made product by product, or through an update import (see chapter 22).

Note

Invoicing on delivered quantities only makes sense for goods that pass through stock. For a service, invoicing on ordered quantities is the expected behaviour, unless time spent is being tracked.

Tip

It is the exact counterpart of section 10.1.4 on the purchase side: one drives what you invoice, the other what you pay. Setting them consistently on the same item avoids invoicing a customer on order what you pay the vendor on receipt.

11.3 Drawing up a quotation

11.3.1 Creating the quotation

1. Open **Sales → Orders → Quotations**.
2. Click **New**.
3. Select the **Customer**: their payment terms, their fiscal position and their pricelist apply automatically.
4. Check the **Invoice Address** and the **Delivery Address**, taken from the contact record and editable if delivery is made elsewhere.
5. Check the **Expiration**, beyond which the offer is no longer valid. The **Quotation Date** only appears in developer mode.
6. Add the product lines: quantity, unit price, discount if any.
7. Check the taxes and the total.
8. Save.

Note

Three links below the lines complete the entry. **Add a product** inserts an ordinary line; **Add a section** introduces a heading that groups the lines that follow; **Add a note** inserts a free comment, carried over onto the document sent to the customer.

The **Catalog** link opens the catalogue as tiles, where you build the offer by clicking on items rather than looking them up line by line. It is the quickest route on a quotation with many references.

Tip

The **Add shipping** button computes the shipping costs according to the delivery method chosen and adds them as a quotation line. It assumes the **Delivery Methods** option is enabled.

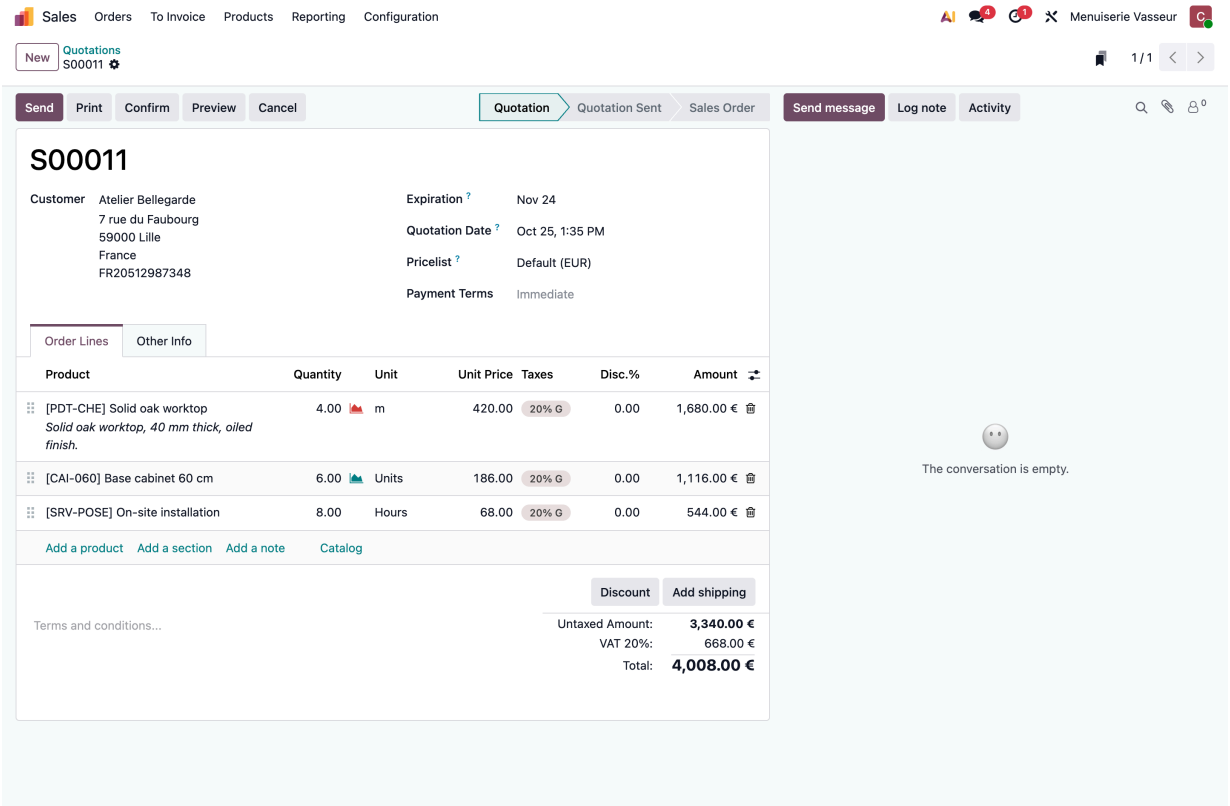


Figure 11.2: Quotation being written

Tip

Structure long quotations with section and note lines: clicking **Add a section** groups the lines under a heading, which makes the offer readable on the customer's side.

11.3.2 Using a quotation template

A template pre-fills a quotation with a set of items and conditions. It saves rebuilding recurring offers, and guarantees that the conditions announced are the same from one salesperson to the next.

1. Enable **Quotation Templates** in **Sales → Configuration → Settings**.
2. Open **Sales → Configuration → Sales Orders → Quotation Templates** and click **New**.
3. Name the template, then fill in:
   - the **Quotation Validity**, in days, which will compute the expiration date;
   - the **Confirmation Mail** sent automatically when the order is confirmed;
   - the **Invoicing Journal**, if sales of this kind are to be posted separately;
   - the **Online Signature** and the **Online Payment**, which take precedence over the general setting.
4. In the **Lines** tab, build the offer: **Add a product** for items, **Add a section** and **Add a note** to structure it.
5. In the **Terms & Conditions** tab, enter the text specific to this kind of offer.
6. Save.

On a new quotation, select the template: the lines, the conditions and the confirmation requirements apply. All that is left is to adjust quantities and prices to the case at hand.

Note

The template carries its own **Online Signature** and **Online Payment** settings. One kind of offer can therefore require a down payment while the others make do with a signature, without touching the general configuration.

Tip

The quantities entered in the template are starting points, not commitments. Put the most common quantities in rather than values of one: the salesperson then corrects the exceptions instead of entering everything.

11.3.3 Pricing with the quote calculator

Some offers are not built line by line: they are computed. A measurement to be converted into quantities, a scale with breaks, a formula combining area, difficulty coefficient and travel. The **quote calculator** answers this need by attaching a spreadsheet to the template.

1. On the quotation template, fill in the **Quote calculator** field with the spreadsheet to be used.
2. Build the pricing in it as you would in a spreadsheet: input cells, formulas, results.
3. Synchronise the result cells with the quotation fields, using the **Sync with field** command: the computed quantity will feed the corresponding order line.

On a quotation created from this template, a **Quote calculator** smart button opens a copy of the sheet, specific to that quotation. The salesperson enters the site data in it, and the computed quantities are carried over onto the lines.

What this changes

Pricing stops being done on the side (in a personal spreadsheet, on the corner of a table) and then re-entered in Odoo. It lives in the quotation, with it.

The consequences are concrete: the assumptions behind the calculation remain available afterwards, a revised offer is redone by changing one input, and the pricing method is the same for the whole team since it is carried by the template.

Note

Each quotation receives its own copy of the sheet. Modifying the template's calculator therefore has no effect on quotations already drawn up, which keep the pricing as it was done.

Watch out

The calculator belongs to the Enterprise edition. It also assumes that someone builds and maintains the spreadsheet: it is a business tool, to be entrusted to whoever masters the pricing method, not a setting to be switched on.

11.3.4 Offering options

An option is not a separate line: it is a *section* of the order flagged as optional. The lines it contains drop to zero and become editable by the customer in the online quotation.

1. Open the quotation and add a section in the **Order Lines** tab, using **Add a section**.
2. Place in it the extras and alternatives the customer can choose.
3. On the section row, open the three-dot menu at the end of the row and choose **Set Optional**.

The quantities of the lines in the section then drop to zero, and the quotation total no longer counts them. When the customer views the quotation online, they adjust those quantities themselves with the **+** and **–** buttons; what they keep feeds the order.

Note

A quotation template can carry the section ready-made: simply add a section to it and make it optional through the same menu. The section row menu offers **Unset Optional** to reverse this, which brings the quantities back to 1.

11.3.5 Enriching the quotation PDF

A quotation can be accompanied by commercial documents assembled automatically into the PDF: cover page, company presentation, datasheets for the products offered, terms and conditions.

1. Enable **PDF Quote builder** in **Sales → Configuration → Settings**.
2. Open **Sales → Configuration → Sales Orders → Headers/Footers**.
3. Click **New**.
4. Fill in the **Document Type**: **Header** to place the document before the proposal, **Footer** to place it after.
5. Upload the PDF into the **File Content (base64)** field.
6. Restrict the scope if needed through the **Quotation Templates**: the document will only be offered on quotations drawn up from those templates. Left empty, it is offered everywhere.
7. Tick **Add By Default** so that it is attached from the outset to every new quotation, without having to select it.
8. To attach a datasheet to a specific product, open the product record, click the **Documents** smart button, upload the PDF there and set **Sale : Visible at** to **Inside quote pdf**: it will only be offered on the quotation if that product appears on it.
9. On the quotation, open the dedicated tab to tick the documents to be included in the send.

Note

The **Headers/Footers** menu only exists once the option is enabled: ticking the box installs an additional module, which creates the menu. If it does not appear immediately, refresh the page.

The text areas of the PDFs uploaded can be fed with the quotation's data (customer name, amount, validity date, salesperson name) which personalises the document without editing the file on every send. In developer mode, the **Form Fields Included** field lists the areas detected in the file uploaded.

Tip

Keep **Add By Default** for documents meant to accompany every offer: terms and conditions, company presentation. A product brochure is better left optional, or it will weigh down quotations it adds nothing to.

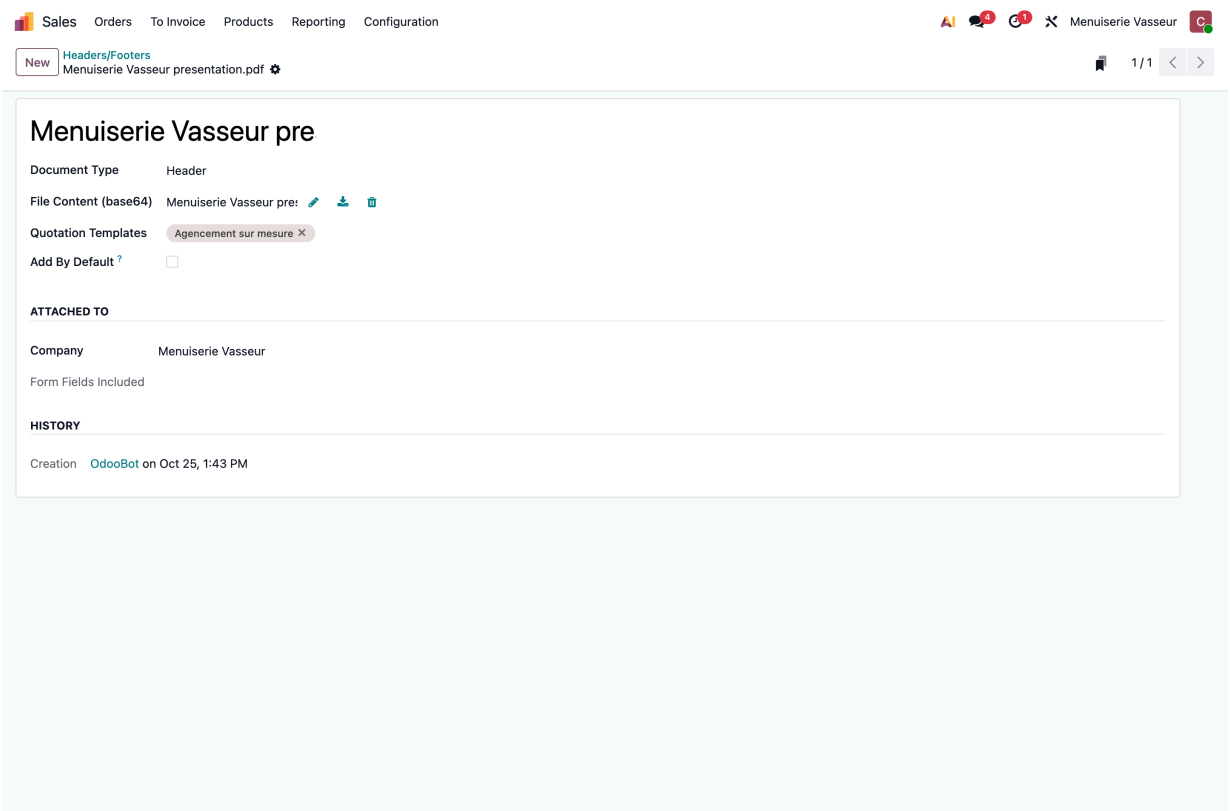


Figure 11.3: Configuring a quotation header

11.3.6 Sending the quotation

1. Click **Preview** to check the quotation as the customer will see it in their browser.
2. Click **Send**.
3. Check the recipient and the attached documents, personalise the message if needed.
4. Confirm the send.

The status of the quotation moves from **Quotation** to **Quotation Sent**, which distinguishes offers that have been sent from those still being prepared. The **Print** button generates the PDF without going through email.

11.3.7 Setting the terms and conditions

Terms and conditions are printed at the foot of quotations, orders and invoices. They are defined once for the whole company, in the accounting settings.

1. Open **Accounting → Configuration → Settings**.
2. Enable **Default Terms & Conditions**.
3. Choose the **Terms & Conditions format**:
   - **Add a Note**: the text is entered in the field that appears below and is printed in full at the foot of the documents;
   - **Add a link to a Web Page**: the documents carry a link to a page on your website, which the **Update Terms** button lets you write.
4. Save.

Note

The choice depends on the length of the text and on how it is used. Short terms are better shown on the document itself, which the customer keeps as it is. Long terms weigh the PDF down and lend themselves better to the link, which has the further advantage of being updatable without reissuing documents.

Watch out

The link points to the online version of the moment, not to the one in force at the time of signing. If your terms change, keep a record of the successive versions: it is the one accepted by the customer that binds them.

Tip

A quotation template can carry its own terms and conditions, in its dedicated tab (see section 11.3.2). They then replace the company text for offers drawn up from that template, useful when an activity falls under particular conditions.

11.4 Turning the quotation into an order

11.4.1 Confirmation by the salesperson

1. Open the accepted quotation.
2. Click **Confirm**.

The document moves to the **Sales Order** status and the delivery order is created automatically in **Inventory**.

Note

The order reference does not change: it is assigned when the quotation is created and follows it all the way to the invoice.

The documents it generates, on the other hand, carry their own reference: a delivery order is called `WH/OUT/01026`, for example. The link between the two is read in the **Source Document** field of the transfer, and in the smart button on the order.

The delivery order is created in the **Waiting** or **Ready** status depending on whether the goods are available or not. It carries the **Delivery Address** from the order, a **Scheduled Date** computed from the lead times, and for each line the **Demand** quantity next to the **Quantity** actually picked.

Note

A **Not Available** mention on a line means the quantity could not be reserved. The **Check Availability** button re-runs the reservation: it is used after a receipt, to attach to the delivery order the goods that have just come in.

Watch out

Confirming an order for which stock is insufficient blocks nothing: the delivery is created and stays pending. It is the replenishment screen that will surface the need (see section 10.5.1). So do not look for a warning message on confirmation, there is none.

11.4.2 Confirmation by the customer

The customer can accept the quotation themselves, from the link received by email, without the salesperson stepping in. Two requirements can be set for them, separately or together.

Set the default behaviour in **Sales → Configuration → Settings**:

- **Online Signature**: the customer draws their signature in the browser;
- **Online Payment**: the customer pays all or part of the amount;
- **Prepayment percentage**: the share to be paid for the order to be confirmed. At one hundred, the quotation is paid in full; at thirty, a 30% down payment is enough.

These settings set the value carried over onto new quotations. Each quotation then carries them in its **Other Info** tab, where they can be changed case by case: a small order can be confirmed on a signature alone, a large order can require a down payment.

What the customer sees. The quotation opens in their browser, with the detail of the lines and the attached documents. Depending on the requirements set, the acceptance button reads **Accept & Sign**, **Accept & Pay** or **Sign & Pay**.

What happens next. The quotation moves to the **Sales Order** status, the salesperson is notified in the chatter, which keeps a record of the agreement: the **Order signed by** message followed by the signatory's name, timestamped, with the signed PDF attached. When a payment is required, the transaction is attached to the order; the down payment gives rise to an invoice if the **Automatic Invoice** option is ticked in **Sales → Configuration → Settings**.

Why this is useful beyond convenience

Online acceptance shortens the decision time, there is no longer an order form to print, sign, scan and send back.

Above all it provides evidence: the signature is timestamped and attached to the document, the payment materialises the commitment. In case of a later dispute over the content of the order, it is the accepted quotation that prevails, with its lines and its terms and conditions as they stood at the moment of the agreement.

Watch out

An expired quotation can no longer be accepted online: past the **Expiration** date, the customer can neither sign nor pay. You then have to reopen the quotation and push the date back before sending them the link again.

Tip

Online payment requires at least one payment provider to be configured, and the down payment requires a dedicated account. Settle these two points before announcing the feature to the salespeople: a customer who runs into a payment that does not work is a customer who calls back.

11.4.3 Modifying a confirmed order

1. Open the order.
2. Modify the lines concerned, or add some.
3. Save.

Odoo passes the change on to logistics, without your having to touch the delivery order.

What becomes of the delivery order

- **The existing transfer is completed** if the goods have not yet left. An increased quantity, an added line: the movement joins the delivery order in progress, which remains a single one.
- **A second transfer is created** if the first can no longer take it, because it has already been validated, cancelled, or because the picking list has been printed. Both transfers then point to the same order.
- **A reduced quantity** decreases the corresponding movement, as long as it has not been validated. If the goods have already left, the order stays above what has been delivered and the difference is settled by a return.

Watch out

Printing the picking list closes the transfer to additions. This is deliberate: the warehouse worker works from a paper document, and a line that appeared after printing would never be picked. A change made after printing therefore always produces a second transfer, which has to be remembered and handled.

Note

Lines already delivered or invoiced cannot be edited freely: Odoo prevents the ordered quantity being brought below what has gone out, and you then have to go through a goods return. Below what has been invoiced, the change is accepted and recorded in the chatter; the difference is settled by a credit note.

Tip

Before any correction, look at the smart buttons at the top of the order: they show how many transfers and invoices are attached to it. Two transfers instead of one signal a change that has already been passed on, and save you creating a duplicate by trying to correct twice.

11.5 Delivering

11.5.1 Validating the delivery

1. Open the sales order.
2. Click the **Delivery** smart button.
3. Check the products and the quantities.
4. Click **Validate**.

In a multi-step warehouse, validate the picking first, then move on to the shipping step using the **Next Transfer** button.

11.5.2 Delivering partially

Enter the quantities actually shipped and validate, then accept the creation of the backorder. The delivery status of the order stays partial until the balance is shipped.

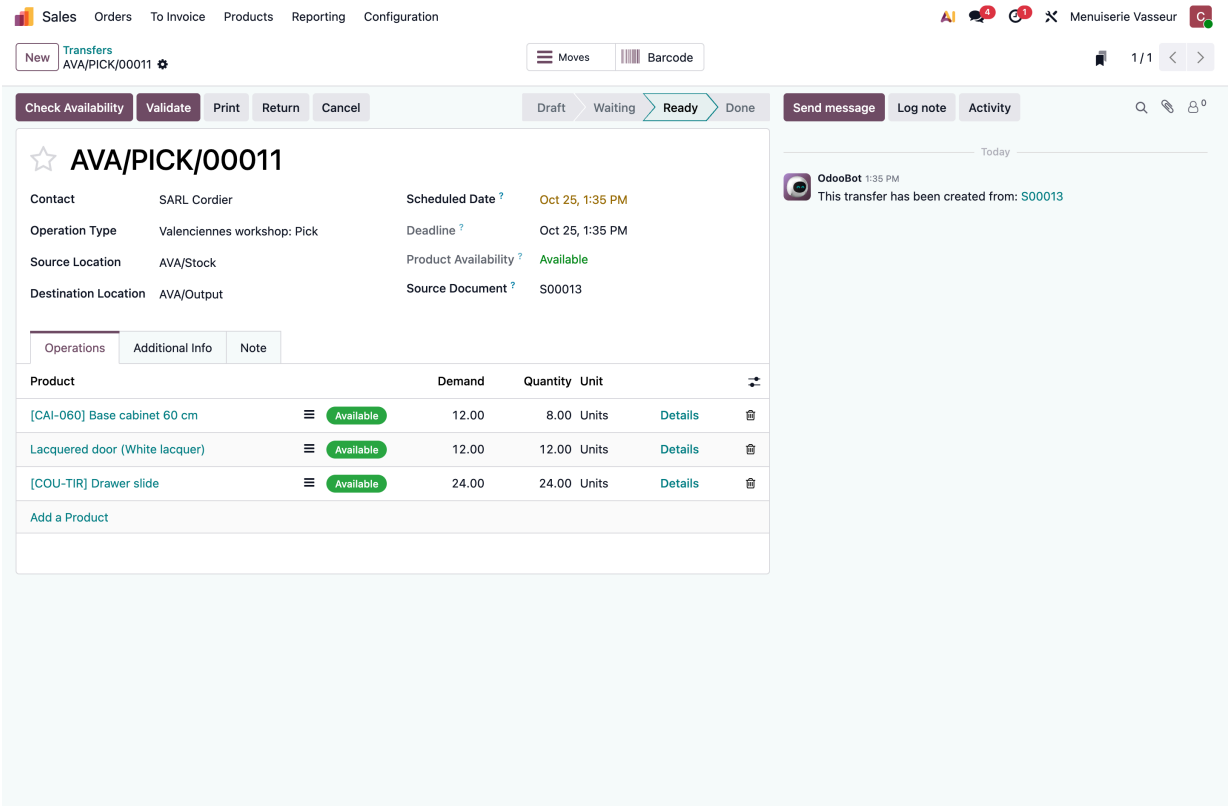


Figure 11.4: Delivery order attached to an order

11.6 Pricing and discounting

11.6.1 Pricelists

The pricelist assigned to the customer applies automatically to every new line. Building the lists is described in chapter 9.

11.6.2 Discounts

Three levels coexist:

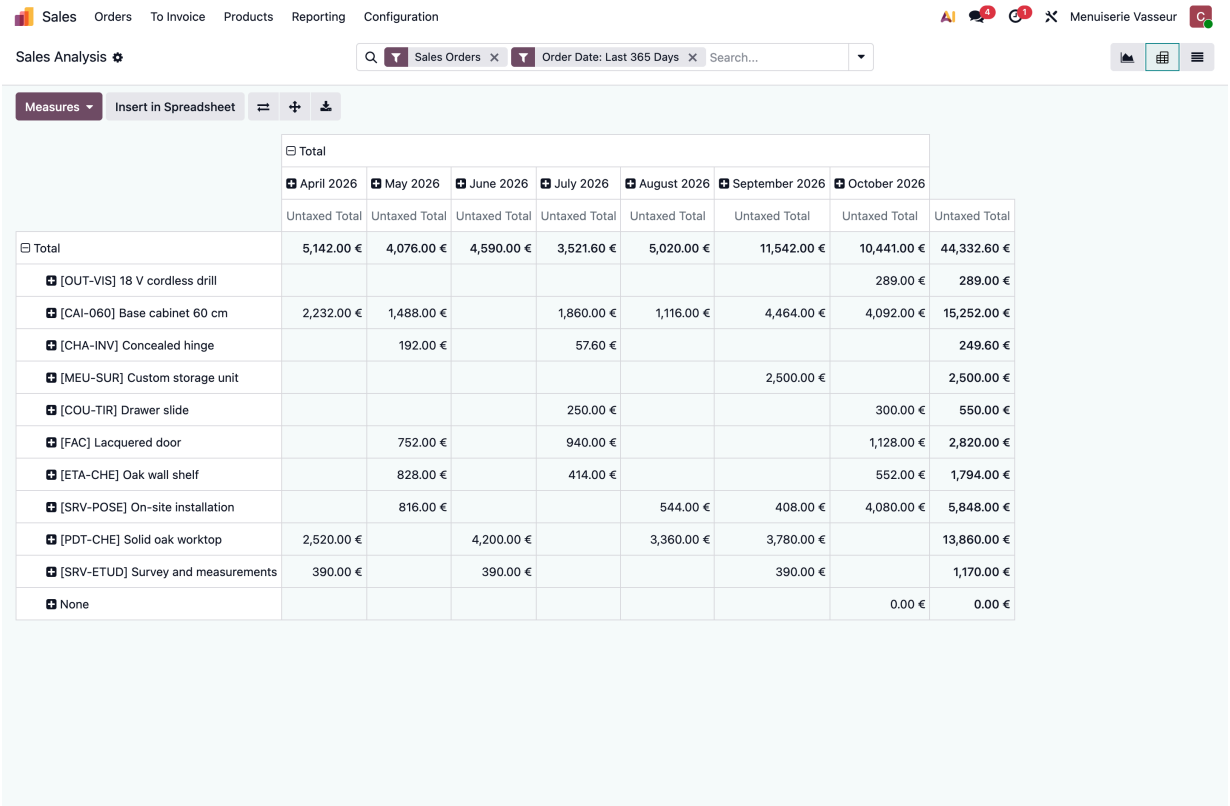
- **Line discount**: entered directly in the **Disc.%** column of a line.
- **Global discount**: applied to the total of the quotation.
- **Automatic discount**: coming from a pricelist rule, triggered by quantity, amount or product category.

Watch out

If the price displayed is not what you expect, check in this order: the customer's pricelist, the active rules of that list, today's date against the validity periods, then the document currency.

11.7 Analysing sales

1. Open **Sales → Reporting → Sales**.
2. Choose the **Measures** to display: revenue, quantities, margin.
3. Cross by customer, product, salesperson, team or period with **Group By**.
4. Save recurring analyses in **Favorites** to come back to them in one click.



	Total							
	April 2026	May 2026	June 2026	July 2026	August 2026	September 2026	October 2026	
	Untaxed Total	Untaxed Total	Untaxed Total	Untaxed Total	Untaxed Total	Untaxed Total	Untaxed Total	Untaxed Total
Total	5,142.00 €	4,076.00 €	4,590.00 €	3,521.60 €	5,020.00 €	11,542.00 €	10,441.00 €	44,332.60 €
[OUT-VIS] 18 V cordless drill							289.00 €	289.00 €
[CAI-060] Base cabinet 60 cm	2,232.00 €	1,488.00 €		1,860.00 €	1,116.00 €	4,464.00 €	4,092.00 €	15,252.00 €
[CHA-INV] Concealed hinge		192.00 €		57.60 €				249.60 €
[MEU-SUR] Custom storage unit						2,500.00 €		2,500.00 €
[COU-TIR] Drawer slide				250.00 €			300.00 €	550.00 €
[FAC] Lacquered door		752.00 €		940.00 €			1,128.00 €	2,820.00 €
[ETA-CHE] Oak wall shelf		828.00 €		414.00 €			552.00 €	1,794.00 €
[SRV-POSE] On-site installation		816.00 €			544.00 €	408.00 €	4,080.00 €	5,848.00 €
[PDT-CHE] Solid oak worktop	2,520.00 €		4,200.00 €		3,360.00 €	3,780.00 €		13,860.00 €
[SRV-ETUD] Survey and measurements	390.00 €		390.00 €			390.00 €		1,170.00 €
None							0.00 €	0.00 €

Figure 11.5: Sales analysis in a pivot table

11.8 Granting a discount

Discounts require the **Discounts** option to be enabled in the **Pricing** block of **Sales → Configuration → Settings**. Without it, neither the discount column nor the button described below appears.

11.8.1 Discounting one line

Enter a rate in the **Disc.%** column of the line concerned. This is the route to take when the discount only covers certain items.

11.8.2 Discounting the whole quotation

The **Discount** button, below the lines, opens a window where you enter a rate in the **Discount** field, then choose one of three options before clicking **Apply**.

Option	What it does to the document
On All Order Lines	Writes the rate into the **Disc.%** column of **every** line. No line is added: the quotation shows the discounted price item by item.
Global Discount	Adds discount lines at the end of the quotation carrying the rate in their label: for example `Discount 5.00%`. The item lines are not modified.
Fixed Amount	Does the same with a set amount instead of a percentage. The label of the line created is simply `Discount`.

Watch out

On All Order Lines overwrites the discounts already entered line by line, across the whole quotation, without asking for confirmation. A discount granted on a single item therefore disappears in favour of the overall rate.

Note

Global Discount and **Fixed Amount** do not necessarily create a single line. When the quotation contains items subject to different taxes, Odoo produces one discount line per tax regime, so that the discount is allocated correctly: each one then stating the taxes it relates to.

Note

The first use creates a **Discount** service product, used to carry the lines generated. A user who does not have the right to create products cannot trigger that creation: Odoo then invites them to go through line-by-line discounting, or to have an administrator step in once.

Tip

The choice is not commercially neutral. **On All Order Lines** dissolves the discount into the prices: the customer sees a price, not a gesture. **Global Discount** shows it explicitly at the end of the quotation, which highlights it , and makes it harder to carry over tacitly, since it reads as a one-off concession.

11.9 Example of a full cycle

From quotation to delivery

A customer asks for an offer for 10 units of product A and 5 units of product B.

1. **Draw up the quotation.** From **Sales → Orders → Quotations**, create the quotation, choose the customer, add the two lines. Prices come from their pricelist, taxes from their fiscal position.
2. **Grant the discount.** Click **Discount** below the lines, enter `5` in the **Discount** field, choose the **Global Discount** option, then **Apply**. A `Discount 5.00%` line is added at the end of the quotation; the item lines stay at full price.
3. **Attach the documentation.** On product A's record, a datasheet was uploaded through the **Documents** smart button: it is offered in the **Quote Builder** tab since that product appears on the quotation, and you tick it to add it to the PDF.
4. **Send.** Check through **Preview**, then **Send**. The quotation moves to the **Quotation Sent** status.
5. **The customer accepts.** From the link received, they click **Accept & Sign** and draw their signature. The order is confirmed without the salesperson stepping in, and the document keeps the signature, the signatory's name and the timestamp.
6. **The delivery is created.** A delivery order appears in **Inventory**, carrying its own reference and pointing to the order through its **Source Document**. It is **Ready** if stock is available, **Waiting** otherwise.
7. **The warehouse ships.** The picked quantities are entered, then the transfer is validated with **Validate**. Stock is decreased.
8. **Invoice.** From the order, create the invoice: it takes the ordered or delivered quantities depending on the product's invoicing policy (see section 11.2.1), discount included. What follows is covered in chapter 12.

11.10 Good practice

Selling effectively with Odoo

- Create templates for recurring offers rather than duplicating old quotations.
- Always fill in an expiration date: it creates the deadline for a decision.
- Use optional products to increase the basket without weighing down the main offer.
- Check availability before confirming an order with a fixed date.

- Record exchanges in the chatter of the document, not in personal emails: the salesperson's successor must be able to pick the file up.

CHAPTER 12

Invoicing

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER

- invoice an order in full, as a down payment, or on delivered quantities;
- send the invoice to the customer and record the payment;
- correct an invoice with a credit note and handle a refund;
- monitor receivables, chase overdue accounts and read the invoicing reports.

The **Invoicing** application handles customer and vendor invoices, payment tracking and the basic accounting data. This chapter covers the operational cycle; bookkeeping proper is covered in chapter 14.

12.1 Invoicing or Accounting?

Two applications carry the accounts, and the question comes up constantly: which one do you need? The answer depends less on those two names than on the edition you are running.

Invoicing is the foundation. It covers issuing and tracking invoices, the chart of accounts, the journals, the taxes, the journal entries and analytic accounting.

Accounting is an Enterprise edition application that sits on top of it.

What is really going on

In **Community**, only the foundation exists. The database holds the invoices and the journal entries, but neither assisted bank reconciliation, nor the financial statements, nor automatic follow-ups are available: the books are kept elsewhere, at the accountant's office.

In **Enterprise**, installing **Invoicing** is enough to get most of the accountant's toolkit. It comes along on its own: the reconciliation screen, the financial statements, customer follow-ups, fiscal years and lock dates.

The **Accounting** application then adds three things: fixed asset management, the tracking of assets and liabilities, and the intermediate **In Payment** status described further on. It also renames the application, which is why the menu paths sometimes start with **Invoicing** and sometimes with **Accounting**.

Community (the foundation alone)	Enterprise (as soon as Invoicing is installed)
– invoices, credit notes and payments, customers and vendors; – chart of accounts, journals, taxes, fiscal positions, currencies; – journal entries and analytic entries; – payment terms; – invoice analysis; – audit trail and securing of journal entries.	– everything above; – bank reconciliation screen and reconciliation models; – financial statements: balance sheet, profit and loss, general ledger, trial balances; – tax returns and their filing; – fiscal years and lock dates; – multi-level customer follow-ups; – digitisation of incoming bills.

Note

The **Accounting** application is therefore not the price of entry to accounting: on an Enterprise database, almost everything is already there with **Invoicing**. What it brings is fixed assets, loans, and the tracking of assets and liabilities.

Watch out

This chapter and chapter 14 are written for a database that has the **Accounting** application, whose menu paths start with that name. On an Enterprise database where only **Invoicing** is installed, read **Invoicing** at the first level: the rest of the path is the same, and the screens are identical.

On a **Community** database, the functions in the right-hand column do not exist: the passages that refer to them do not apply.

12.2 Setting up invoicing

12.2.1 Basic settings

Accounting → Configuration → Settings groups the options into thematic blocks. The list is shorter in the Community edition: the blocks specific to bookkeeping (default accounts, fiscal periods, analytic accounting, reports) assume the Enterprise edition modules.

Fiscal Localization: check that the package matches the country you operate in. It is what installed the chart of accounts, the taxes and the fiscal positions (see section 5.5).

Taxes: the block with the greatest structural effect.

Setting	What it governs
Default Taxes	The sales and purchase taxes carried automatically onto new products. They do not change existing product records.
Rounding Method	**Round per Tax** computes the VAT on the total for each rate; **Round per Line** rounds it line by line. The difference is a matter of pennies, but it must be consistent with what your accountant expects.
Cash Basis	Allows VAT to become chargeable on receipt of payment rather than on invoicing. A setting to settle with your accountant, according to the nature of the business.
Fiscal Country	The country your accounts fall under, which determines the returns available.

Currencies: the company's **Main Currency**, and **Automatic Currency Rates**, which keeps the rates up to date from an official source at the chosen interval.

Customer Invoices: the presentation and the wording.

Setting	What it adds
Default Terms & Conditions	The terms printed at the foot of the documents, as a note or as a link (see section 11.3.7).
Customer Addresses	Allows separate invoice and delivery addresses on the documents.
Sales Credit Limit	Warns during entry when a customer's outstanding balance exceeds the ceiling set for them.
Total amount of invoice in letters	Adds the amount written out in words, required in some countries.

Setting	What it adds
Taxes in company currency	Also shows the taxes in local currency on invoices issued in a foreign currency.
Default Incoterm	The incoterm carried onto export documents.

Customer Payments: **Invoice Online Payment** opens payment from the portal; **SEPA Direct Debit (SDD)** allows you to collect from customers who have signed a mandate; **QR Codes** adds a payment QR code to the invoices; **Batch Payments** groups several payments into one operation to simplify reconciliation.

Vendor Bills: automatic posting of the bills of a vendor whose extractions prove reliable several times in a row, and prediction of the product from the line label. **Vendor Payments**, a separate block: check printing and **SEPA Credit Transfer / ISO20022** to pay by bank file.

Digitization: **Document Digitization** extracts the data from bills received as PDF or scans by optical reading. The processing applies separately to vendor bills and to customer invoices, each with a choice between no digitisation, digitisation on demand, or automatic digitisation.

Note

Digitization consumes credits, deducted for every document processed. The *automatic* mode processes everything that comes in: keep it for steady volumes, and choose *on demand* for occasional use.

Accounting Firms mode: intended for accounting practices, it makes the document sequence editable and adds fast entry from the tax-inclusive total. There is no reason to enable it on a company database.

Tip

At start-up, enable only the **Fiscal Localization**, **Taxes** and **Currencies** blocks, plus the terms and conditions. The rest can be added as the need arises, and every option left aside is one screen fewer to explain to users.

12.2.2 Journals

Journals are the entry points for accounting records: sales, purchases, bank, cash, miscellaneous operations.

1. Open **Accounting → Configuration → Accounting → Journals**.
2. Check the journals created by the localisation.
3. Open the bank journal and fill in the account details.
4. Adjust the numbering sequences if your organisation requires it.

Note

Creating several sales journals lets you separate activities (trading and services, or two brands) with distinct numbering sequences, without multiplying companies.

12.2.3 The taxes

The fiscal localisation installs the country's taxes: for France, the VAT rates of 20%, 10%, 5.5% and 2.1%, on sales as well as purchases. So there is normally nothing to create.

Note

The rates quoted here are French. On another localisation the mechanism is identical, only the rates and the names of the taxes differ.

1. Open **Accounting → Configuration → Accounting → Taxes** to consult them.
2. For every tax in use, check:
   - the **Tax Type**: **Sales** or **Purchases**
   - the **Tax Computation**: **Percentage** in most cases, **Fixed** for a flat amount, **Group of Taxes** to combine several taxes;
   - the **Amount**, that is, the rate;
   - the **Tax Scope**, which restricts its use to **Goods** or to **Services**
   - the **Included in Price** option, if the catalogue prices are tax inclusive.

Note

The tax carried by a product is the one that applies by default. The **Default Taxes** in the settings only apply to products created afterwards: they do not change the existing catalogue.

Watch out

Do not change the rate of an existing tax when the law changes: the documents already issued refer to it and would be recomputed. Create a new tax, and archive the old one so that it is no longer offered.

12.2.4 Fiscal positions

The same sale is not taxed the same way depending on the customer: 20% for a French customer, exemption for a VAT-registered European customer, exemption again for an export outside the Union. The **fiscal position** is the mechanism that automates that adaptation.

What it does

A fiscal position is a mapping table. It says: *wherever the product carries this tax, apply that one instead*: and, if need be, *wherever the line would go to this account, post it to that one*.

The product therefore keeps a single tax, the one for the standard regime. It is the customer's fiscal position that substitutes it at the moment of entry, without the salesperson having to give it a thought.

The French localisation installs the usual positions: intra-Community regime, export outside the Union, French overseas territories, reverse charge. They can be consulted in **Accounting → Configuration → Accounting → Fiscal Positions**.

Reading a fiscal position. The **Taxes** smart button opens the list of the taxes attached to it. It reads line by line: the **Name** column carries the tax to apply, the **Replaces** column the ones it stands in for. A line reading `0% EX G` set against `20% G`, `10% G` and `5.5% G` therefore means: whatever the standard rate of the goods, apply the exemption.

The **Tax Scope** column distinguishes **Goods** from **Services**, which do not always fall under the same regime.

Assigning the position. Two ways:

- **by hand**, in the **Fiscal Information** block of the customer record (see section 11.1.4);
- **automatically**, by ticking **Detect Automatically** on the position and filling in the **Country** or the **Country Group** it applies to. Odoo then picks it from the customer's address. The **VAT required** option further makes it conditional on a VAT number being present on the record, which is what tells a VAT-registered business from a private individual.

Watch out

The intra-Community exemption assumes a valid VAT number. Without it, the sale falls under the domestic rate, and the VAT is yours to pay. The **VAT required** option sets that condition in Odoo; the validity check on the number itself is configured separately in the settings.

Note

A fiscal position can also carry **legal statements**, printed on the documents that use it: the reverse charge statement, or the reference to the article of the tax code on which the exemption rests. They are entered in its notes field.

Tip

Check the behaviour on a test quotation before going live: create a dummy customer in each regime (domestic, VAT-registered European, outside the Union) and check the tax that is proposed. A badly set position only shows up on the VAT return, several weeks later.

12.2.5 Invoice numbering

The numbering of accounting documents obeys legal rules: the numbers must run without gaps, without duplicates, and in chronological order. Odoo uses a particular mechanism for this, which is worth understanding before you try to configure it.

How Odoo numbers

The number is not drawn from a counter defined in advance. Odoo reads the number of the **last posted invoice in the same journal**, works out the format used, and increments it.

A document numbered `INV/2026/00042` therefore produces `INV/2026/00043`, and the counter starts again at `00001` when the year changes because the year is part of the format. Nothing is configured: the format is deduced from what came before.

Choosing the format therefore comes down to writing the first number by hand:

1. Create the first invoice of the journal and leave it in draft.
2. Correct its number in the field provided: for example `INV/2026/00001`.
3. Post it. All the following ones will take up that format.

This is the move to make **before the first real invoice**. Once the series has started, the format can only be changed by renumbering the documents already issued.

Correcting a series already started is possible as long as the mistake is recent, through a dedicated action.

1. Open the invoice list and tick the ones to renumber, they must belong to the same journal and be of the same kind.
2. Click **Actions** then **Resequence**.
3. Enter the **First New Sequence**: it is that number which sets the format of the whole series.
4. Choose the order: **Keep current order**, or **Reorder by accounting date** to restore the chronology.
5. Check **Preview Modifications**, which shows the old and the new number of each document, then **Confirm**.

Watch out

The **Resequence** action only appears in developer mode. This is not an oversight: renumbering posted documents is a sensitive operation, to be kept for correcting a configuration mistake spotted early. It is refused on a journal secured by hashing when a reordering by date is asked for.

Tip

Take the time to set the format on a test invoice, at the start of the project, rather than relying on this action. It gets you out of trouble, but renumbering invoices already sent to customers or to the accountant creates more confusion than it resolves.

Note

Whether the year or the month appears in the number governs the reset. A format `INV/2026/00001` starts again at one every year; `INV/2026/01/00001` every month; `INV00001` never starts again. Odoo announces what it has deduced with a **The sequence format has changed** message when you edit a number by hand.

Watch out

The number is assigned on **posting**, not on creation. A draft carries the **Draft** label, or its prospective number as a watermark, and consumes no number: it can be deleted without leaving a gap. Once posted, on the other hand, an invoice can no longer be deleted, it is cancelled by a credit note.

That is what guarantees the absence of gaps, and it is also why Odoo refuses to change the journal of a document that has already been numbered.

Note

Credit notes carry their **own series**, separate from that of the invoices: for example `RINV/2026/00001` alongside `INV/2026/00003`. This is the default behaviour of sales and purchase journals, governed by the journal's **Dedicated Credit Note Sequence** option. Unticking it numbers credit notes and invoices in a single continuous series.

Tip

One sales journal per activity gives separate series (trading and services, or two brands) without multiplying companies. Set these series before the first invoice: taking them back afterwards means renumbering posted documents, which is not possible.

Note

The journal's **Secure Posted Entries with Hash** option adds a digital fingerprint to every posted entry, chained to the previous one. Any later alteration becomes detectable. It is required by the regulations of several countries, France among them, and can no longer be disabled once active.

12.2.6 Payment terms

1. Open **Accounting → Configuration → Invoicing → Payment Terms**.
2. Create the terms matching your practice: immediate, 30 days, 30 days end of month, 45 days end of month, instalments in several payments.
3. Assign the default term to each customer on their contact record.

Watch out

Payment terms compute the due date, which governs the aged balance and the follow-ups. A badly configured term throws off the whole tracking of receivables.

12.2.7 Electronic invoicing

Sending invoices in electronic format relies on the Peppol network.

1. Open **Accounting → Configuration → Settings**.
2. In the section devoted to electronic invoicing, activate the service.
3. Fill in the company identifier and follow the registration procedure on the network.
4. Check, on the customer records, that the recipient's electronic identifier is filled in.

Note

The obligation to invoice electronically is rolled out in stages according to company size. Check the timetable that applies to your organisation and register early: it is not instantaneous.

12.3 Invoicing a customer

12.3.1 Invoicing from an order

1. Open the delivered sales order.
2. Click **Create Invoice**.
3. Choose the mode:
   - **Regular invoice**: invoices the balance still due;
   - **Down payment (percentage)**: invoices a share of the total;
   - **Down payment (fixed amount)**: invoices a set sum.
4. Click **Create Draft**.
5. Check the lines, the date and the due date.
6. Click **Confirm**.

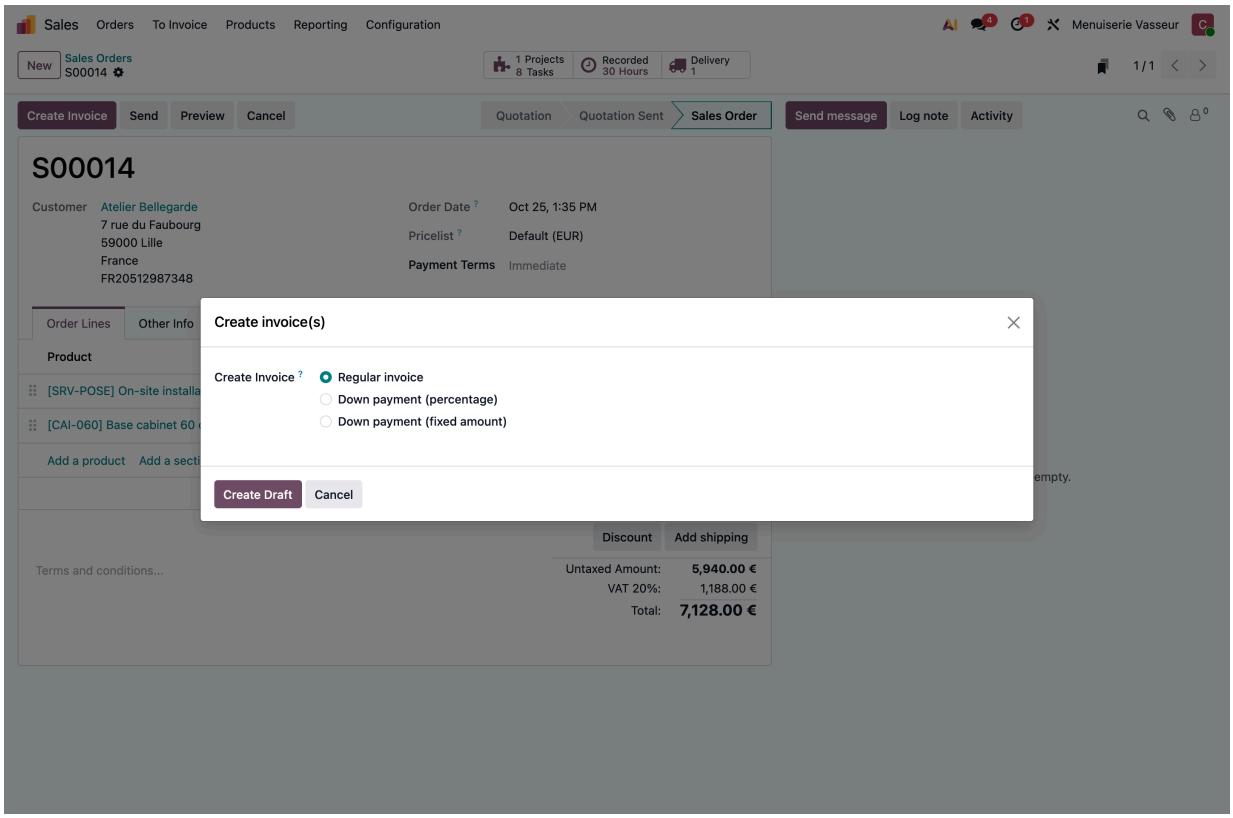


Figure 12.1: Invoice creation wizard from an order

Note

What the invoice takes up (ordered quantities or delivered quantities) depends on the invoicing policy set on each product. On a partly delivered order, that setting changes the amount invoiced.

12.3.2 Creating an invoice manually

1. Open **Accounting → Customers → Invoices**.

2. Click **New**.
3. Select the customer, the invoice date and the payment terms.
4. Add the product or service lines.
5. Check the taxes and the income accounts.
6. Click **Confirm**.

Watch out

A confirmed invoice receives its final number and can no longer be edited. To correct a mistake you have to reset it to draft, which remains possible even on a paid invoice or one already sent over the Peppol network, but not at all once the document carries a digital fingerprint (journal secured by hashing) or has been sent through the French approved platform; otherwise, issue a credit note. An invoice reset to draft after a Peppol sending is not sent a second time over that network.

12.3.3 Invoicing several orders together

1. Open **Sales → To Invoice → Orders to Invoice**.
2. Select the orders belonging to the same customer.
3. Click the **Create Invoices** button that appears at the top of the list.
4. Choose the grouping you want, then validate.

Tip

Grouped invoicing lightens the administrative load on customers who order frequently, and reduces by as much the number of payments to reconcile.

12.3.4 Sending the invoice

1. Open the confirmed invoice.
2. Click **Send**.
3. Choose how it is to be sent: email, PDF download, or transmission over the electronic invoicing network where it is configured.
4. Check the recipient and the message, then validate.

Note

On a brand-new database, the very first send does not open the window you expect but **Configure your document layout**. Odoo insists that you set the appearance of the documents before dispatching one: logo, colours, layout (see section 5.2). Once the layout is saved, the question does not come up again. The case only concerns administrators: an ordinary user goes straight to the sending window.

The send is logged in the invoice's message thread, which provides proof of transmission should it be disputed.

12.4 Collecting payment

12.4.1 Recording a payment

1. Open the invoice.
2. Click **Pay**.
3. Fill in the amount (the balance due is offered by default), the date, the **Journal** and the payment method.
4. Add a reference that will let you identify the payment on the bank statement.
5. Validate.

The invoice moves to the **In Payment** status, then to **Paid** once the payment has been reconciled.

Note

This intermediate state only exists if the **Accounting** application is installed. With **Invoicing** alone, the invoice goes straight to **Paid** as soon as the payment is entered, and the distinction described below does not arise.

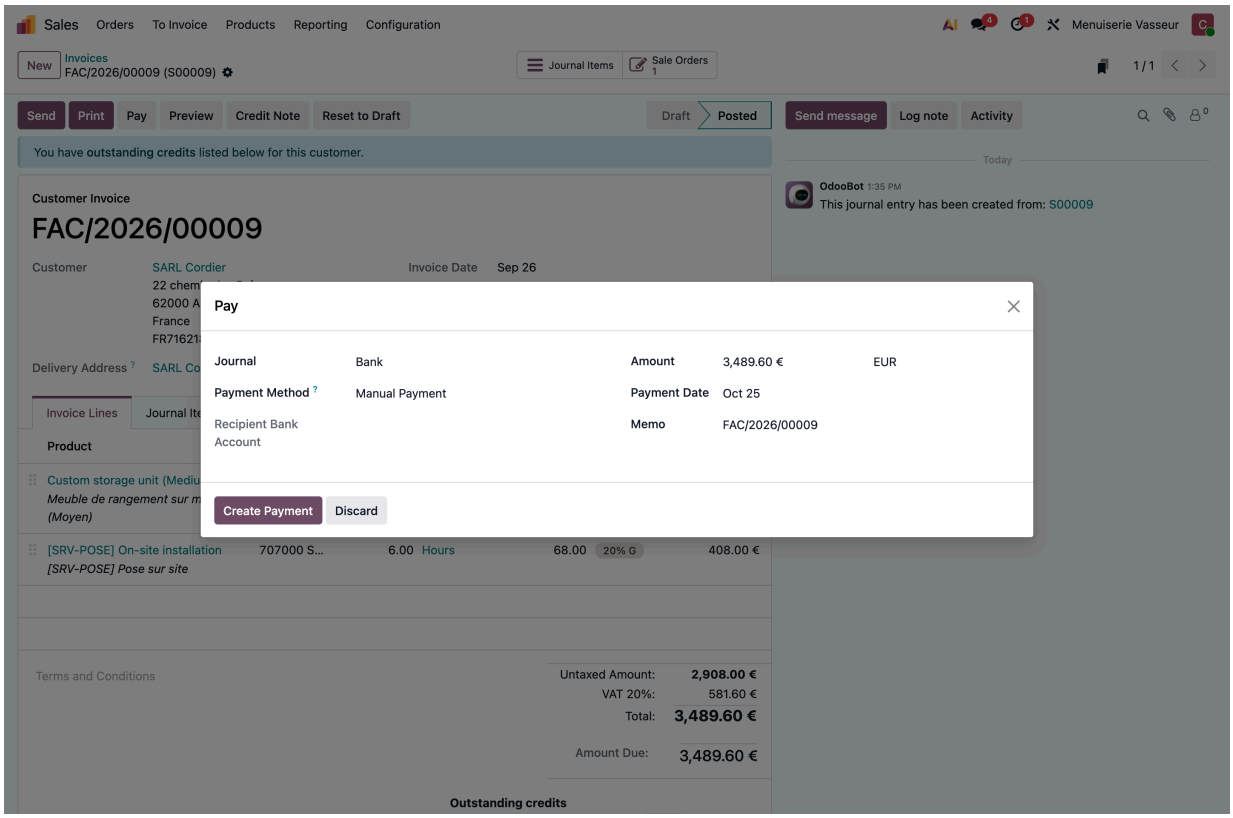


Figure 12.2: Recording a customer payment

Reconciliation, in two words

Recording a payment in Odoo means declaring that a payment has taken place. Nothing yet proves that it arrived: the declaration comes from you, not from the bank.

Reconciliation is the operation that matches that declaration with the corresponding line on the bank statement. It sets what you entered against what the bank actually recorded, and it is what moves the invoice to **Paid**.

The procedure is described in section 14.3. What matters at this stage is that it is indispensable: without it, an invoice stays **In Payment** indefinitely, and the balance of the bank account in Odoo corresponds to nothing verifiable.

Note

The distinction between **In Payment** and **Paid** is therefore not a presentation detail: the first status means the payment has been *entered*, the second that it has been *confirmed by the bank*. Only the second attests that the money has come in.

12.4.2 Partial payments

Enter the amount actually received and validate. The invoice moves to partially paid and shows the balance remaining. As many partial payments as necessary can be recorded.

12.4.3 Handling a down payment

The cycle of an order with a down payment runs as follows:

1. Invoice the down payment from the order, as a percentage or a fixed amount.
2. Send the down payment invoice and record its payment.
3. Deliver.
4. Invoice the balance: Odoo automatically deducts the down payment already invoiced on the final invoice.
5. Record the payment of the balance.

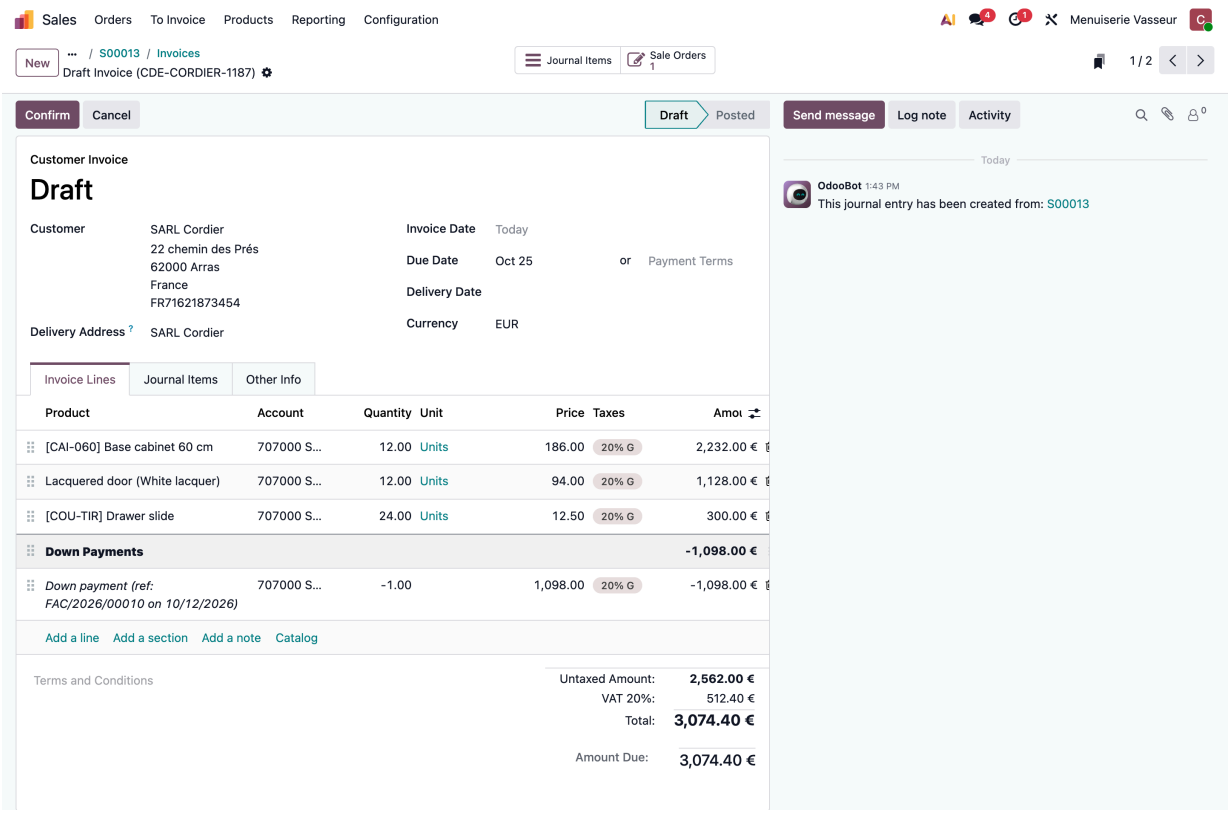


Figure 12.3: Final invoice with the down payment deducted

Watch out

Down payments pass through a dedicated partner account: advances and down payments received. The matching between the down payment invoice, its payment and the final invoice is done on the reconciliation screen. The advances account is cleared as soon as the final invoice is posted, the two entries cancelling each other out; what remains to be done is matching the items against one another.

12.5 Entering vendor bills

12.5.1 From a purchase order

The procedure is described in chapter 10: the line-by-line check is done at the moment the bill is created, from the purchase order.

12.5.2 From a document received

This is the quickest route, and the one that limits keying errors: the vendor's document is loaded into Odoo, which extracts the data from it by optical reading.

Getting the document in. Three ways:

- **drop it** from **Accounting → Vendors → Bills** with the upload button, several files at a time;
- **email it** to a dedicated address attached to the purchase journal (see below);
- **photograph it** from the mobile application.

Odoo creates a draft bill for each document, with the file attached.

Extraction. Depending on the mode chosen in the settings, it is launched automatically or on demand with the **Digitize document** button. Odoo then fills in the vendor, the dates, the amounts and the taxes, and highlights the extracted values on the form.

1. Check every recognised value, in particular the vendor, the total and the VAT.
2. Correct what needs correcting: the corrections feed the learning and improve later extractions for that same vendor.
3. Check or complete the expense accounts on the lines.
4. Click **Confirm**.

Watch out

Digitization does not do away with checking. It offers a reading, often right, never guaranteed: a misread amount goes into the accounts exactly as if it had been keyed in. Checking the total and the VAT rate remains the accountant's business.

Note

Each document processed consumes a credit. The **Digitize automatically** mode processes everything that comes in, including documents that should not have been; **Digitize on demand only** leaves you in control. By default, Odoo digitises vendor bills automatically and waits to be asked for customer invoices.

12.5.3 Receiving bills by email

A journal can have its own receiving address. Any document sent to it becomes a draft bill, with no user having to step in.

1. Open **Accounting → Configuration → Accounting → Journals** and select the purchase journal.
2. Fill in the **Email Alias**: the part before the at sign: for example `bills`.
3. Choose the **Alias Domain** to its right, which completes the address.
4. Save.

Bills sent to that address now land in the journal, ready to be digitised.

Note

The pair of fields only appears on the journal if an alias domain is configured on the database. On a database hosted by Odoo it is there from the start; on a standalone installation it has to be declared beforehand, along with incoming mail handling.

Watch out

An email carrying several bills gives as many draft bills: Odoo splits the attachments, one PDF per bill. Only files of different types stay together on the same bill, for example a PDF and the XML that comes with it.

Only PDF and XML files are interpreted. Other formats (images, spreadsheets) are attached to the document without being read.

Tip

Give this address to your vendors, or set a forwarding rule from the accounts mailbox. Bills then come in by themselves, and the work is reduced to checking them and matching them to the purchase order.

12.5.4 Direct entry

1. Open **Accounting** → **Vendors** → **Bills**.
2. Click **New**.
3. Select the vendor.
4. Fill in the **Reference** (the vendor's invoice number) and the date of the document.
5. Enter the lines, checking the expense accounts and the taxes.
6. Confirm.

Note

Attaching the PDF received to the accounting document, by dragging and dropping it into the message thread, constitutes the supporting document for the expense and saves searching should you be audited.

12.5.5 Paying

1. Open the confirmed vendor bill.
2. Click **Pay**.
3. Fill in the amount, the date, the bank journal and the payment method.
4. Validate.

To prepare several payments at once, go through **Accounting** → **Vendors** → **Payments**.

12.6 Correcting: credit notes and refunds

12.6.1 Issuing a credit note

1. Open the invoice to be corrected.
2. Click **Credit Note**.
3. Fill in the **Reason displayed on Credit Note**, which will appear on the document.
4. Check the **Journal** and the **Reversal date**.
5. Choose the appropriate option:
   - **Reverse**, simply to cancel the invoice;
   - **Reverse and Create Invoice**, to correct it and reissue straight away.
6. Confirm the credit note obtained.

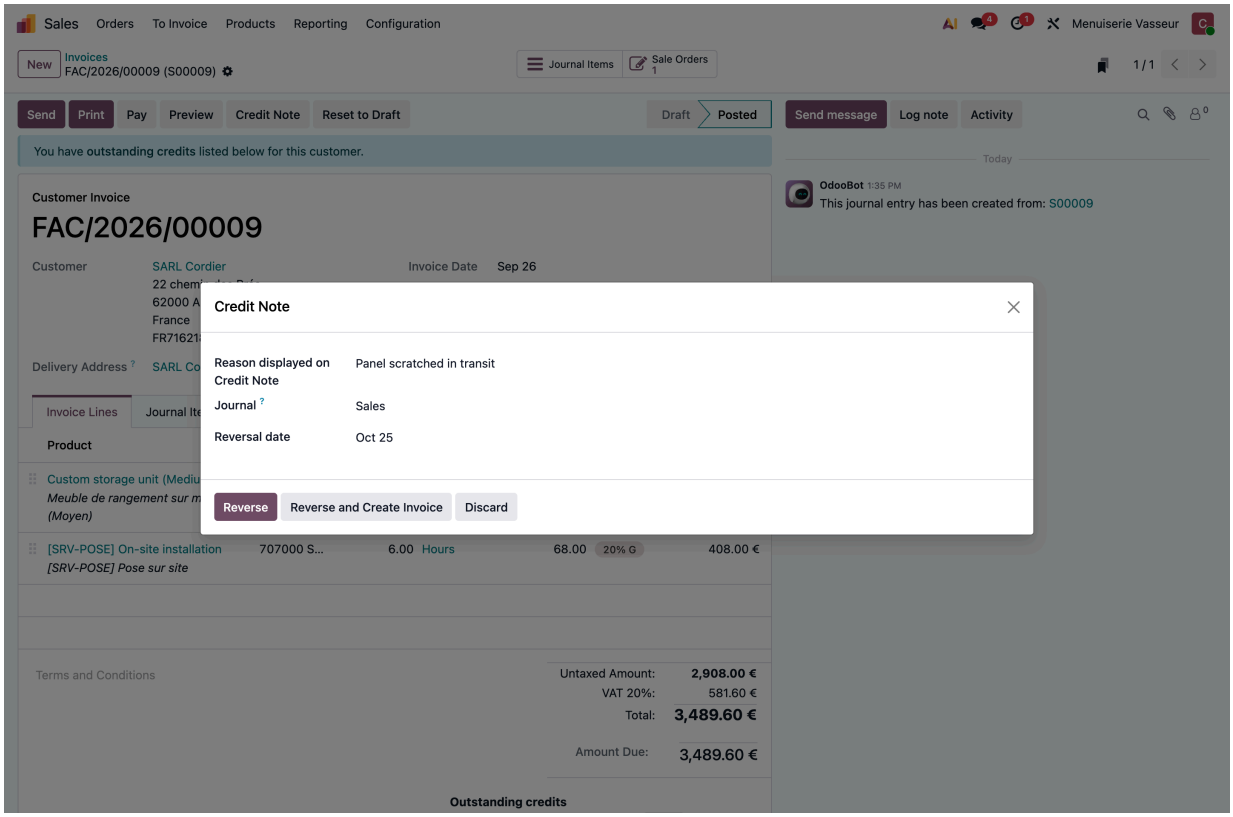


Figure 12.4: Creating a credit note

12.6.2 Settling the credit note

A posted credit note is a debt owed to the customer. Three routes extinguish it.

Refund it.

1. Open the posted, unsettled credit note.
2. Click **Pay**.
3. Select the bank journal and the amount refunded.
4. Validate.

Note

The **Pay** button disappears as soon as the credit note is settled. On a credit note that is already reconciled (the case of an invoice reversed before any payment) it therefore never appears: there is nothing to refund.

It also changes appearance according to the situation: highlighted when refunding is the only way out, discreet when a credit is available to be applied. Odoo thus steers you towards applying it, which avoids a bank movement.

Apply it to an invoice. This is the most frequent case: rather than refunding, the credit note is deducted from another invoice for the same customer.

1. Open the invoice the credit note is to be applied to.
2. In the banner announcing outstanding credits, click **Add** beside the credit note you want.
3. The amount comes off the **Amount Due**.

Let it apply itself to the original. When the credit note reverses an unpaid invoice, Odoo reconciles it by itself with that invoice: the credit note moves to **Paid** and the invoice to **Reversed** without any bank movement taking place, and the **Amount Due** falls to zero. When the invoice had already been paid, the credit note remains owed to the customer: it is refunded or applied as above.

Note

A credit note marked **Paid** therefore does not mean that a refund has been made. It means that the debt is extinguished: by a transfer, by application to an invoice, or by reconciliation with the original invoice. The detail can be read in the message thread and in the **Paid on** line.

Tip

Prefer application to refunding when the commercial relationship carries on: it avoids a bank movement, a statement line to reconcile, and a processing time at the customer's end.

12.7 Monitoring receivables

12.7.1 Spotting unpaid invoices

1. Open **Accounting** → **Customers** → **Invoices**.
2. Apply the filter matching what you are looking for.

Filter	What it keeps
To pay	Invoices unpaid or partly paid, overdue or not. This is the customer exposure in the broad sense.
In payment	Invoices for which a payment has been recorded but not yet reconciled against the bank statement. They are neither to be chased, nor quite settled.
Overdue	Invoices whose due date has passed. This is the filter for follow-ups.

1. Group by **Partner** to measure the overall exposure on each account.
2. Sort by **Due Date** to deal with the oldest arrears first.

Note

To pay and **Overdue** do not overlap: an invoice at thirty days issued yesterday is to be paid without being overdue. To chase, take **Overdue** to measure the receivables position, take **To pay**.

Tip

An invoice that sits in **In payment** signals a payment recorded with no bank counterpart: a payment entered twice, or a reconciliation forgotten. Go through this list at each month end: it is the best detector of cash anomalies (see section 14.3).

12.7.2 Chasing

Define the levels, once and for all.

1. Open **Accounting** → **Configuration** → **Invoicing** → **Follow-up Levels**.
2. Create the successive levels (polite reminder, firm chase, formal notice) filling in for each of them:
   - the **Due Days**, the number of days after the due date that triggers this level;
   - the email template used, and the **Attach Invoices** option to attach the documents concerned;
   - possibly an SMS, and **Schedule Activity** so that a reminder appears in the tasks of the person responsible.

Tip

Three levels are enough in most cases: a reminder after a few days, a firm chase at fifteen days, a formal notice at thirty. Space them far enough apart to leave time for a payment already on its way.

Set the handling per customer, in the **Accounting** tab of their record: the tab is called **Invoicing** when only that application is installed.

Field	What it governs
Follow-up Status	Computed: **No action needed**, **In need of action** when a level is reached, or **With overdue invoices** if invoices are past due without a level being owed yet.
Reminders	**Automatic** sends the follow-ups without any intervention; **Manual** prepares them and waits for validation.
Next reminder	A date before which no follow-up will go out. This is the field to fill in when a customer announces a payment: it suspends the follow-ups until the agreed date.
Responsible	The user in charge of collection on this account.

A banner above shows the progress through the levels, and the **Due** smart button gives the amount to collect.

Send the follow-up. The **Send** link, beside the reminders, triggers the level reached: email, SMS or activity, according to what is set on that level.

Note

Follow-up handling belongs to the Enterprise edition, where it is available as soon as **Invoicing** is installed. In Community there are neither levels nor a follow-up report: monitoring is done from the invoice list, filtered on **Overdue**.

Watch out

The **Automatic** mode sends the follow-ups by itself, including to a customer with whom a negotiation is under way. Fill in the **Next reminder** as soon as an extension is granted, or switch that customer to **Manual**: a formal notice sent by mistake costs more than the arrears it pursues.

12.8 Invoicing reports

The **Reporting** menu of **Accounting** groups the reports by family. Four of them bear directly on the monitoring of invoicing.

Report	What it shows
Invoice Analysis	Turnover invoiced, which can be broken down by customer, product, salesperson or period. This is the commercial steering report.
Aged Receivable	Receivables classified by how long they have been overdue, in columns of thirty days. This is the collection report.
Aged Payable	Payables classified the same way. This is the report that prepares payment decisions.
Partner Ledger	The detail of the movements on one third party, invoice by invoice and payment by payment. This is the report to open when a customer disputes a balance.

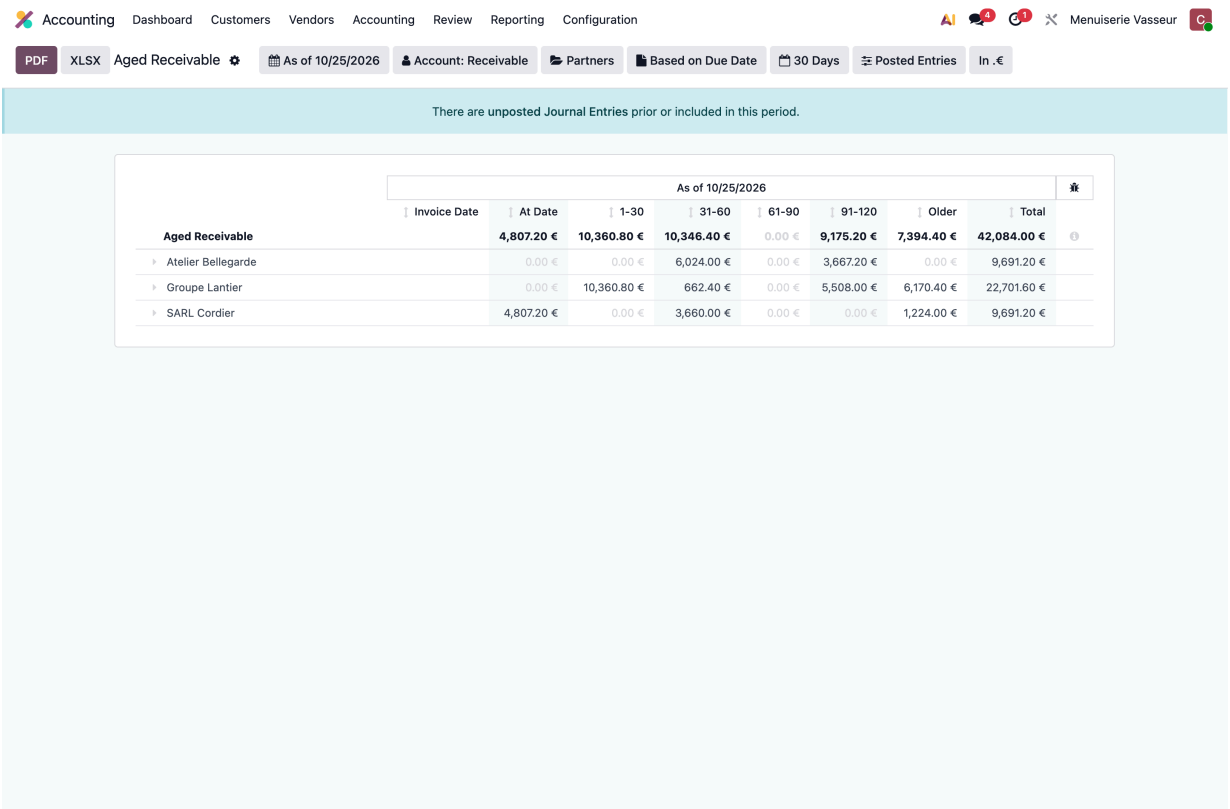


Figure 12.5: Aged Receivable

Note

These reports belong to the Enterprise edition, where they are available as soon as **Invoicing** is installed: with the exception of **Invoice Analysis**, which is present in Community. Without them, receivables are monitored from the invoice list, filtered on **Overdue** and sorted by due date.

Tip

Aged Receivable is the one report to look at every week if you only look at one. It turns an abstract overall exposure into a list of named actions, and reads in a minute.

Note

The other families in the menu belong to bookkeeping and are covered in chapter 14: the **Statement Reports** (balance sheet, profit and loss, cash flow statement), the **Ledgers**, and the **Taxes & Fiscal** reports.

12.9 Resolving common situations

The invoice is not in the right state

1. Check its current status: draft, posted, in payment, paid.
2. A draft invoice is confirmed with **Confirm**.
3. A confirmed invoice to be cancelled goes through a credit note.
4. An invoice showing **in payment** when the money has been received is waiting for its bank reconciliation.
5. When in doubt, look at the message thread: it retraces every action carried out.

The taxes are wrong

1. Check the customer's fiscal position: domestic, intra-Community, export, exempt.
2. Check the taxes set on the products concerned.
3. If the invoice is in draft, correct the taxes directly on the lines.
4. If it is confirmed, issue a credit note and reissue a correct invoice.

12.10 A complete cycle, worked through

From the sale to the payment

1. An order for 20 units at €100 is confirmed.
2. The products are delivered and the delivery note validated.
3. The invoice is generated from the order, for €2,000 excluding tax, and confirmed.
4. It is sent to the customer by email.
5. Fifteen days later, the customer pays by bank transfer; the payment is recorded.
6. The transfer appears on the bank statement. There it is reconciled with the payment entered at the previous step, and the invoice moves to **Paid**.

CHAPTER 13

French electronic invoicing

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER

- place your company on the timetable of the reform;
- activate electronic invoicing and register the company on the approved platform;
- check that a customer is reachable before sending them an invoice;
- issue and receive invoices through the platform;
- follow the statuses, deal with refusals and file the e-reporting.

Watch out

This chapter covers the French electronic invoicing reform. It applies to companies established in France and has no equivalent in other jurisdictions.

The French electronic invoicing reform requires invoices between businesses to travel through an **approved platform**, and transaction data to be filed with the tax administration. Odoo operates its own approved platform: the company registers on it from its own database, with no further intermediary.

13.1 What the reform requires

13.1.1 The timetable

Deadline	Obligation
1 September 2026	**Every** VAT-registered business must be able to **receive** an electronic invoice, whatever its size. Large and mid-sized companies must in addition **issue** all their invoices in electronic format.
1 September 2027	Small and medium-sized enterprises and micro-enterprises must in turn **issue** in electronic format.

Note

The distinction matters: **receiving** concerns everybody from the first deadline. A company that does not yet issue electronically must nevertheless be reachable, on pain of no longer receiving its vendors' invoices.

13.1.2 Two separate obligations

Scheme	Purpose
Electronic invoicing	The exchange of invoices between VAT-registered businesses, platform to platform, in a structured format.
E-reporting	The filing with the administration of transaction data that falls outside the previous channel: sales to private individuals, transactions with other countries.

Watch out

Emailing an invoice as a PDF does not satisfy the obligation, even if the document is perfectly compliant in substance. It is the channel of transmission that is regulated.

13.1.3 Approved platform and compatible solution

Two qualifications coexist, and they are frequently confused.

Qualification	What it covers
Approved platform	An operator registered by the administration, authorised to issue, transmit and receive electronic invoices. The registration is granted for three years, renewable.
Compatible solution	A tool that is not registered, but that offers the expected functions and connects to at least one approved platform.

Odoo appears on the list of registered operators published by the administration, its registration number having been granted on 15 April 2026.

Note

Registration is temporary and the list changes. Before a project, check the current status on the official list published by the tax administration, the only authoritative source. It is issued as downloadable files, in two tables: the operators meeting all the conditions, and those still awaiting the interoperability tests.

13.2 Installing the module

French electronic invoicing rests on a dedicated module, installed automatically with the French fiscal localisation. On a database where it does not appear yet, it is installed as follows:

1. Open **Apps**.
2. Click **Update Apps List**, then confirm: without this step, a recently published module does not appear in the list.
3. Remove the **Apps** filter and search for `pdp`.
4. On the **France - E-Invoicing (Approved Platform)** tile, click **Activate**.

Note

The module builds on the European network: it declares it among its dependencies and installs it along with itself. There is therefore nothing to uninstall beforehand. What is exclusive is the *connection*: a company is connected either to the approved platform, or to the European network alone, never to both.

13.3 Activating electronic invoicing

1. Check that the French fiscal localisation is installed (see section 5.5).
2. Check that the company record carries its **SIREN** and its full address: this information determines whether registration will go through.
3. Open **Accounting → Configuration → Settings**.
4. In the **Approved Platform** section, click **Activate Electronic Invoicing**.

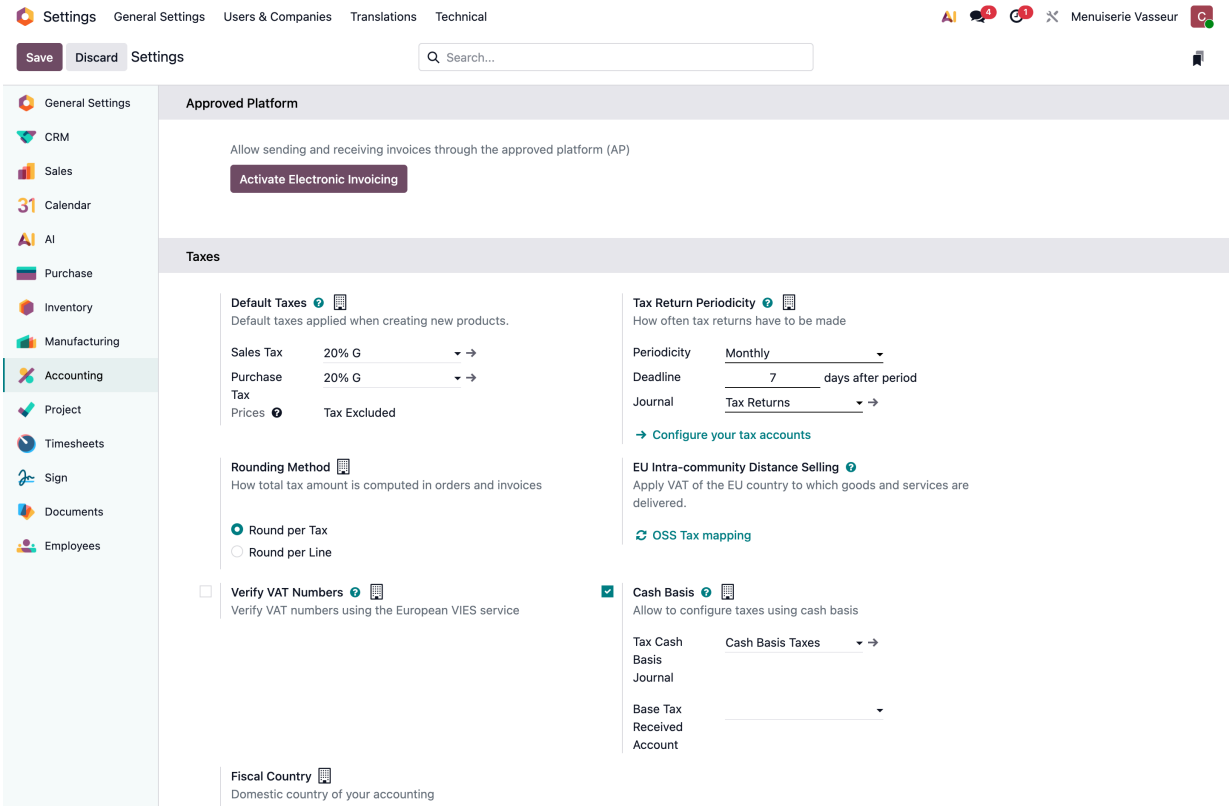


Figure 13.1: The approved platform settings section

13.4 Registering on the approved platform

Registration attaches the company to the platform and enters it in the directory, where its business partners will find it.

1. From the settings section, launch the registration.
2. Fill in the company's **Identifier** and the **Email**, which will receive the platform's notifications.
3. Click **Authenticate**: Odoo opens the identity verification portal in a new tab, operated by a qualified signature provider. The **Open link** button takes you back to it.
4. On that portal, name the person who will sign, receive the verification code at the address given, then upload the signatory's identity document and sign the certificate.
5. Once the identity has been verified, registration is validated automatically. If the identifier is already attached to another platform in the directory, Odoo asks for explicit confirmation before migrating it.
6. The **Refresh** button lets you follow progress for as long as the platform has not confirmed.

The identifier always begins with the SIREN. What follows is optional, and serves to designate a reception point finer than a legal entity.

Form	What it designates
`SIREN`	The legal entity. Nine digits. This is the common form, and the one Odoo suggests.
`SIREN_SIRET`	A specific establishment. The SIRET is fourteen digits.
`SIREN_SIRET_RoutingCode`	A department inside an establishment.
`SIREN_AddressingSuffix`	A department inside the entity, without going through the establishment.

Note

The last two forms serve organisations that want to route their bills to distinct departments: purchasing on one side, maintenance on the other, for instance. They are only worth using if your vendors actually address their bills at that level of detail. In the common case, the SIREN alone is enough.

13.4.1 The wait between signature and connection

Once the procedure is launched, the window displays *Authentication in progress* and will not move on its own. Odoo is waiting for the signature provider to confirm that the identity is verified and the certificate signed. Until that confirmation arrives, the screen stays as it is and the final validation button does not appear.

Button	What it does
Refresh	Asks the provider for the status again. This is the button to use to see whether the confirmation has arrived.
Open link	Reopens the verification portal, to resume an interrupted procedure.
Cancel	Abandons the procedure and sets the status back to failed.

Watch out

Cancel is not a way out of the screen: it cancels the procedure under way, and everything has to be started again from scratch, signature included. To leave the window without breaking anything, use the close cross.

Note

Confirmation is not always immediate. It may only arrive the following day, with nothing on screen to announce it. A connection that looks stuck is therefore not necessarily failed: come back the next day and click **Refresh** before concluding that something is wrong.

This wait is distinct from the directory one described below: the first concerns identity verification, the second the listing of the company.

Watch out

If the window displays *The SIREN of the company could not be determined.*, registration cannot go through: the **Identifier** field will stay empty and authentication will fail. The **Go to company** link offered in the message opens the company record directly, where the number can be filled in.

Note

Entry in the directory is not instantaneous: it takes effect **the day after** configuration. The date from which the company is listed there is kept in the configuration; it is from that date onwards that its vendors can send it invoices through the platform.

Note

Authentication is not a matter of keying in a code: it goes through the electronic signature of a *certificate designating the approved platform*, with identity verification against a proof of identity. Plan to have an identity document of the legal representative to hand, and reckon that the operation cannot be delegated.

Note

Registration on the approved platform counts as registration on the European network: no separate formality is needed on that side.

Tip

Have the identity document ready before you start: the portal asks for it partway through, and the session does not wait. Plan also for the signatory to be available throughout, since the verification code goes to their address and the signature is theirs by name.

Once the company is connected, a box and a list appear in the section, visible only at that stage.

Setting	What it governs
Enable e-reporting & sending of invoices to the PPF	The transmission to the administration of the regulatory data of invoices and of the mandatory statuses, and the production of the e-reporting flows. The box is **ticked by default**. Unticking it does not stop invoices being sent to customers.
E-Reporting Periodicity	The rhythm of the e-reporting submissions, set according to the VAT scheme (see further on).

Watch out

An invoice only goes out through the platform to a customer reachable in the directory: check your customers before issuing (see section 13.5). Reception works from registration onwards and is enough for the 1 September 2026 obligation.

Watch out

Only one company can be registered per identifier. In a group, each legal entity registers separately, with its own identification number. Branches are the exception: they can issue through the connection of their parent company, without registering in their own right.

13.4.2 Putting the chain to the test

As soon as the company is connected and a partner is too, the circuit works: a complete cycle can be tested on real invoices.

Tip

Test at least one complete cycle (issue, receipt, refusal, correction) on a willing customer and a willing vendor. Transmission failures almost always come from incomplete identification data, which takes a few minutes to correct once identified, and blocks a whole invoicing run if you discover it on the day of the deadline.

13.5 Checking that a customer is reachable

Before issuing, you need to know whether the recipient is listed in the directory and whether they accept the format used. Three pieces of information determine the answer, and they are all set in the same place: the customer record, **Accounting** tab, **Customer Invoices** block. The tab is called **Invoicing** when only that application is installed.

13.5.1 The electronic address scheme

This is the most important setting in the whole configuration, and the least obvious.

An electronic invoicing address is made up of two parts: a **scheme**, which names the register to search in, and a **value**, which identifies the company within that register. Odoo offers about a hundred schemes, one or more per country.

For a French partner connected to an approved platform, the scheme must be **France FRCTC Electronic Address**, and the value their identification number.

This field is not normally filled in by hand. It is derived from information entered elsewhere:

1. Check that the contact's **Country** is indeed `France`.
2. In the body of the record, under the VAT number, fill in the **Siren/Siret** field. On a non-French contact, that same field appears in the **Sales & Purchase** tab, section **Misc**, under the label **Company ID**.
3. Odoo then carries the SIREN (the first nine digits) over as the value of the **France FRCTC Electronic Address**, in the **Invoicing** tab. Failing a **Siren/Siret**, it derives it from the French VAT number.

A contact that has neither will therefore have no electronic address, and the check will fail without the reason being shown on that field.

The value follows the same four forms as your own identifier, described in section 13.4: the SIREN alone, or completed with the SIRET, a routing code or an addressing suffix. The check is the same on both sides, and so is the error message.

Watch out

Odoo only carries over the SIREN, never an extended form, even when the record holds a SIRET. A customer who has given you an address with a routing code must therefore be keyed in by hand: otherwise the invoice goes to the legal entity instead of the intended department, which shows up as a rejection or a document lost at the recipient's end.

Watch out

This scheme is not a descriptive label: it, and it alone, decides which directory is queried. With **France FRCTC Electronic Address**, Odoo queries the French directory, the one that lists the companies connected to an approved platform. With **any other scheme**: VAT number, establishment identifier, another country's identifier, Odoo goes off to search the European directory, where a French company connected to an approved platform does not appear, and the **Verify** button fails. The invoice sending window catches this case: if the customer carries a SIREN and is listed in the French directory, Odoo replaces the scheme with the French scheme, fills in the address found and the format, then runs the check again.

Odoo often proposes a default scheme, derived from the country and the identifiers entered. Check it: this is where most verification failures are lodged.

13.5.2 The invoice format

Fill in **France E-Invoicing (UBL 2.1)**. Without it, Odoo does not even start the directory search and reports an invalid format straight away.

Note

On a database connected to an approved platform, this format is the only one accepted for a French partner identified by the French scheme. Choosing another is refused on save, with a message stating that only French electronic invoicing is supported for regulated French invoices.

13.5.3 The check

1. Open the customer record.

2. Click **Verify**: Odoo queries the directory and fills in the **E-Invoicing State** field, which takes one of the following values:

State	What it means
Not verified yet	The check has not yet been carried out for this partner.
Partner is in the annuaire	The customer is reachable: the invoice can be sent to them through the platform.
Partner is not in the annuaire	The customer is not registered yet. The invoice cannot be sent to them through this channel.
Partner cannot receive format	The customer is registered but does not accept the format chosen: the exchange format has to be adjusted.

1. Finally, check that the sending method chosen is **by the Approved Platform**.

Note

A customer absent from the directory is not necessarily at fault: as long as their own issuing deadline has not arrived, they may have registered for receipt only. The check bears on their ability to receive, not on their compliance. Before 1 September 2026, most companies are not listed yet, and **Partner is not in the annuaire** is then the right answer, not an anomaly.

A check that fails: the four causes

In order of frequency:

1. **The address scheme is not the French scheme.** The **Verify** button then queries the wrong directory and will never find anything, however many times you try. Opening the invoice sending window for this customer corrects the scheme, if the customer carries a SIREN and is listed in the French directory.
2. **The invoice format is not filled in,** or is not the French format: no search is launched.
3. **Your own company is in test mode.** The test directory only contains test participants; a real company is not in it.
4. **The contact is not registered yet.** This is the most frequent case before the deadline.

Your own connection counts, contrary to what one might think: for as long as your company is not connected to the approved platform, Odoo queries the European directory even for a partner carrying the French scheme.

13.6 Issuing an invoice

The issuing procedure does not change: it is the channel that changes.

1. Draw up and confirm the invoice as usual (see chapter 12). It then takes the **Ready to send** status, on three conditions: your company is connected, the customer is reachable in the directory, and the invoice is posted.
2. Check that every line carries at least a product or a label, and **exactly one** tax.
3. Click **Send**.
4. In the sending window, check that the **by the Approved Platform** option is ticked. It is the same label as on the contact record.
5. Finally, check that the customer record carries their **Siren/Siret**, or failing that a French VAT number from which Odoo derives the SIREN: without either, Odoo cannot identify the recipient. The **Tax ID** also plays another role, described in section 13.9.1.
6. Validate the send.

The invoice is converted to the structured format, deposited on the platform and routed to the customer's own. It moves to the **Pending Reception** status, then **Done** once delivered to the recipient's platform. The structured file is attached in its message thread.

Watch out

The constraint on the lines is not cosmetic: a line with no tax, or carrying two taxes, prevents the file from being built. It is a frequent cause of failure on invoices taken up from old templates or coming from an import.

Note

For as long as the customer record does not fix their sending method, Odoo ticks both channels and makes both sends. As soon as it carries **by the Approved Platform**, only that channel is ticked by default. The email is then no more than a courtesy copy, useful to warn your contact, with no evidential value. To a VAT-registered customer reachable in the directory, the invoice that counts is the one deposited on the platform.

Watch out

The status is not shown on the invoice form in ordinary use. It does appear in the **Other Info** tab, but that block is reserved for developer mode and only appears after the send. In practice, the status is read in the invoice list: see section 13.8.

Tip

Two routes lead to the invoices ready to go: the status column in the list, and the **E-Invoicing Ready** filter in the search bar.

13.6.1 Terms and conditions become mandatory

As soon as your company is registered on an approved platform, Odoo requires **Terms and Conditions** on every invoice whose format is Factur-X, the one used by default for a French customer sent by email. The field is the text area below the invoice lines.

If it is empty, sending displays:

```
Errors occurred while creating the EDI document (format: ...):
The field 'Terms and Conditions' is required on INV/2026/00042.
```

Watch out

Sending through the platform, which uses another format, is not concerned. The requirement targets the invoices sent in Factur-X format, in particular by plain email: registration on the platform is enough to trigger it on those.

The invoice goes out all the same, but **without its structured file**: the recipient receives an ordinary PDF. The message is therefore not cosmetic, it announces an incomplete document.

Unblocking an urgent invoice

The check only looks at whether the field is filled in, not at its content. A dash is enough to satisfy it.

The lasting setting

Enable **Default Terms & Conditions** in the accounting settings, as described in section 11.3.7. Odoo then copies the company's text onto every customer invoice when it is created, and the question does not come up again.

Watch out

The setting only applies to invoices created after it. Those already drawn up and not yet sent keep their field empty and will produce the message. On a backlog, the field is filled in invoice by invoice.

Note

Of the two formats offered by this setting, only the text fully satisfies the obligation. The link to a website page only copies an address into the field: the check passes, but the terms themselves are not transmitted in the structured file.

Note

Registration on the platform makes mandatory, at the same moment and through the same mechanism, the electronic address scheme and the address itself, for your company as for the customer. This is the subject of section 13.5.

13.6.2 Late payment penalties

Every customer invoice of a French company subject to e-invoicing carries two statements on late payment: the flat-rate fee of €40 for collection costs and the annual rate of the penalties. Odoo adds them on its own; only the rate is set.

1. Open **Accounting → Configuration → Settings**.
2. Find the **Late Payment Penalties** setting, just after **Default Terms & Conditions**.
3. Leave **Update Late Payment Penalties Automatically** ticked for Odoo to apply the rate of each half-year (refinancing rate of the European Central Bank plus 10 points), or clear it and enter the rate in **Annual Rate** (10% on installation).
4. Save.

The rate is frozen on the invoice when it is posted, based on the half-year of its invoice date. When Odoo could not obtain the rate of the half-year, it applies the rate entered and writes so in the invoice chatter: resetting the invoice to draft then lets you correct the rate before posting it again.

Both statements are printed on the invoice, above the terms and conditions, and travel in the structured file of the e-invoice.

13.7 Receiving vendor bills

This is the side that concerns **every** VAT-registered business from 1 September 2026, including those whose obligation to issue only arrives later.

13.7.1 Two inbound channels during the transition

Between the two deadlines, your vendors are not all under the same rules. Large companies and mid-sized companies issue electronically from 1 September 2026; small and medium-sized companies and micro-businesses are only bound a year later. Until then, the latter legitimately keep sending you a PDF by email.

That PDF does not arrive through the platform, and the **Incoming Invoices Journal** will never see it: that journal only receives what the platform hands over. The path stays the one that existed before the reform, described in chapter 12: the purchase journal's email alias receives the message and creates a draft bill with the PDF attached, then **Document Digitization** extracts the data from it by optical reading.

	Through the platform	**By email**
What arrives	A structured file, plus the PDF	A PDF alone
What Odoo fills in	Vendor, lines and VAT taken from the file	Data extracted by optical reading, to be checked

	Through the platform	By email
Life cycle	Statuses tracked, and posting counts as acceptance	None: it is an ordinary bill
Prerequisite	**Incoming Invoices Journal** filled in	Email alias on the purchase journal

Note

Both channels must stay operational throughout the transition year, and the same vendor may move from one to the other along the way, the day they connect. Do not dismantle the purchase journal's email alias on the grounds that the platform is live.

13.7.2 The bill arrives on its own

You have nothing to do. The bill appears in your purchase journal, in draft, vendor recognised, lines and VAT taken up, with the structured file attached. The only exception is an invoice a customer has issued on your behalf, which goes to sales: see section 13.7.7.

Odoo queries the platform several times a day. One prerequisite only: the **Incoming Invoices Journal** must be filled in in the configuration. Without it, nothing is imported and your vendors' invoices stay stuck on the platform side.

Note

If the file received cannot be read, the document is created all the same, empty, and its **E-Invoicing Status** becomes **Error**. Its chatter carries a message and the received file as an attachment: the bill is then completed by hand from that file.

Tip

Rather than wait for the next automatic pass, the invoice list of the designated purchase journal carries a **Fetch e-Invoices** command in its cog menu, which goes and gets the documents waiting immediately. The sales journal carries the equivalent, **Refresh e-Invoices Status**, to refresh the status of the invoices issued.

13.7.3 Check, then accept

This is the point that surprises people most, and it has no equivalent in current habits.

Watch out

Posting the bill means accepting it. Odoo automatically sends the **Approved** status to the platform at the moment of posting. **Cancelling the bill means refusing it**, and a reason is then required.

Posting is the act of approval, with no further step, and it is binding on your vendor. The **Send Response** action, in the cog menu, also lets you issue a response without posting. So check the bill **before** posting it, as you would an approval for payment: which assumes you have written down your approval workflow.

13.7.4 Refusing a bill

1. Click **Cancel**. Odoo opens the **Send Response Message** window, with the **Refused** status pre-elected.
2. Choose a reason from the list. The reasons are imposed by the standard, they cannot be written freely.
3. Enter the explanatory note: **mandatory** for a refusal. The field has no label, only a placeholder.
4. Send.

The drop-down list shows seventeen reasons: five of them relate to suspension, a status the same window offers under **Suspended**. The twelve refusal reasons are the following:

Incorrect VAT rate	**Incorrect Total Amount**
Billing calculation error	**Legal information missing**
Wrong recipient	**Unknown transaction**
Unknown sender	**Contract completed**
Duplicate Invoice	**Order number is incorrect or missing**
Incorrect electronic billing address	**Contract reference required to process the missing invoice**

Note

If the **Cancel** button does not appear, it is because the document can still be reset to draft: reset it to draft, then cancel it to open the reasoned response.

Watch out

On a domestic invoice between VAT-registered businesses that has already been transmitted, **Reset to Draft** is no longer offered. This is consistent with the evidential value of the document: a document that has gone out over the network is not withdrawn, it is corrected. Odoo replaces the button with **Cancel**, which triggers the reasoned response described above.

Tip

The most frequent reason in practice is **Order number is incorrect or missing**. It is the direct consequence of a matching that has failed: better to deal with the cause upstream, with the vendor, than to multiply refusals.

Watch out

A bill received through the platform has evidential value. It is not deleted: a document received in error is refused with its reason, or dealt with by a credit note.

13.7.5 Matching with the purchase order

When the bill received quotes your order number, Odoo finds the order and attaches the lines with no intervention. This is the most immediate gain of the reform on the purchasing side: keying in vendor bills disappears, and checking them comes down to a comparison.

Watch out

When the matching fails, it fails **silently**. The bill simply arrives with no link to the order, with no alert and no message. Plan a periodic review of vendor bills not attached to an order: this is a control point to write into the procedure, not an anomaly that will announce itself.

13.7.6 The case of expense claims

The reform changes the treatment of expenses paid for by an employee, and the trap is easy to miss. Everything depends on the name the invoice is made out to.

Invoice in the company's name, paid for by an employee. This is an invoice between VAT-registered businesses: it reaches you through the platform, with its full life cycle. That the employee put up the money does not change the nature of the document. The treatment has three stages: the vendor bill

carries the expense and the deductible VAT and creates a debt to the vendor; a transfer entry clears the vendor account and creates the debt to the employee; the employee is reimbursed.

Invoice in the employee's name. The vendor has invoiced a private individual: the transaction is out of scope, nothing will reach you through the platform. The receipt stays attached to the expense claim, as it does today.

Watch out

The trap: entering an expense claim with an expense product **on top of** an invoice that has already reached you through the platform. The expense would be carried twice. The risk rises sharply with the reform, since the bill now arrives on its own, without anyone having keyed it in.

Note

Whether VAT is deductible on an invoice made out in the employee's name is a tax question, not a setting: have it settled by your accountant.

13.7.7 Self-billed invoices issued by your customers

Some customers issue the invoice for what you sell them themselves, in your name and with your agreement: this is self-billing. The customer records the invoice, or the credit note, in their own software, and their platform sends it to you like any other e-invoice.

The file received carries a document type specific to self-billing. Odoo recognises it and turns it into a **customer invoice**, or a **customer credit note**, not a vendor bill: the document records your sale. It arrives in draft, customer recognised, lines and VAT taken up. The number the customer gave it is taken up as **Customer Reference**, in the **Other Info** tab; the number of the document in Odoo is the one of the sales journal.

Sales journals set up	Where the self-billed invoice lands
One or more have the **Self Billing** box ticked	The first of them
None has the box ticked	The first sales journal of the company

The first journal is the one at the top of the journal list. Without any setting, self-billed invoices therefore mix with the invoices you issue yourself. To keep them in a dedicated journal:

1. Open **Accounting → Configuration → Accounting → Journals**.
2. Open the chosen sales journal, or create one of type **Sales**.
3. In the **Advanced Settings** tab, tick **Self Billing**.
4. Save.

Checking then follows the same rule as for a vendor bill: **posting the self-billed invoice means accepting it**, and Odoo sends the **Approved** status to the platform.

Watch out

A wrong self-billed invoice cannot be refused with a reason. Odoo handles it as a sales document: **Cancel** opens the **Send Response Message** window on the **Cancelled** status, and the list of statuses only offers those of an issued invoice (**Paid**, **Cancelled**, **Completed**). The twelve refusal reasons described above do not apply. Report the error to the customer so that they correct it on their side, with a self-billed credit note that will reach you by the same route.

13.8 Following the life cycle of an invoice

The real change brought by the reform is not the format of the file: it is that every stage of an invoice's journey is now timestamped and binding. You still have to know where to read it.

Watch out

Odoo carries **two** separate status fields, which must not be confused. The **E-Invoicing Status** follows the journey of the invoice itself, from its deposit to the customer's response. The **E-Reporting Status**, covered in section 13.9, follows something else entirely: the periodic filing of data with the administration.

13.8.1 Showing the column, once and for all

The status does not appear on the invoice form. It is read in the list, provided the column is shown.

1. Open the customer invoice list.
2. Click the column selection icon, at the far right of the header row.
3. Tick **E-Invoicing Status**. The setting is remembered.

A single screen is then enough to follow a whole portfolio. The **Group By** menu also offers this status: handy for isolating refused or pending invoices in one go.

13.8.2 Reading the statuses

Status	Who issues it	What it means
Ready to send	Odoo	Posted, recipient reachable, not yet deposited.
Submitted	Your platform	Deposited. This is your proof of issue.
Received	The customer's platform	The document has crossed the network.
Made Available	The customer's platform	The invoice is made available to the customer, and the step is timestamped.
Approved	Your customer	Approved for payment.
Refused	Your customer	Reasoned refusal, correction expected.
Rejected	The customer's platform	Technical anomaly: the file could not be processed. To be corrected and redeposited.
With Payments	You	Payment reported. Bears on when VAT becomes chargeable on services.
Cancelled	You	Invoice withdrawn by the issuer.
Done	Odoo	Routing complete, with no further business response expected.

Note

Rejection or refusal? A **Rejected** is technical: the platform could not process the file. A **Refused** is a business decision by your customer, and it has to be reasoned. The two call for corrections of a different nature.

Tip

The column shows the furthest stage reached, not the last message received: it never goes backwards. For the full history, open the invoice's message thread, which keeps every response timestamped with its code, its reason where there is one, and the report attached. That is your supporting document in the event of a dispute.

Note

A refusal does not cancel the invoice: it opens a correction cycle. Practice is to issue a credit note, then a compliant corrected invoice. Since the reasons are standardised, you know exactly what to correct.

Is there a deadline for accepting or refusing?

Odoo imposes no deadline and triggers no automatic acceptance: a bill received stays in draft for as long as nobody deals with it.

The legal consequences of the timestamping of the statuses (the starting point of payment terms, the effect of a tacit acceptance offered by some platforms) are a matter of commercial law, not of configuration. Have them settled by your legal adviser.

13.9 E-reporting

13.9.1 What decides whether a sale enters e-reporting

A sale between a French taxable person and another French taxable person falls under electronic invoicing. E-reporting is reserved for sales to a non-taxable person and for international transactions, with one exception: an invoice whose lines all carry only French exempt taxes, with a **Tax Exemption Reason Code** under articles 261 to 261 E of the French general tax code, is not reported, even when sold to a private individual. Odoo sorts every invoice into one category or the other on its own, without saying so on screen.

Two fields of the customer record come into play, and they do not serve the same purpose.

Field	Role
Siren/Siret	Identifies the recipient for sending. Odoo only accepts it if it is made of nine or fourteen digits, with no other character.
Tax ID	Decides the classification on its own. On a sale, if it is empty or reduced to a single character, the invoice is classified B2C and enters e-reporting.

The classification therefore does not look at the **Siren/Siret**. A business customer whose record carries their establishment number but not their VAT number is treated as an individual.

Watch out

The case arises mostly with businesses under the French small-business VAT exemption, which often have no VAT number, and with sole traders. Those customers do fall under electronic invoicing. Their sales are wrongly declared in e-reporting as long as the invoice is not sent through the platform. The **Siren/Siret** being enough for sending, the platform option remains offered.

Two conditions are checked when the file is built, and they bear on **both** parties, yours as well as the customer's:

1. the electronic address scheme and its value are filled in;
2. a SIREN or a SIRET is available: a **Siren/Siret** of nine or fourteen digits, or failing that a French VAT number.

Any one of them missing blocks the send, and its reason is shown in the window. The VAT number is not required.

Watch out

An invoice sent through the approved platform leaves e-reporting, whatever its classification: if it already appeared in a transmitted flow, Odoo opens a corrective flow.

13.9.2 The four combinations, and what each produces

The two fields combine into four situations. None of them raises anything on screen: what becomes of the sale depends on the combination, and on the actual send through the platform.

Tax ID	Siren/Siret	What happens
filled	filled	No e-reporting, and sending through the platform is possible. This is the correct state for a business customer, provided the send is actually carried out.
filled	empty	No e-reporting. If the VAT number is in French format, Odoo derives the SIREN from it and sending through the platform remains possible; otherwise sending is impossible for want of a recipient identifier, and **the sale is declared nowhere.**
empty	filled	The sale is classified in e-reporting, but sending through the platform remains possible: once sent, the invoice leaves e-reporting. If it is not sent, it is only declared in e-reporting.
empty	empty	E-reporting only, no sending possible. Correct if the customer really is a private individual. A sale exempt under articles 261 to 261 E of the French general tax code is reported nowhere, which is compliant.

Watch out

Sending through the platform is not triggered on its own. The module carries only three scheduled actions: retrieve incoming documents, report statuses back, and produce the e-reporting flows. None of them despatches a customer invoice.

The consequence falls on the first row of the table, the one that looks sound. A properly filled customer is out of e-reporting, so the declaration of that sale rests entirely on the send. If nobody puts the invoice through the send wizard, the corresponding turnover is declared neither on one side nor the other, and no screen says so.

It is the record of the customer's commercial entity that is read, never the invoicing address or the contact carried by the invoice. An attached address inherits the identifiers of its company, unless it is itself ticked **Company**: it then becomes its own commercial entity, inherits nothing, and falls to B2C whatever the parent record carries.

Note

Correcting the record afterwards does not reclassify invoices already posted. The classification is stored and is not recomputed when the customer's VAT number is edited. On an invoice that has not yet gone out, resetting it to draft and posting it again is enough to reclassify it; on an invoice already transmitted through the platform, the reset-to-draft button is not offered. The data must therefore be entered before posting.

13.9.3 Following the statuses

The **E-Reporting Status** is a field separate from the previous one. It does not describe the journey of the invoice but its inclusion in the periodic filings intended for the administration.

Status	Meaning
Out of scope	The invoice does not fall within the scope of e-reporting.
Pending	It is waiting to be included in the next filing.
Ready	It has been built and is ready to go.
Sent	It has been transmitted to the platform.
Completed	The flow that carried it has been accepted and closed.
Error	Transmission failed: the reason is shown on the invoice.

The status is tracked in each invoice's message thread: every change leaves a dated trace there.

Note

The invoice list offers no e-reporting filter. To steer the whole set, go through the list of flows, whose **Ready**, **Sent** and **Error** filters bear on the state of the flow. The invoices excluded for an anomaly can be found from the flow form, through **View invoices**.

Tip

A weekly look at the flows is enough to keep the chain running: the **Error** filter for the rejected flows, and the banner of excluded invoices on each flow. An invoice in error is not transmitted: without that check, the anomaly comes to light when the customer chases you, several weeks later.

13.9.4 Filing the flows

Transaction data falling outside the scope of business-to-business invoicing is the subject of periodic filings.

1. Open **Accounting** → **Configuration** → **Settings** and set the **E-Reporting Periodicity** according to your VAT regime: standard regime monthly or quarterly, simplified regime monthly, exempt regime two-monthly.
2. Open **Accounting** → **Reporting** → **France** → **E-reporting** to consult the filings built.
3. Check the content, then click **Send**.

Note

If invoices were excluded for an anomaly, the sending window says so: **Send anyway** transmits the flow without them, **View invoices** opens the excluded invoices.

Watch out

The periodicity must match the company's actual VAT regime. A mismatch between the two produces incomplete or late filings, with nothing in Odoo to signal it.

Takings collected at the point of sale fall under the same scheme, through a dedicated extension: they are aggregated and filed at the same periodicity.

13.10 Points to watch

What blocks you on the day of the deadline

- **Incomplete identification**: identification number, address, legal form: these are the first causes of rejection, at registration as at issue.

- **Unverified customers**: go through the customer file before the deadline rather than invoice by invoice.
- **Receiving journal not configured**: incoming bills then have nowhere to land.
- **E-reporting periodicity out of line** with the VAT regime.
- **Statuses in error left untreated**: they do not clear themselves.
- **Wrong electronic address scheme** on the customer records: the check will always fail, however hard you insist (see section 13.5).
- **Vendor bill approval workflow not written down**: posting counts as binding acceptance, and nothing on screen reminds you of it.
- **Unmatched vendor bills not monitored**: matching fails silently.
- **Double entry of expense claims** on bills already received through the platform.
- **Customers' self-billed invoices mixed with sales**: without a sales journal marked **Self Billing**, they land in the first sales journal.

Note

Regulatory compliance goes beyond configuring the tool: it engages the form of the invoices, the mandatory statements and the organisation of the accounts. Have your arrangements validated by your accountant before the deadline that concerns you.

CHAPTER 14

Accounting and finance

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER

- adapt the chart of accounts and enter manual journal entries;
- reconcile bank movements and match the items on control accounts;
- allocate expenses and income by analytic dimension;
- lock periods, produce the financial statements and close a financial year.

chapter 12 covers the operational invoicing cycle. This one covers bookkeeping: chart of accounts, journal entries, bank reconciliation, analytic accounting, closing and financial statements.

14.1 Setting up the chart of accounts

14.1.1 Localisation

The chart of accounts is installed automatically by the fiscal localisation chosen when the database goes live (see section 5.5). For France, it is the Plan Comptable Général.

Note

The Plan Comptable Général is the French statutory chart of accounts. On another localisation the mechanism is the same: the package installs the chart of the country concerned.

Watch out

The fiscal localisation is chosen before the first journal entry. Changing it on a database that already holds data is not a configuration exercise but an accounting migration.

14.1.2 Adapting the accounts

1. Open **Accounting → Configuration → Accounting → Chart of Accounts**.
2. Create or edit the accounts your business needs.
3. For each account, check the type, the currency where there is one, the default taxes attached and whether reconciliation is allowed.

Note

Tick **Allow Reconciliation** on control accounts and on suspense accounts. Without it, clearing the balances of those accounts becomes impossible.

14.2 Entering journal entries

14.2.1 Kinds of entry

- Sales entries, generated by customer invoices.
- Purchase entries, generated by vendor bills.
- Bank and cash entries, coming from payments and statements.
- Miscellaneous entries, keyed in by hand: provisions, accruals, payroll, depreciation.

14.2.2 Entering a manual journal entry

1. Open **Accounting → Accounting → Transactions → Journal Entries**.
2. Click **New**.
3. Check the **Journal**: **Miscellaneous Operations** is offered by default.
4. Check the **Accounting Date** and fill in a meaningful **Reference**.

5. In the **Journal Items** tab, click **Add a line** and fill in for each of them the **Account**, the **Label**, then the amount in **Debit** or in **Credit**.
6. Fill in the **Partner** on the lines that use control accounts: without it, the line will not appear in the partner ledger and cannot be matched.
7. Check that total debits equal total credits.
8. Click **Post**.

Note

The **Tax Grids** column appears on lines carrying a tax. It shows which box of the return the amount will be reported in: this is what links the entry to the VAT return, and it is worth checking on a manual entry, where nothing is derived from a commercial document.

Watch out

An unbalanced draft cannot be posted: Odoo refuses the operation. That is the guarantee that no document can throw off the trial balance, but it also means the mistake is to be looked for in the lines, and nowhere else.

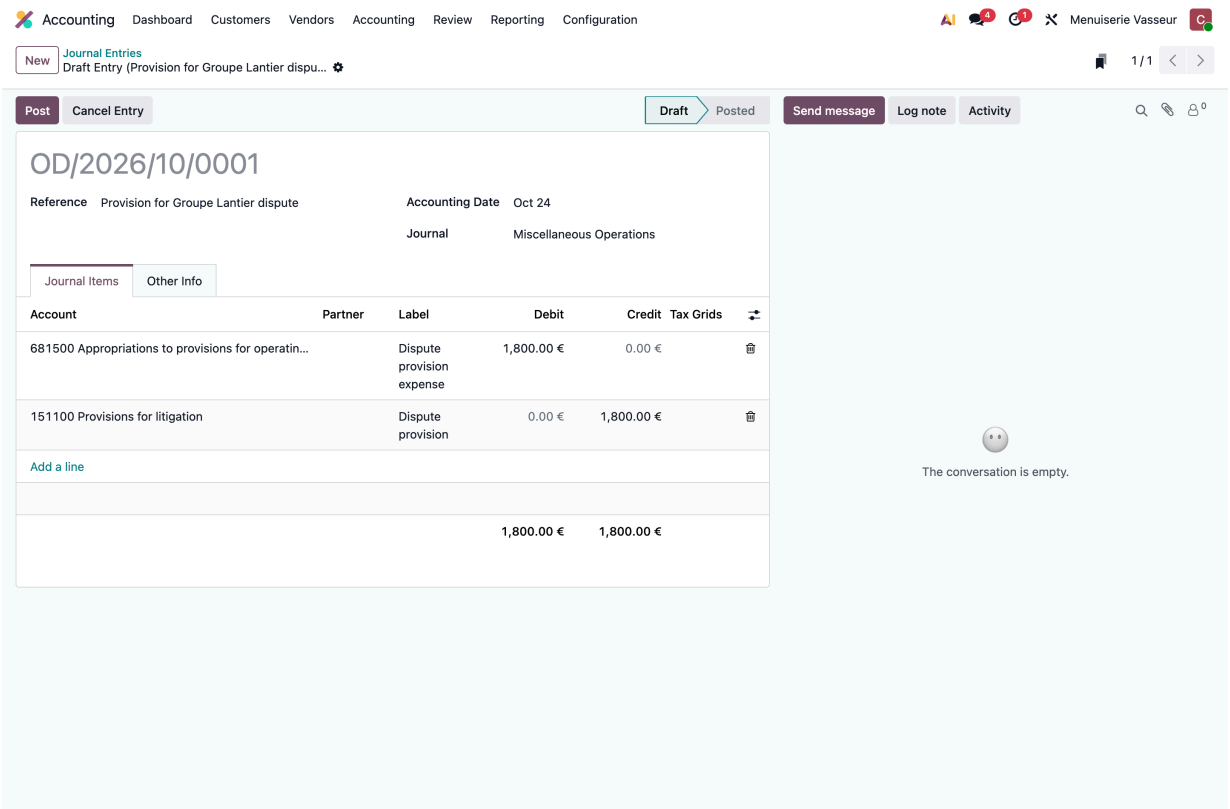


Figure 14.1: Entering a manual journal entry

14.2.3 Correcting a posted entry

The correction goes through a **reversal**: rather than editing the faulty document, you record an opposite entry that cancels it, then key in the right one. Both remain visible, and the path that led to the correction can be read in the accounts.

1. Open the document concerned.
2. Click **Reverse Entry**.
3. Fill in the date of the reversal. The **Reason displayed on Credit Note** field only appears on an invoice, not on a miscellaneous entry.
4. Validate: an opposite entry is generated, reconciled with the original.

5. Then key in the correct entry.

Note

Odoo also offers **Reset to Draft**, which makes the document editable again. This button does not always appear: it disappears as soon as the document is protected by a digital fingerprint (see section 12.2.5), and its use is blocked if the date of the document falls in a locked period (see section 14.5.2).

A database configured for France therefore ends up offering nothing but the reversal, once hashing is active and the periods are closed. That is the intended behaviour: the inalterability of accounting records is a legal obligation, not a limitation of the software.

Watch out

For as long as those protections are not in place, resetting to draft remains possible and **wipes out the trace of the original entry**. That is convenient in the start-up phase, dangerous afterwards: have your accountant put hashing and the lock dates in place before the first close.

Tip

In practice, keep resetting to draft for mistakes spotted immediately, on a document nobody has seen. As soon as a document has gone out to a third party or a return has been filed, reversal is the only correct route.

14.3 Reconciling the bank

Bank reconciliation consists in matching each line of the bank statement with the accounting document it corresponds to: an invoice paid, a vendor payment, bank charges. It is the most repetitive accounting work, and the one that lends itself best to automation.

For as long as a transaction is not reconciled, the invoice it pays stays **in payment** and not **paid**: reconciliation is what closes the cycle.

14.3.1 Feeding the statement

Three routes bring bank transactions into Odoo.

Route	What it assumes
Bank synchronisation	Odoo connects to the bank and retrieves the transactions every day, without any intervention. Belongs to the Enterprise edition and requires a subscription to the connection service.
File import	The statement is downloaded from the bank then loaded into Odoo, in the common formats: CSV, OFX, QIF, CAMT. Free, but to be done again every period.
Manual entry	The lines are keyed in by hand. Reserved for very low volumes or for accounts with little activity.

1. Open the **Accounting** dashboard and find the bank journal card.
2. Open the card's three-dot menu and, in the **New** column, click **Import File** or key the lines in directly.

Tip

Synchronisation pays for itself from a few dozen transactions a month: it removes not only the downloading, but also the forgotten periods and the double imports, which are the leading cause of divergence between the Odoo balance and the real one.

14.3.2 Reconciling

1. Open the **Accounting** dashboard and find the bank journal card.
2. Click the button announcing the number of transactions **to reconcile**.

The **Bank Matching** screen lists the transactions not yet dealt with, with the account's **Current Balance** at the top. Each line carries the buttons that match its situation.

Button	What it does
Reconcile	Reconciles the transaction with the document proposed. The figure beside it gives the number of documents Odoo has retained: a confident match proposes only one.
Receivable / **Payable**	Posts the transaction to the corresponding control account, without naming a particular document. To be used for a down payment received or a payment that does not yet settle anything.
Set Partner	Fills in the third party when Odoo has not recognised it, which brings up the documents that might match.
Set Account	Posts the transaction directly to an account, with no third-party counterpart. This is the route for bank charges, overdraft interest and commissions.

The three-dot menu on each line gives access to the less common actions: the reconciliation models, **Manage Models** and **Delete Transaction**. To set a transaction aside without dealing with it, open it and click **To Review** the **Reviewed** button lifts that marking.

Note

A transaction whose third party has been recognised shows its name at the head of the line. That is the first thing to check: a reconciliation right on the amount but wrong on the third party settles a receivable that is not settled.

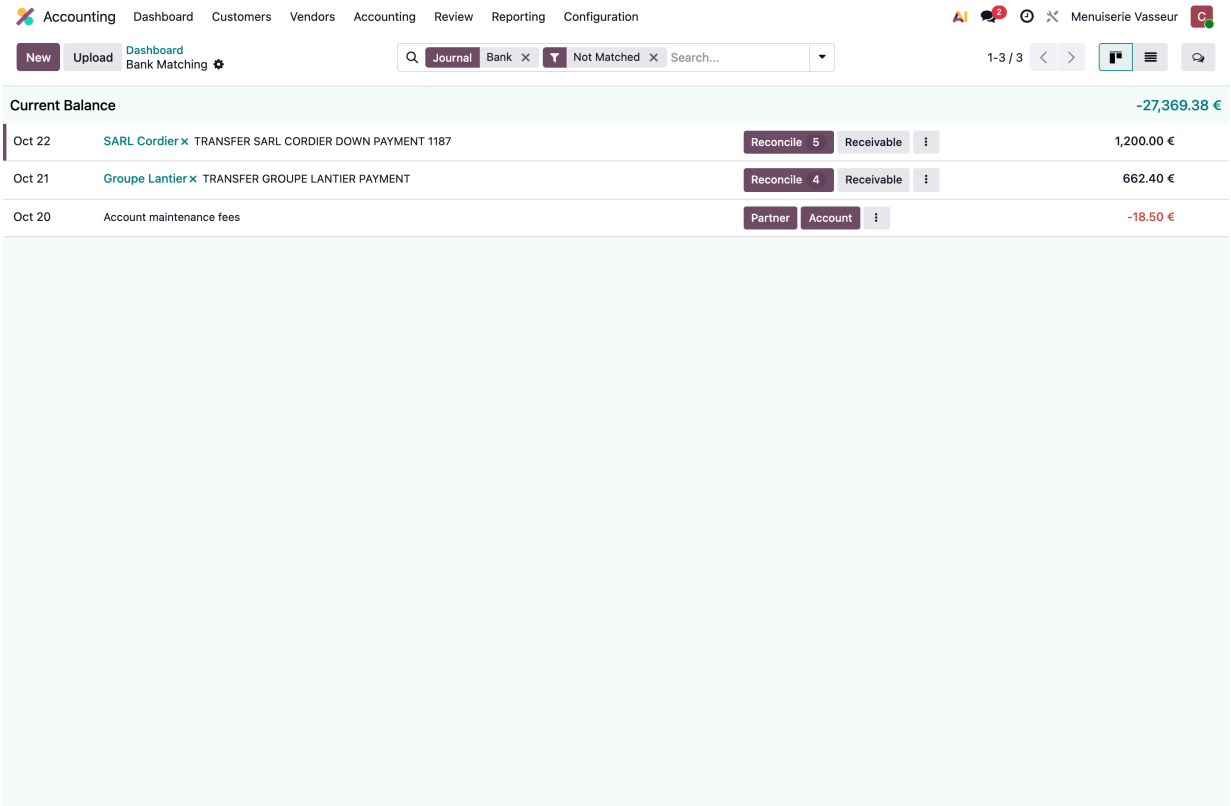


Figure 14.2: The bank reconciliation screen

Note

The **Bank Matching** screen belongs to the Enterprise edition, where it is available as soon as **Invoicing** is installed.

In Community, statements can be keyed in and consulted: the bank journal card gives access to them , but no screen proposes matches. Reconciliation is then done document by document: from each invoice, by applying the payments available through the outstanding credits banner (see section 12.6.2).

Watch out

A transaction reconciled against the wrong document settles an invoice that is not settled. The mistake does not show in the bank balance, which stays right, but in the aged receivables, where one debt disappears and another drags on. Take the time to check the third party as much as the amount.

Tip

The **Not Matched** filter, active by default, shows only what remains to be dealt with. Removing it brings up the transactions already reconciled, which lets you go back on a mistake: a reconciled line can be undone as long as the period is not locked (see section 14.5.2).

14.3.3 Automating with reconciliation models

A **reconciliation model** describes a recurring transaction and the entry to record: the monthly bank charges, a rent collected by direct debit, a subscription. Once the rule is set, Odoo recognises it and proposes (or records) the entry by itself.

1. From the three-dot menu of the bank journal card, section **Reconciliation**, click **Models**. From the reconciliation screen, the equivalent entry is called **Manage Models**.
2. Create a model and name it.

3. Set the **recognition conditions**:
   - the **Journals** the rule applies to;
   - the **Label**: **Contains**, **Not Contains** or a regular expression, with the **Label Parameter** to look for in the transaction description;
   - the amount, with **Is lower than or equal to**, **Is greater than or equal to** or **Is between**
   - the **Partners** concerned, where relevant.
4. Set the **counterpart**: the account to be moved, the label of the entry, the taxes where there are any, and how the amount is split: **Fixed**, **Percentage of balance**, **Percentage of statement line** or **From label**.
5. Choose how it is triggered.

Trigger	Behaviour
Manual	The model is proposed on the reconciliation screen when the transaction matches. The accountant validates.
Automated	The entry is recorded without intervention as soon as the transaction matches the conditions.

Watch out

Only switch a proven rule to **Automated**. A criterion that is too broad (a label that merely contains the name of the bank) reconciles unrelated transactions, and the faulty entries do not announce themselves.

Leave the rule on **Manual** for a month or two: if it consistently proposes the right entry, it can be automated.

Tip

Take three months of statements and spot what comes back identically. A dozen models generally cover most of the recurring transactions of a small business, and bring the monthly reconciliation time down from a few hours to a few minutes.

Note

The order of the models matters: Odoo applies the first one whose conditions are met. Put the most specific rules before the most general.

14.3.4 Matching down payments

The payment of a down payment passes through a control account dedicated to advances received. To clear the position of a customer who has paid a down payment and then the balance:

1. Open **Accounting → Accounting → Closing → Reconcile**.
2. Go to the advances and down payments received account, in the customer's group.
3. Select the line of the down payment invoice and the deduction line carried by the final invoice: both are on that same account and cancel each other out.
4. Click **Reconcile**.

Watch out

An unmatched down payment leaves the customer account apparently in debit and the advances account in credit. The aged balances and the follow-ups are thrown off by it, even though the cash position is right.

14.4 Analytic accounting

14.4.1 Creating the analysis dimensions

1. Open **Accounting** → **Configuration** → **Analytic Accounting** → **Analytic Plans**.
2. Create one plan per dimension of analysis: site, department, vehicle, activity.
3. In each plan, create the corresponding analytic accounts.

Note

Several plans coexist and cross one another: the same expense can be allocated both by site and by department. Each plan answers a distinct management question; opening one without knowing which produces data that nobody uses.

14.4.2 Allocating

The analytic distribution is filled in on invoice lines, on manual journal entries and on timesheets. Distribution models make it possible to apply a split automatically according to criteria: general ledger account, partner, product.

14.4.3 Analysing

Open **Accounting** → **Reporting** → **Management** → **Analytic Report** to consult expenses and income by dimension, and to measure profitability by site or by activity.

14.5 Managing the periods

14.5.1 Fiscal year

1. Open **Accounting** → **Configuration** → **Settings**.
2. In the **Fiscal Year** section, fill in the **Last Day**: the month and day the year ends on.
3. Save.

Note

There is no menu listing the years: the period is derived from that end date. For a year of a length other than twelve months (a first year, a change of closing date) enabling the corresponding option in the same section brings up explicit management of the years.

Watch out

This section belongs to the Enterprise edition, where it appears as soon as **Invoicing** is installed. In Community, the year-end date cannot be set from the interface.

14.5.2 Locking the periods

Locking protects the period up to the date set: a document posted with a date in that period is moved to the first open date, and the entries already posted in the period can no longer be changed. Five locks coexist, each with its own scope.

Lock	Scope
Lock Sales	Entries coming from the sales journals.
Lock Purchases	Entries coming from the purchase journals.
Lock Tax Return	Any entry carrying taxes. Odoo sets it itself when each VAT return is validated.
Lock Everything	All entries, whatever the journal.
Hard Lock	All entries as well, but with no exception possible and no going back.

1. Open **Accounting** → **Accounting** → **Closing** → **Lock Dates…**.
2. Fill in the dates you want.

3. Save.

Soft or hard: the difference

The first four locks are **soft**. They protect the period, but an accountant can lift them temporarily by recording an **exception**: it carries a reason, a period of validity, and stays on record.

The fifth, **Hard Lock**, admits no exception. Its help text says so without ambiguity: *This lock date is irreversible and does not allow any exception.* Once set, it cannot be moved back, by anyone.

Watch out

Only set the **Hard Lock** after the year has been definitively closed and the accounts approved. There is no way back from it in Odoo, which refuses both to remove that date and to move it back: a date set by mistake on a period still open freezes the accounts of that period.

The four soft locks are enough for day-to-day running. Keep the hard lock for what is genuinely closed.

Tip

The usual order is as follows: tax lock set by Odoo at every return validated, global lock at every accounts close, and hard lock once a year, after validation by the accountant.

Note

Lock dates belong to the Enterprise edition, where they are available as soon as **Invoicing** is installed. In Community, the securing of entries is still provided by the audit trail and by hashing, but no date can be set from the interface.

Watch out

The hard lock cannot be removed, not even by an administrator. It is set once the year is closed and the accounts filed, never “to see what happens”.

14.6 Tax returns

14.6.1 VAT return

1. Open **Accounting → Accounting → Closing → Tax Returns**.
2. Select the period.
3. Check the bases and the amounts: output VAT on sales, input VAT on purchases, balance payable or credit.
4. Check the points the report flags for attention.
5. Generate the tax closing entry.
6. File the return, electronically where the function is available.

Note

The returns available depend on the localisation installed; in France it is the VAT return, and the filing goes to the tax administration’s portal.

Note

Automated tax returns and their electronic filing belong to the Enterprise edition. In the Community edition, the bases are prepared from the tax reports and keyed in by hand on the administration's portal.

14.6.2 Setting the tax lock

The tax lock is set automatically at the end of the period declared when the return is validated and its closing entry generated. Any later entry affecting that period is then postponed, which guarantees that the accounts and the return agree.

14.7 Financial statements

The financial statements belong to the Enterprise edition, where they are available as soon as **Invoicing** is installed. They do not exist in Community. They are reached from the **Reporting** menu of **Accounting**, sorted by family.

Family	Report	Contents
Statement Reports	**Balance Sheet**	The financial position at a given date: what the company owns and what it owes.
	Profit and Loss	Income and expenses over a period, and the result that follows from them.
	Cash Flow Statement	Where the cash came from and where it went over the period.
Ledgers	**Trial Balance**	The debit and credit balances of every account. This is the control report: it must balance.
	General Ledger	The detail of the movements, account by account.
Partner Reports	**Partner Ledger**	The detail of the movements by third party.
	Aged Receivable	Receivables classified by how long they have been overdue.
	Aged Payable	Payables classified the same way.

Note

What is usually called the *aged balance* corresponds to the two *aged* reports: the receivable one for what is owed to you, the payable one for what you owe.

14.7.1 Reading a report

Every report shares the same toolbar, which governs what it shows.

Setting	What it governs
Period	The year or the interval chosen. This is the first filter to set.
Comparison	Adds a column for the **Previous Period** or for a period of your choosing, and a percentage variance column.
All Journals	Restricts the report to certain journals, useful to isolate an activity kept in a separate journal.
Posted Entries	This button carries the current state as its label: **Posted Entries**, or **With Draft Entries** if drafts are included. The **Draft Entries** entry in its menu switches between the two. Official reports are read on the posted entries.

Setting	What it governs
Report	Chooses the presentation variant. The French localisation installs one that follows the Plan Comptable Général.
Budget	Sets actuals against forecasts, where budgets are defined.

The **PDF** and **XLSX** buttons, on the left, export the report as it stands: comparison and filters included.

Note

Lines carrying a chevron unfold down to the account, then down to the originating entry. So you go from a balance sheet total to the document that explains it without leaving the report or building a search.

Watch out

A banner flags the *unposted entries* that exist in the period or before it. It warns that the report does not reflect everything: drafts are waiting, and the figures will move when they are posted.

Never send a report carrying that banner to a third party (accountant, bank, administration) without having dealt with the documents waiting.

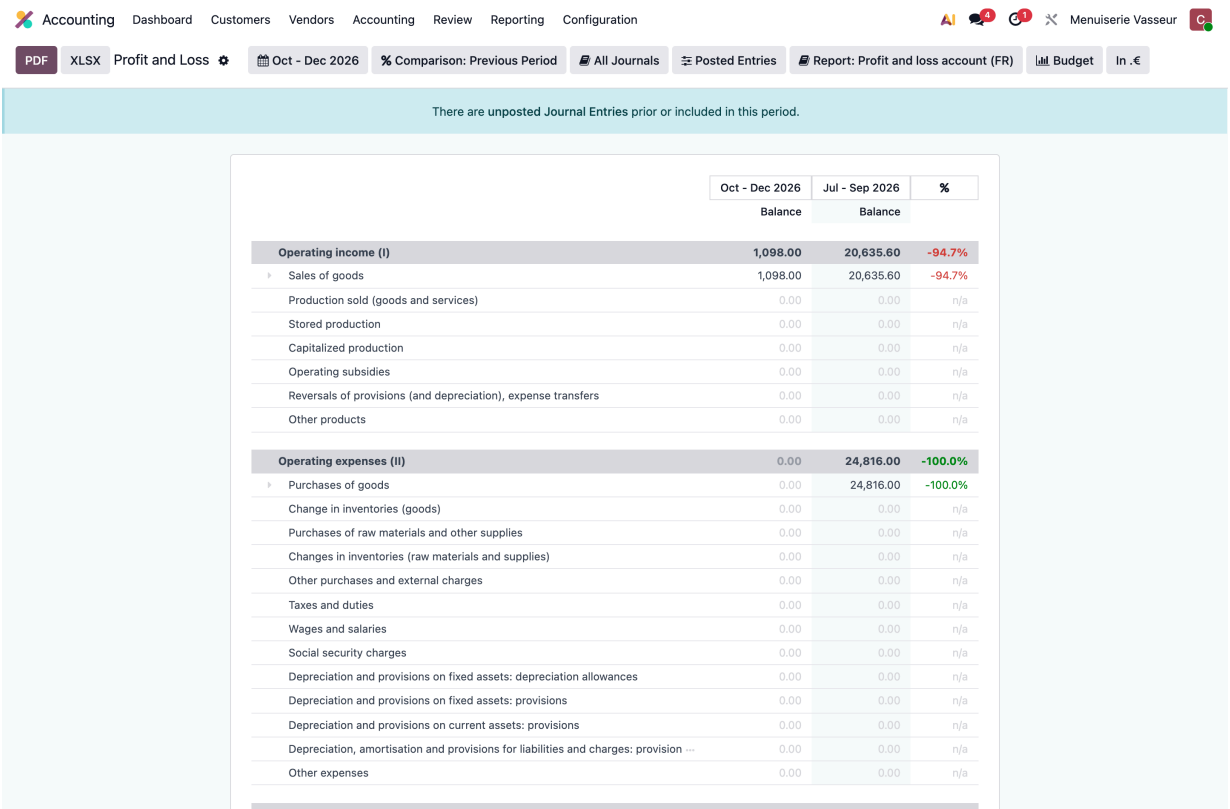


Figure 14.3: Profit and loss with a comparison

14.8 Annual report

Odoo lets you build the company's annual report from preconfigured templates, gathering the financial statements and the management commentary into a single document.

Watch out

This feature assumes three applications installed together: **Accounting**, **Knowledge** and **Sign**. Without them, the **Annual Report** entry does not appear in the menu, it is an add-on module that creates it, and that module only installs when all three are present.

The **Audit** menu then holds only the **Working Files**, which gather the reports and the supporting documents without the editorial dressing of the annual report.

1. Open **Accounting** → **Review** → **Audit** → **Annual Report**.
2. Click **New**.
3. In the creation window, fill in the title, the period (start date and end date) and the people responsible for the file.
4. Click **Save**: the report opens in the editor.

Note

The template is not offered in the creation window: Odoo applies it itself, and the field carrying it only appears in developer mode.

What Odoo prepares. The report is not a single document but a **tree of sections**, already structured by the template and summarised by an **Index** block at the top:

Section	What it carries
Attestation	The signed statement of the director or the accountant.
Balance Sheet and **Profit and Loss**	The financial statements for the year.
Annexes	The body of the report, subdivided: preamble, accounting principles and methods, fixed assets, inventory, financial resources, contextual information, financial position, performance, taxation.
Supporting Documents	The documents to attach to the file.

1. Open each section and complete it: management commentary, significant events, explanations of the variations.
2. Insert the financial statements into the body of the text, or attach existing documents.
3. **Add an Article** creates an extra section; **Load a Template** inserts a ready-made structure.
4. **Share** distributes the report, for reading or for editing.

Tip

The **Index** block is updated with **Refresh** and follows the actual tree. It is the table of contents of the file: start by checking there that nothing is missing before you write, rather than discovering an empty section on the final read-through.

Note

Sections can be reordered by dragging and dropping from the index, and folded away with **Hide sub-articles** when the tree gets long.

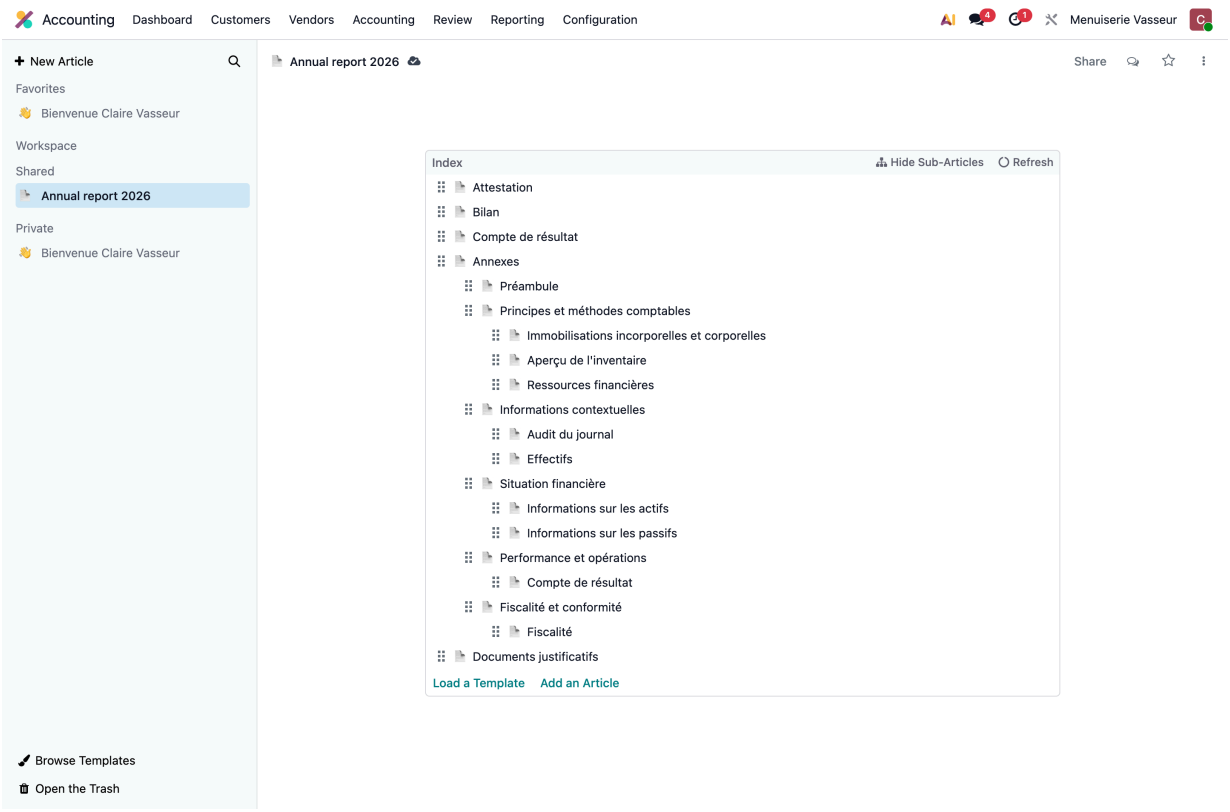


Figure 14.4: The annual report being edited

Note

The annual report is edited in the knowledge base interface, integrated into Accounting. The same editing actions as in the articles are available there.

14.9 Multi-currency

Check the company's currency. The **Currencies** block of the settings carries the **Main Currency**, the one the accounts are kept in.

Activate the currencies you use. The **Currencies** link in the same block opens the list: activate there the ones you invoice or buy in. An inactive currency is offered nowhere.

Keep the rates up to date.

1. Tick **Automatic Currency Rates**.
2. Choose the **Service** that supplies the rates: the **European Central Bank** for a company in the euro area.
3. Set the **Interval**: **Manually**, or an automatic frequency.
4. The **Next Run** date shows when the next update will take place; the icon beside it triggers it immediately.

Documents are entered in their original currency and converted into the company's currency for the accounts. The exchange differences arising on payment are recorded automatically in the accounts provided for that purpose.

Note

Automatic rate updating belongs to the Enterprise edition, where it is available as soon as **Invoicing** is installed. In Community, the rates are keyed in by hand on each currency record.

Watch out

Left on **Manually**, the service fetches no rate by itself: that is the default setting, and the update has to be triggered every time. A database that regularly invoices in foreign currency gains from switching to an automatic frequency, failing which the conversions are made at a rate that ages without anything saying so.

14.10 Multi-company

Where several entities coexist in the database:

- each company has its own chart of accounts, its own journals and its own sequences;
- users' access rights determine which companies they can see;
- transactions between entities can automatically generate the mirror documents: the sales invoice of one entity creating the vendor bill of the other.

Watch out

Check the active company before any entry. An entry posted in the wrong entity is corrected by a reversal, with the cash timing difference and the tax consequences that implies.

14.11 Closing the year

The **Review** menu of **Accounting** brings together the closing tools. It is arranged in the order in which they are used.

1. Make sure everything has been entered.

1. Open **Accounting → Review → Control → Journal Items** and replace the **Posted** filter with **Unposted**: the remaining drafts appear.
2. Deal with them or delete them. A forgotten draft throws off the reports without signalling itself anywhere other than in the warning banner.
3. Open **Accounting → Review → Control → Journal Audit**: the report lists the entries journal by journal, which makes it possible to spot a quiet period or a missing entry.

2. Identify what straddles the year end. The **Purchases** and **Sales** headings in the same menu flag the timing differences between the physical flows and the accounting flows:

Report	What it reveals
Bill To Receive	Goods received whose vendor bill has not arrived. The expense has to be recognised in the year.
Billed Not Received	The opposite: a bill recorded for goods not yet received.
Invoices To Be Issued	Deliveries made that have not yet been invoiced. The income belongs to the year.
Invoiced Not Delivered	Invoicing ahead of delivery.

3. Record the adjusting entries. Under the **Regularization Entries** heading of the **Review** menu of **Accounting** are three reports, which are not handled in the same way.

Report	What to do with it
Unrealized Currencies	It recognises the unrealised exchange differences on balances held in foreign currency. The **Adjustment Entry** button records the adjustment; it is always available.

Report	What to do with it
Deferred Revenues and **Deferred Expenses**	They list the income and the expenses to be carried to another year. The **Generate entry** button only appears if generation is set to **Manually & Grouped** in the settings.

4. Deal with the fixed assets. In **Accounting → Review → Inventory → Depreciation Schedule**, the report summarises the year's depreciation charges; **Loans Analysis**, in the same place, gives the loan instalments.

5. Reconcile and match. Reconcile every bank account in full (see section 14.3), then match the items on the control accounts and substantiate the remaining balances with the **Partner Ledger**.

6. Substantiate account by account. **Accounting → Review → Audit → Working Files** opens the review files. Each file carries the year under review and tracks progress account by account, through a status with four values:

Status	What it indicates
To Review	The account has not been substantiated yet.
Reviewed	The balance has been substantiated by the person who keeps the accounts.
Supervised	The substantiation has been checked by a second pair of eyes.
Anomaly	A discrepancy has been found and is still to be dealt with.

This is the tool that makes the review of the accounts tangible: where the previous steps produce reports, this one records **who substantiated what**, and separates the substantiation from its supervision.

7. Close the accounts.

1. Produce the final financial statements from the **Reporting** menu of **Accounting**.
2. Open **Accounting → Accounting → Closing → Lock Dates…** and set the **Lock Everything** at the year end.
3. Once the accounts have been filed, come back to the same place and set the **Hard Lock**.

The detail of the five locks and their effects is given in section 14.5.2.

Tip

Accounting → Review → Logs → Audit Trail retraces every change made to the documents. It is what an inspector will ask for, and it is also the way to understand after the event why a balance moved.

Note

The close is conducted with the accountant. Odoo produces the reports and secures the periods; judging the provisions and the accruals remains an accounting decision.

14.12 How it fits with the other applications

- **Sales**: confirmed orders generate the customer invoices.
- **Purchase**: orders and receipts feed the vendor bills.
- **Inventory**: stock movements produce the valuation entries.
- **Project**: time spent feeds the analytic costs and the invoicing.
- **Payroll**: payslips generate the personnel expense entries.

CHAPTER 15

Inventory

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER

- structure a warehouse into locations and choose the number of steps in your flows;
- process receipts and deliveries, including partial ones;
- set up automatic replenishment;
- carry out a physical count and trace a product by lot or serial number;
- understand stock valuation and its accounting consequences.

The **Inventory** application tracks stock quantities, orchestrates receipts and deliveries, organises the warehouse into locations and puts a financial value on the goods held.

15.1 Configuring inventory

Inventory → Configuration → Settings gathers some thirty options grouped into thematic blocks. Not all of them concern every organisation: the list below points out those that shape the way the application works, and those you can leave aside at the outset.

15.1.1 Operations

Option	What it brings
Packages	Groups goods into an identified container (a sealed box, a wrapped pallet) whose contents are tracked through the successive operations.
Batch, Wave & Cluster Transfers	Groups several pickings into a single round for the operator, instead of one round trip per order.
Picking Policy	Sets the default behaviour on orders: **Ship products as soon as available, with back orders** or **Ship all products at once**.
Partner-Specific Instructions	Displays on the operations an instruction specific to the customer or the vendor: dock hours, access, on-site contact.
Reception Report	On receipt, shows which pending sales orders the goods can be allocated to.
Annual Inventory Day and Month	Sets the reference date of the annual count, to which the cyclic counts are attached.
Quality	Inserts control points into the transfer operations. Belongs to a separate application.

15.1.2 Shipping

Option	What it brings
Delivery Methods	Computes and invoices shipping costs, from rate tables or through a connection to a carrier.
Email Confirmation	Notifies the customer by email when the delivery order is validated.
Text Confirmation	Does the same by SMS. Consumes credits.
Signature	Asks for a signature on handover, kept with the delivery order.

A **Shipping Connectors** block then offers the carrier integrations. They compute the costs at the carrier's real rates, print the labels and bring back parcel tracking.

Four points set them apart from the other settings.

They all belong to the Enterprise edition. None is available in Community, where shipping is invoiced through the rate tables of the **Delivery Methods**.

Not all of them are activated here. Some appear without a checkbox, accompanied by the note *(please go to Home>Apps to install)*: they are installed from **Apps**, not from this screen.

Several are specific to a country or an area. bpost addresses companies established in Belgium, USPS those operating in the United States, Envia.com Mexico and the United States. Activating a connector outside its area brings nothing: the rates and the services offered do not cover the shipment.

Each one assumes a contract with the carrier, along with credentials for its technical interface. The connector does not create the commercial relationship, it builds on it.

Watch out

Several carriers have renewed their technical interface, and for some of them Odoo ships two modules: the old one, kept for the databases still using it, and the new one. The credentials are not interchangeable between the two.

Before installing a connector, check in **Apps** that you are indeed picking the current version: the one whose description does not mention a legacy module to be replaced.

15.1.3 Traceability

Option	What it brings
Lots & Serial Numbers	Activates upstream and downstream traceability. Essential in food, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics and for any product subject to recall.
Consignment	Allows you to hold stock belonging to a third party, or to leave stock at a customer's premises, without transfer of ownership.

15.1.4 Warehouse

Option	What it brings
Storage Locations	Subdivides the warehouse into zones, aisles and locations. Without it, stock is known by warehouse, with no finer positioning.
Multi-Step Routes	Allows receipt and delivery flows in several steps: quality control, picking then shipping.

Watch out

Storage Locations is a prerequisite for **Multi-Step Routes**. Activate both if you plan a quality control on receipt or a picking step separate from shipping.

These two options are easy to switch on and hard to switch off: the documents created in the meantime carry locations and steps that would no longer make sense.

15.1.5 Advanced Scheduling

These three settings shift the dates computed by Odoo in order to absorb the unexpected.

Setting	Effect
Replenishment Horizon	How far ahead future needs are analysed, in days. A wide horizon anticipates the orders already known; a short horizon sticks to what is urgent and keeps stock down.
Security Lead Time for Sales	Brings pickings forward by a number of days, to keep a margin ahead of the date promised to the customer.
Days to Purchase	Time needed to confirm a purchase order, added to the vendor lead time.

15.1.6 The blocks covered elsewhere

- **Barcode**: activates the **Barcode Scanner** and the associated scanning settings.
- **Products**: **Variants** and **Units of Measure & Packagings**, covered in chapter 9.
- **Valuation**: **Landed Costs**, to add an extra transport or customs cost to the value of the product (see section 15.8).
- **Logistics**: **Dropshipping** and **Replenish on Order (MTO)**, covered in chapter 10.

Tip

At the outset, activate only what you are certain to use. Every option adds fields, screens or steps, and the initial simplicity makes the tool easier to take on. The settings can be added later as needs arise, with nothing to redo.

15.2 Structuring the warehouse

15.2.1 Creating a warehouse

1. Open **Inventory → Configuration → Warehouse Management → Warehouses**.
2. Click on **New**.
3. Fill in the name, the short name (five characters at most, carried into every transfer reference) and the address.
4. Save.

The warehouse record also carries the number of steps of its receipts and of its deliveries. That is the setting which governs the shape of the flows, and through them the number of documents created at each movement: it is covered in chapter 16, together with the routes it puts in place.

15.2.2 Organising the locations

1. Open **Inventory → Configuration → Warehouse Management → Locations**.
2. Create the hierarchy matching the physical organisation: zones, aisles, bays, levels.
3. Provide for the service locations: receipt, quality control, output, quarantine, scrap.

Tip

Adopt a location naming scheme that is legible and regular, of the type `ZONE/AISLE/BAY/LEVEL`. It determines picking speed and the quality of the cyclic counts.

Note

Once the locations are created, two mechanisms automate their use: the putaway rules, which direct incoming goods to the right location, and the removal strategies, which determine which stock to draw from on the way out. They are covered in chapter 16.

15.3 Receiving

15.3.1 The three-step flow

When the warehouse is configured in three steps, the goods pass successively through:

1. **Receipt**: the delivered quantities are recorded and placed in the input location.
2. **Quality control**: the goods are transferred to the control area and checked. If they are not compliant, they go back to the vendor or into quarantine.
3. **Storage**: the accepted goods join the storage locations and become available.

Each step is validated independently. The **Next Transfer** smart button, at the top of the document, opens the next step directly without going back through the menus.

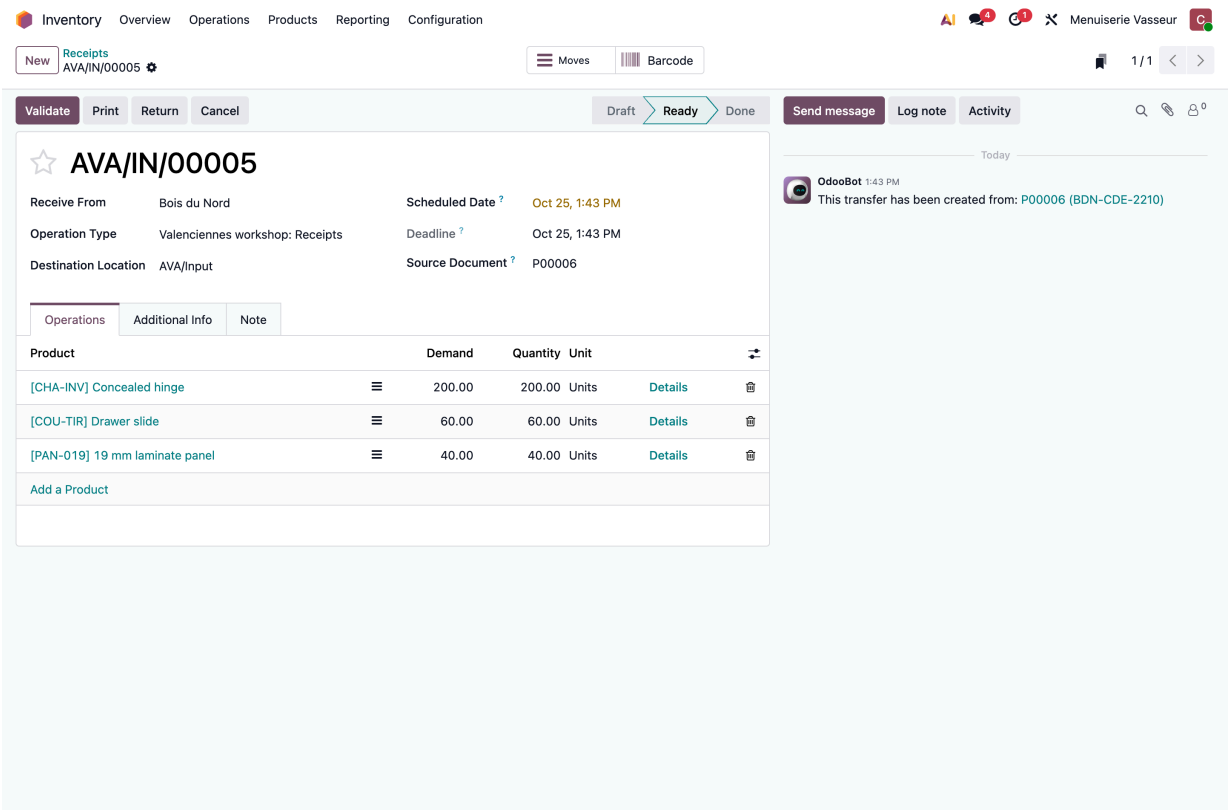


Figure 15.1: Receipt to be validated

15.3.2 Partial receipt

Enter the quantities actually received, then validate. Odoo offers to create a backorder for the missing quantities, which stays pending until the follow-up delivery.

15.4 Shipping

15.4.1 The two-step flow

1. **Picking**: the items are picked from the storage locations and gathered in the output area.
2. **Delivery**: the parcel is made up, the transport documents are printed, the goods leave.

Tip

Reach the transfers from the sales order rather than from the **Transfers** menu: you then see only the movements linked to that order, which removes the risk of validating the wrong document.

15.4.2 Partial delivery

Enter the quantities actually shipped and validate. The backorder created lets you track what remains to be delivered, and the sales order stays open as long as quantities are still due.

15.5 Replenishing

The replenishment screen, the reordering rules and their trigger are described in section 10.5.1. What follows completes that configuration with the question of lead times, which belongs to logistics.

15.5.1 Triggering at the latest moment

Odoo does not order as soon as the threshold is crossed: it computes the date at which the supply must be launched for the goods to arrive on time, by adding up the lead times along the chain, vendor lead time, manufacturing lead time, internal receipt lead time.

For a product whose total lead time is five days and whose need falls in ten days, the order is launched after five days, not immediately.

Note

This behaviour keeps tied-up stock down, but it assumes realistic lead times. If your vendor lead times are irregular, add a safety margin to the declared lead time rather than give up the mechanism.

Lead times are set at three levels: the vendor lead time, in the **Purchase** tab of the product record; the manufacturing lead time, on the bill of materials; the warehouse safety lead times, in **Inventory → Configuration → Settings**.

15.6 Counting stock

15.6.1 Carrying out a physical count

1. Open **Inventory → Operations → Adjustments → Physical Inventory**.
2. Filter on the locations or the products to be counted.
3. Enter the quantities counted in the **Counted** column: the **Difference** column computes itself.
4. Click on **Apply** to adjust the stock.

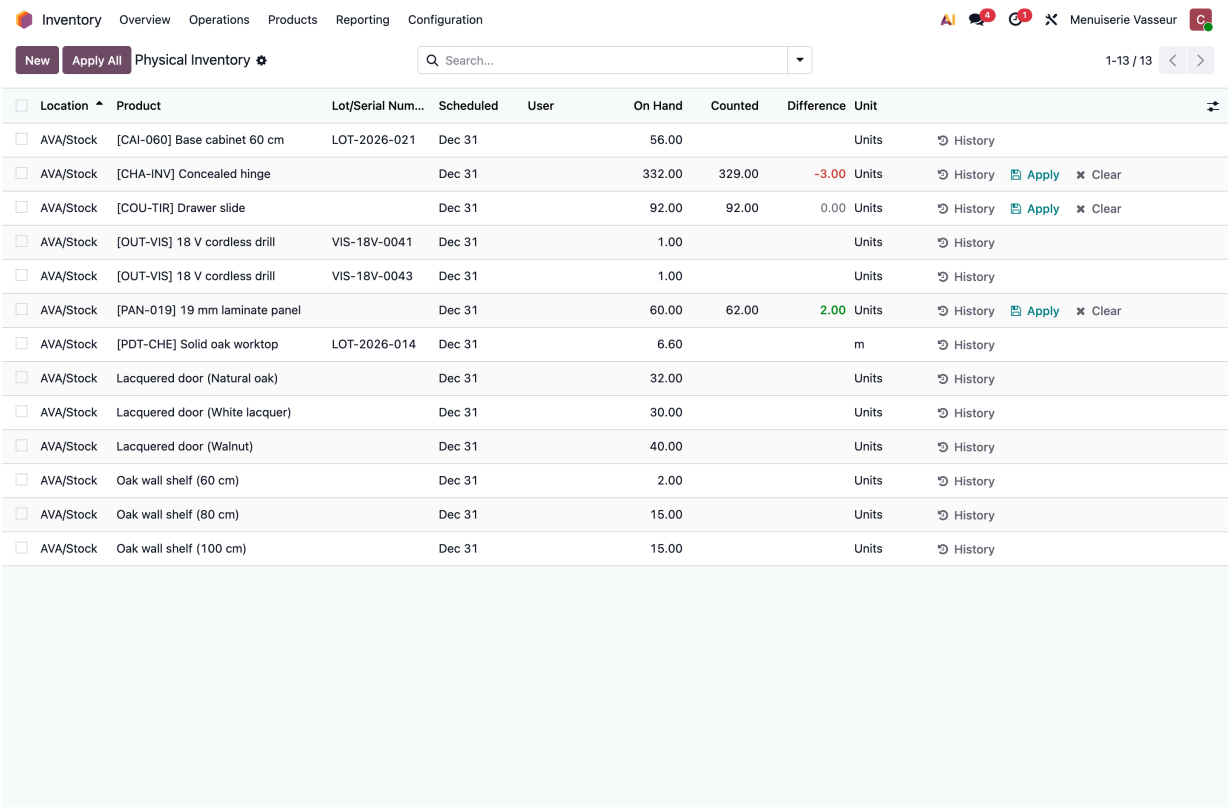


Figure 15.2: Physical inventory screen

Watch out

Applying an inventory changes the value of the stock. In the accounts, this difference is taken up by the adjustment entry posted at closing. An entry is only produced as soon as the inventory is applied under **Perpetual (at invoicing)** valuation, and only if the inventory adjustment location carries a **Loss Account**. On a live database, this operation is planned with the accountant, on a controlled date.

Note

The screen only lists the non-zero stock lines of the internal locations, including those whose quantity is negative. A product never received, or whose stock has come back to zero, does not appear there: to give it a stock, click on **New** in this screen, choose the product and the location, enter the counted quantity, then apply.

15.6.2 Cyclic counts

Rather than one full annual count, part of the warehouse is counted at a time, at regular intervals. The workload is spread over the year and the quantities stay reliable at all times, without bringing the business to a halt for a whole day.

The frequency is set **per location**, on the record of each one.

1. Open **Inventory → Configuration → Warehouse Management → Locations**.
2. Open the location concerned.
3. Fill in the **Inventory Frequency**, in days: `30` for a monthly count, `90` for a quarterly one.
4. Save.

Odoo then computes the **Next Expected** date from the **Last Inventory** and the frequency. Each count applied updates the date of the last inventory, and the next one is recomputed by itself: the schedule maintains itself without intervention.

The counts due show up in the physical inventory screen, where a filter on the scheduled date isolates what is to be done.

Note

A frequency left at zero (the default value) disables the mechanism for that location. The setting is moreover only meaningful for internal and transit locations: it has no effect on the virtual vendor or customer locations.

Tip

Match the frequency to what is at stake rather than applying it uniformly. Locations with high turnover or high value are worth counting every month; dormant stock areas are content with one annual pass. That is the very principle of cyclic counting: concentrate the effort where the discrepancy costs.

Note

The reference date of the annual count is set separately, through **Annual Inventory Day and Month**, in the application settings.

15.6.3 Taking unusable goods out of stock

1. Open **Inventory → Operations → Adjustments → Scrap**.
2. Click on **New**.
3. Select the product, the quantity and the reason.
4. Validate.

The quantity leaves the available stock and joins a scrap location. The corresponding value is taken out of the stock valuation and recognised as an expense.

15.7 Tracing products

15.7.1 Activating traceability

1. Open the product record, **General Information** tab.
2. Tick **Track Inventory**: the product is tracked in stock.
3. Next to it, choose **By Unique Serial Number**: each unit has its own number.
4. Save.

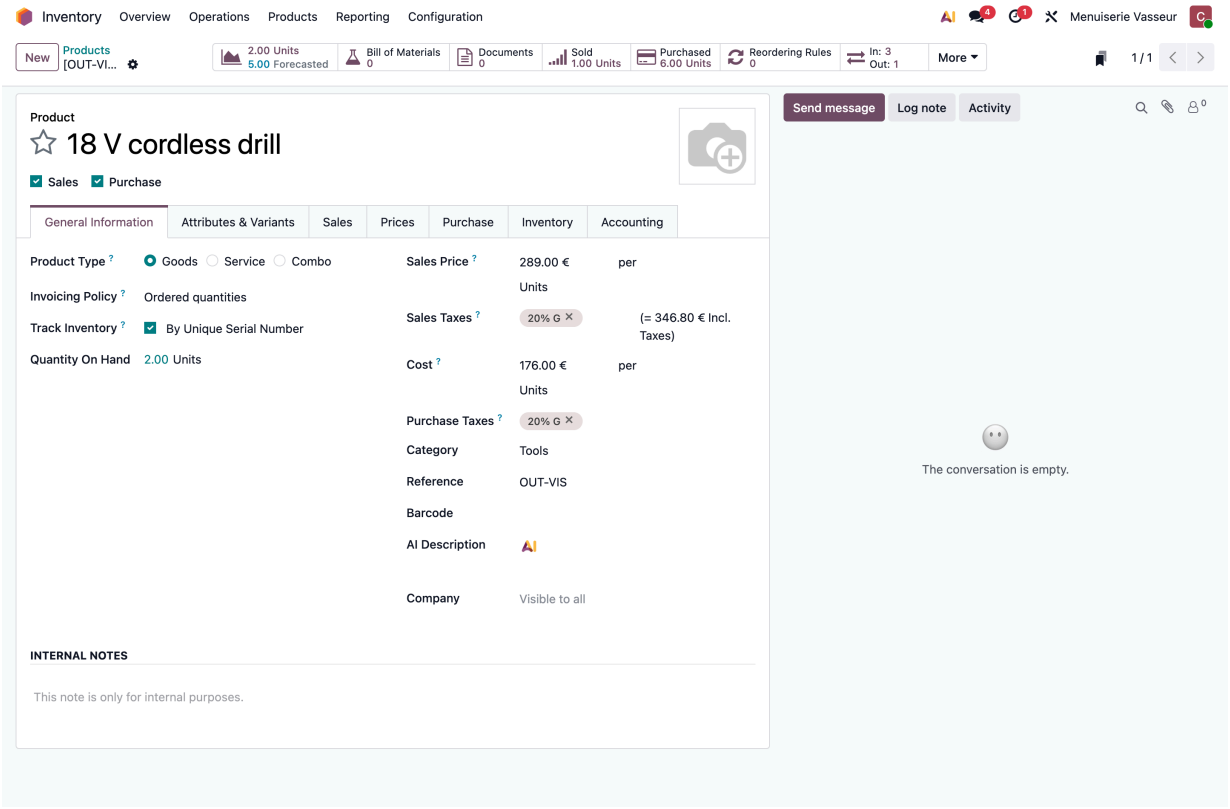


Figure 15.3: Tracked in stock by serial number

For tracking in homogeneous groups, the same line takes **By Lots**. **By Quantity** keeps the product tracked in stock, without a number.

15.7.2 Using lots day to day

On receipt as in manufacturing, Odoo asks for the lot number. On delivery, the lots actually shipped have to be designated. A lot groups several units received or manufactured together: the quantity on a line can exceed 1.

To reconstruct the history of a lot, open **Inventory → Products → Lots / Serial Numbers**, select the lot then click the **Traceability** smart button.

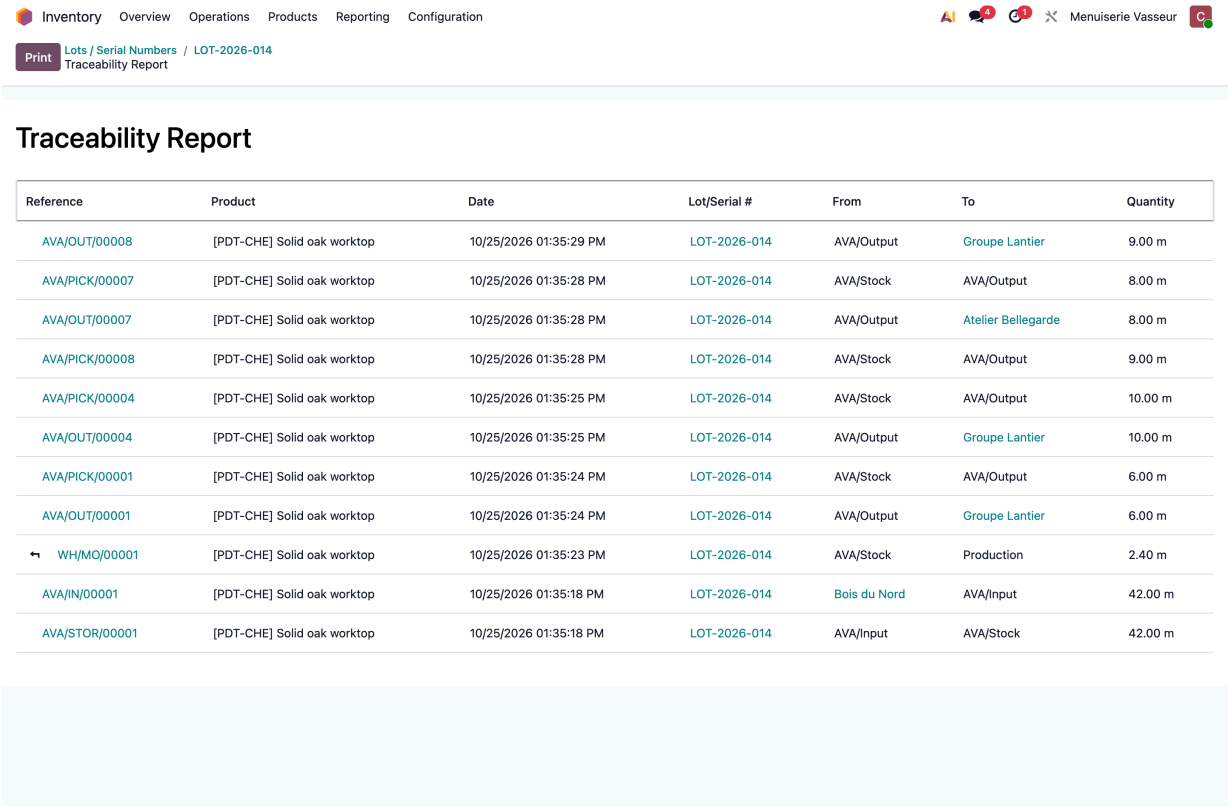


Figure 15.4: Traceability of a lot

Note

Traceability is a regulatory obligation in food, pharmaceuticals and aeronautics. It also determines your ability to confine a product recall to a few customers rather than to the whole customer base.

15.7.3 Tracking a unit by its serial number

By Unique Serial Number identifies each unit by its own number. The quantity on each line is 1: Odoo rejects any other quantity. The same number cannot be in two places at once.

The **Lots & Serial Numbers** setting, in the **Traceability** block of the settings, has to be ticked. Without it, the **Tracking** field and the numbers menu stay hidden.

On a receipt, the operation type lets you create a number that does not exist yet. On a delivery, you designate a number already in stock.

1. Open the receipt.
2. On the product line, click **Details**.
3. The **Detailed Operations** window opens. One line is one unit.
4. Enter the number in **Lot/Serial Number**, or click **Generate Serials/Lots**.
5. In the **Generate Serial numbers** window, fill in the **First Serial Number** and the **Number of SN**, then click **Generate**.
6. Check that each line carries quantity 1, then validate the receipt.

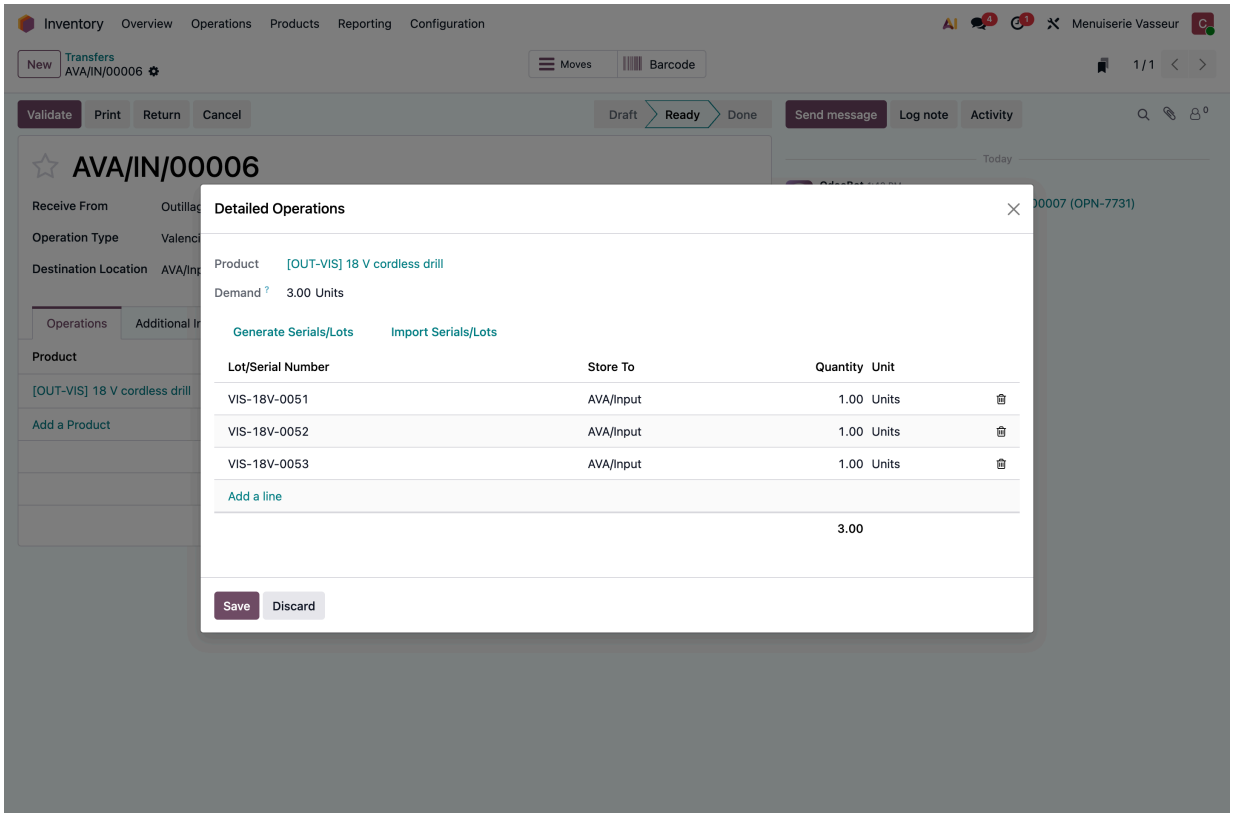


Figure 15.5: Serial numbers on a receipt

Tip

Numbers already known, engraved by the vendor or taken from a file, are imported with **Import Serials/Lots**: one number per line.

1. Open the delivery order.
2. On the line, click **Details**.
3. Choose the **Lot/Serial Number** that leaves the stock. The quantity stays at 1.
4. Validate.

Watch out

A delivery does not create a number. On its operation type, **Use Existing ones** is ticked and **Create New** is not. The reverse holds for a receipt: **Create New** is ticked. Both boxes are set in **Inventory → Configuration → Warehouse Management → Operations Types**, in the **Lots/Serial Numbers** group.

When stock already exists without a number at the moment tracking is switched on, the units on hand receive their number through an inventory count. The number is not typed on the line already in stock: a new line is required.

1. Open **Inventory → Operations → Adjustments → Physical Inventory**.
2. On the product lines that have no number, enter 0 in the **Counted** column.
3. Add one line per unit: the product, the location, the **Lot/Serial Number**, and 1 in **Counted**.
4. Click **Apply**.

The history of a unit is found the same way as a lot's. Open **Inventory → Products → Lots / Serial Numbers**, select the number, then click the **Traceability** smart button. The report retraces that unit's receipt and its outgoing moves.

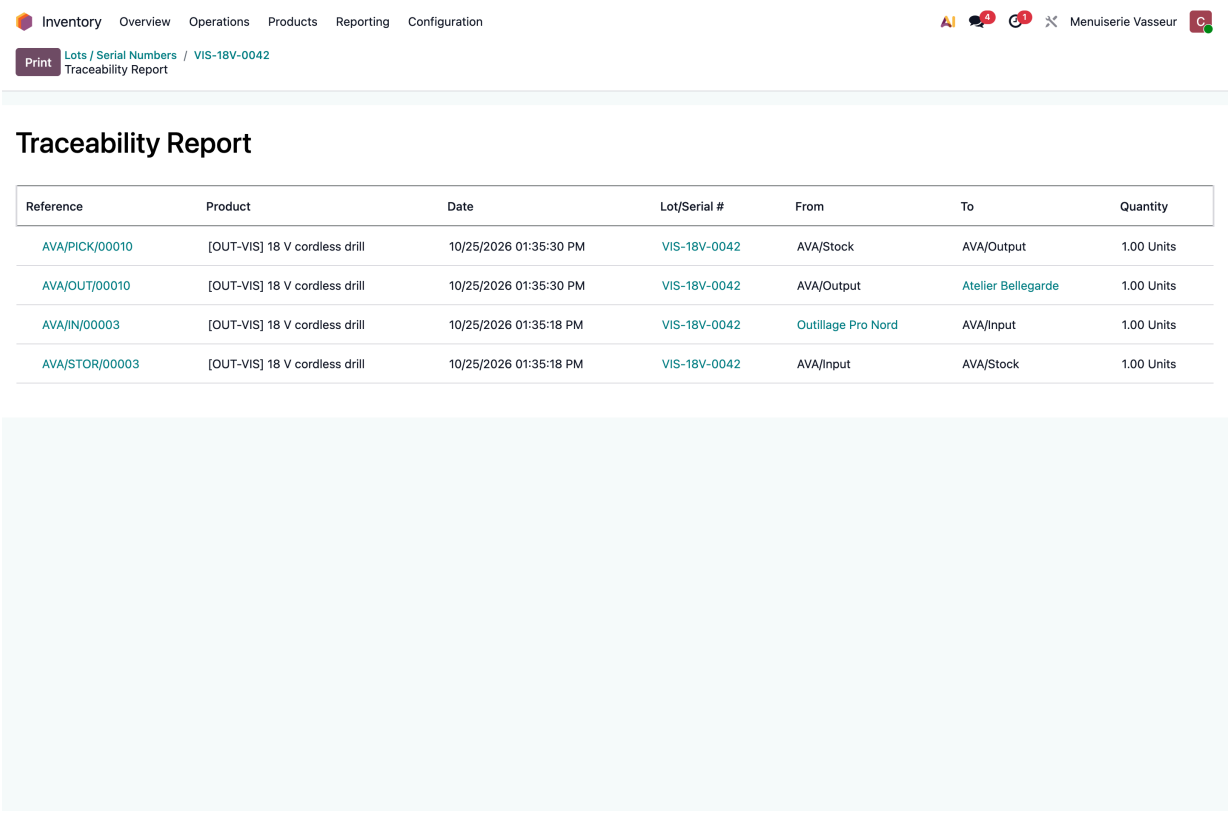


Figure 15.6: Traceability of a serial number

15.8 Valuing stock

Valuing means turning the quantities held into a financial value: the one that appears in the assets of the balance sheet. Two decisions govern it: **how** the unit cost is established, and **when** the accounting entry is produced. They are taken with the accountant.

15.8.1 What gives an incoming movement its value

Contrary to a widespread idea, the value of incoming goods is not simply the price on the order. Odoo looks for the most reliable information available, and works down a cascade of sources until it finds something with which to value the quantity received.

1 **Manual correction** entered on the movement, if there is one.
↓ if quantity remains to be valued
2 **Vendor bill**: the amount actually billed.
↓ if quantity remains to be valued
3 **Manufacturing order**: the cost of the components and the operations.
↓ if quantity remains to be valued
4 **Purchase order**: the negotiated price, before billing.
↓ if quantity remains to be valued
5 **Customer return**: the value of the original outgoing movement.
↓ if quantity remains to be valued
6 **Product cost**: the value carried by the product record.

\+ **Landed costs**: transport, customs, insurance, added on top.

The practical consequence

The bill takes precedence over the order. A receipt valued at the purchase order price is **revalued** when the vendor bill arrives with a different amount , and the difference falls on the value of the remaining stock, not on what has already left.

That is what explains how a stock value can move without any goods having circulated: it was enough for a bill to be posted.

Watch out

Do not validate a purchase order at zero price. A line at zero is information like any other for the cascade: Odoo takes it and values the receipt at zero. It does not fall back on the cost from the product record, because the quantity has already found a source.

The consequences differ according to the method:

- in **average cost**, the average is pulled down: receiving a hundred units at zero on a stock of a hundred units at €10 brings the cost down to €5;
- in **FIFO**, a layer at zero is created: the units leaving it will be counted at no cost, and the margin on those sales will appear whole;
- in **standard price**, the product cost does not move, but the entire amount ends up in the price difference, which makes that account unreadable.

The harm lasts: the distorted cost serves as the basis for the following computations, and spreads to the later receipts and deliveries.

Tip

When a price is genuinely unknown (a sample, free goods, a donation) enter an approximate value on the order line all the same. A reasonable estimate is better than a zero, and the vendor bill will correct the amount afterwards if it carries one.

For goods that truly have no cost, the clean way is an inventory adjustment, which brings the quantity in without going through a valued order.

15.8.2 Choosing the costing method

The **Costing Method** determines how the unit cost is established and, through it, what the remaining stock is worth.

Method	Principle
Standard Price	The cost is a value set by hand on the product record. No movement recomputes it. The differences with the price actually paid are recognised separately, on a dedicated account.
Average Cost (AVCO)	The cost is recomputed at each receipt, in proportion to the quantities. It smooths out variations in purchase price.
First In First Out (FIFO)	Each receipt forms a layer that keeps its price. Outgoing movements consume the layers in order of arrival.

The same stock, three values

Let us follow a product over three movements. It is bought twice, at different prices, then partly sold. Its standard cost has been set at €12 on its record.

Movement	Stock	Standard price	AVCO	FIFO
Receipt of 10 units, billed at €10 each	10	€120	€100	€100
Receipt of 10 units, billed at €20 each	20	€240	€300	€300
Delivery of 15 units	5	€60	€75	€100
Unit cost after these movements		**€12**	**€15**	**€20**

The columns read as follows:

- **Standard price**: everything is counted at €12, on the way in as on the way out, whatever the price billed. The 5 remaining units are therefore worth 5 × €12. The difference with the €300 actually paid is recognised on the price difference account.
- **AVCO**: after the second receipt, the cost becomes the average of the two purchases: €300 ÷ 20 = €15. The delivery is counted at that cost, and the 5 remaining units are worth 5 × €15.
- **FIFO**: the 15 units shipped are taken in order of arrival: the first 10 at €10, then 5 at €20. Only 5 units from the second receipt remain, valued at €20 each.

Same goods, same bills, same quantity on the shelf , and anywhere from €60 to €100 on the balance sheet. The choice of method is therefore not a matter of presentation: it changes the accounting result and the margin shown on sales.

Standard price

The cost is a decision, not an observation: you set it on the product record, and it only moves if you change it. Incoming and outgoing movements are counted at that value, whatever the price actually billed.

The difference between the price paid and the cost retained does not disappear for all that: it is recognised on the **price difference account**, where it can be read and analysed separately. That is precisely the point of the method: to isolate the drift in purchase prices instead of diluting it in the value of the stock.

When to choose it. A production whose theoretical cost price is known and which you want to compare with the actual one. A catalogue of components with stable prices. A need for predictable costs for margin computation.

Watch out

Changing the cost on the product record does not only affect the movements to come: Odoo revalues the stock held and records the operation, traced with the old value, the new one and its author. On a live database, a cost revision is therefore an accounting act, to be planned and dated.

Tip

This method only makes sense if someone revises the costs periodically. A standard price left as it is for two years gives a false stock value and an unreadable difference account. Set the revision frequency from the moment you go live.

Average cost (AVCO)

At each receipt, Odoo recomputes the cost as the weighted average of what is held and what has arrived. Outgoing movements are counted at that cost, but do not change it: only receipts move it.

An increase in purchase price therefore feeds through gradually, damped by the stock already held. Receiving a hundred units at €20 while holding a thousand at €10 only brings the cost to €10.90.

When to choose it. The most common case. Interchangeable items, bought regularly at prices that fluctuate moderately, where it is neither useful nor possible to distinguish one supply from another.

Note

Average cost is sensitive to small stocks. On an item of which only one unit is left, a receipt at an unusual price moves the cost by half. The smoothing effect assumes a quantity held that is significant against the quantities received.

First in first out (FIFO)
Each receipt forms a layer, which keeps its entry price. Outgoing movements consume the layers in order of arrival: the oldest first, then the next.

The remaining stock is therefore valued at the most recent prices, which makes this the method closest to economic reality , and the only one to give, in a period of rising prices, a balance sheet value consistent with the replacement cost.

When to choose it. Goods with volatile prices, where the gap between supplies is significant. An accounting or tax requirement to track by layers. Products for which you want the margin shown to reflect the real cost of what has been sold.

Note

The tracking is heavier: Odoo maintains the layers and their remainders, which makes the history bulkier. In return, the value of each outgoing movement can be justified unit by unit.

Watch out

In FIFO, the cost shown on the product record is an indicator recomputed from the remaining layers, not a value you set. Changing it by hand has no effect on the valuation, which stays governed by the layers.

Watch out

The method is not to be changed lightly on a database already in use. Moving from one method to another means reworking the existing valuation, an operation conducted with the accountant and dated precisely.

15.8.3 Choosing when the entry is made

The **Inventory Valuation** decides when accounting records the stock variations.

Mode	Behaviour
Periodic (at closing)	No entry is produced as movements occur. The stock value is tracked in **Inventory**, and an adjustment entry is posted at the closing of the period.
Perpetual (at invoicing)	Entries are produced as you go, as the purchase and sales invoices are posted. The stock account reflects the value at all times.

Note

Perpetual mode hinges on the **invoices**, not on the physical movements. Receiving goods therefore produces no entry as long as the vendor bill is not posted: it is the bill that carries the final amount.

Watch out

In perpetual mode, every posted invoice writes into the stock accounts. The choice of mode and of accounts is irreversible in practice and must be made with the accountant, before going live.

15.8.4 Setting it up

The two settings are made on the product category, which also carries the accounts.

1. Open **Inventory** → **Configuration** → **Products** → **Categories**.
2. Select the category.
3. Fill in the **Costing Method**: **Standard Price**, **Average Cost (AVCO)** or **First In First Out (FIFO)**.
4. Fill in the **Inventory Valuation**: **Periodic (at closing)** or **Perpetual (at invoicing)**.
5. In perpetual valuation, check the **Stock Account** and the **Stock Variation**.
6. In **Standard Price** combined with perpetual valuation, a **Price Difference Account** is added: fill that one in as well.
7. Save.

Tip

Group into a single category the products that share an accounting treatment, not those that look alike in the catalogue. Resold goods and in-house manufacturing belong to different accounts, even if they address the same customers.

15.8.5 Valuing by lot

The **Valuation by Lot/Serial** option on the product record refines the computation: each lot keeps its own value, instead of being merged into the product cost.

It is justified when the lots have genuinely different entry costs: vintages, supplies from distinct origins, materials whose price varies sharply.

Note

It assumes traceability by lots is activated. An untracked product cannot be valued by lot: the setting disappears from its record.

15.8.6 What moves the value

Four families of events change the value of the stock.

Event	Effect
An incoming movement	Adds the value determined by the cascade described above, and recomputes the unit cost in AVCO as in FIFO.
An outgoing movement	Removes the corresponding value: at average cost, at the oldest layer, or at standard price depending on the method.
A vendor bill	Revalues the receipts it covers, if its amount differs from the price ordered.
An inventory adjustment	Recognises a quantity discrepancy and the corresponding value.

15.8.7 The case of negative stock

Odoo does not forbid shipping goods it does not hold. Validating a delivery with no stock available works: the quantity goes negative, and nothing stands in the way.

That flexibility is useful (it lets you ship without waiting for a forgotten receipt to be entered) but it has a price, and that price falls precisely on valuation.

Watch out

In average cost, the weighted average stops being an average. As long as the quantity is negative, outgoing movements are counted at the last known cost; and at the first receipt that brings the stock back to positive, Odoo *replaces* the average cost with the price of that receipt instead of averaging

it in. The accumulated history is lost: a single receipt at an atypical price then sets the cost of the product.

In FIFO, there is no layer left to consume. Outgoing movements are valued at the cost carried by the product record, for want of anything better, and the gap with reality is only absorbed at the following receipts.

The consequences go beyond valuation. Negative stock distorts the computation of needs, since replenishment starts from a quantity that does not exist; it makes the physical count hard to reconcile; and it hides the original error, which is almost always a receipt not entered or an outgoing movement recorded twice.

Tip

Watch negative quantities rather than trying to forbid them: a filter on stock below zero, consulted every week, lets you trace back to the missing operation while it can still be identified. After a few weeks, nobody knows any more what happened.

To this are added the **landed costs** (transport, customs, insurance) which spread a cost invoice over the receipts concerned and are added to the value of the stock. They assume the **Landed Costs** option is active.

Note

Goods held in **consignment**, on behalf of a third party, are not valued: they take up space without appearing in the assets, since they do not belong to the company.

15.9 Analysing

15.9.1 Built-in reports

The **Reporting** menu of **Inventory** gives access to the standard analyses.

Report	What it shows
Stock	The quantities held per product: **On Hand**, **Free to Use**, **Incoming** and **Outgoing**, the **Forecasted** column being added through the column selector.
Locations	The detail of the stock location by location, down to the lot. This is the view to use to find out *where* goods are.
Moves History	The detail of each incoming and outgoing movement, line by line: which product, which quantity, from where to where, when, under which document.
Moves Analysis	The same data aggregated, to be crossed by period, product, category or operation type. This is the view of trends, where the previous one is the view of facts.
Performance	The indicators of lead time compliance and service quality.

Note

Locations only appears once storage locations or consignment have been activated, or in developer mode: without them, stock is known by warehouse and the view would have nothing to show. **Performance** belongs to the Enterprise edition and is only displayed in developer mode.

Tip

To answer “where is this item?”, take **Locations**. For “what happened to this item?”, take **Moves History**. For “how are our outgoing movements evolving?”, take **Moves Analysis**. These three questions come up constantly and call for three different screens.

15.9.2 Logistics dashboards

Three ready-to-use dashboards complete these reports.

1. Open the **Dashboards** application.
2. In the left-hand panel, select the **Logistics** section.
3. Choose the dashboard you want:
   - **Warehouse Daily Operations**: progress of the tasks and of the scheduled activities;
   - **Operation analysis**: logistics efficiency indicators;
   - **Warehouse Metrics**: stock value and quantity.

The section has one more, **Manufacturing**, when the **Manufacturing** application is installed.

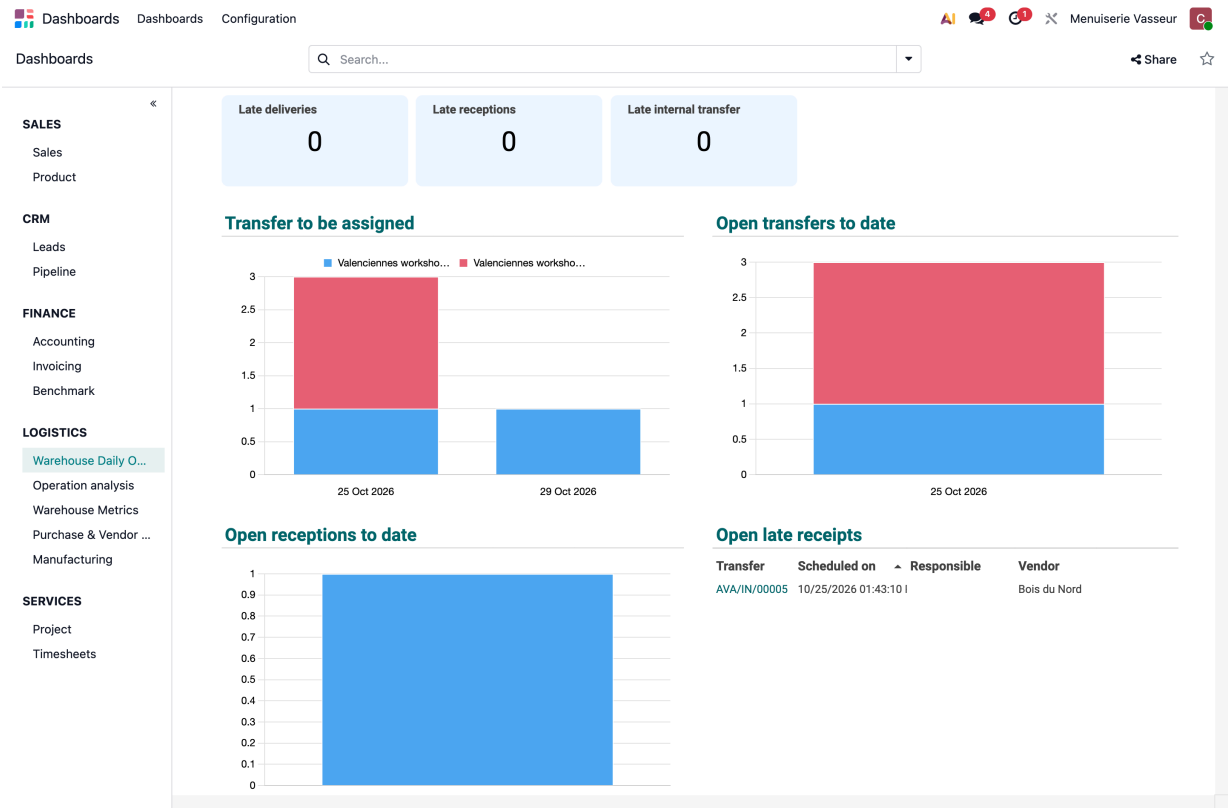


Figure 15.7: Warehouse operations dashboard

Note

Warehouse Daily Operations is visible to any **Inventory** user; **Operation analysis** and **Warehouse Metrics** are reserved for administrator access. The rights are set in the **Dashboards** application.

15.10 Key points

- Define the warehouse structure before entering the first movement.
- Only add receipt or delivery steps where a real check takes place.
- Fill in realistic lead times: they govern all the automatic triggers.
- Prefer regular cyclic counts to a single annual inventory.
- Set the valuation method with the accountant, before going live.

CHAPTER 16

Routes and flow rules

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER

- understand what a route is and what it is for;
- set the number of receipt and delivery steps;
- know at which level to assign a route and which one wins;
- supply one warehouse from another;
- diagnose a flow that does not trigger as expected.

A route describes **the path goods take**: where they start from, where they pass through, where they arrive. It is the notion that governs the behaviour of the whole of Inventory, what gets created automatically, in which order and at what moment.

The subject has a reputation for being technical. It only appears so: everyday needs are settled by a few checkboxes, and you only go down to the level of the rules for genuinely unusual flows.

16.1 The principle

Take a delivery. In its simplest form, the goods leave stock and go to the customer: one operation. In an organised warehouse, they are first picked from the shelves, then packed, then handed to the carrier: three operations, three documents, three successive places.

A **route** is the description of that sequence. It is made up of **rules**, each describing one segment of the journey: from where to where, under which operation type, with which lead time.

What a route produces

A route moves nothing by itself. It tells Odoo which documents to create, and in which order, when a need appears: a sales order to be delivered, a stock that has fallen below its threshold, a component to be supplied to a workshop.

Confirming an order on a warehouse in three steps therefore creates three chained transfers, whereas the same order on a one-step warehouse creates only one. The user's action is identical; it is the route that differs.

16.2 The direction of a rule

Each rule carries an **Action**, which says in which direction the goods circulate.

Action	Behaviour
Pull From	The need calls the goods. A demand is born at the destination, and the rule goes to the source to find something to satisfy it. This is the direction of most flows: a sales order triggers a picking, which in turn triggers a withdrawal.
Push To	The arrival of the goods causes their next movement. As soon as a product enters somewhere, the rule moves it on to the next place. This is the direction of receipt flows: what arrives at the dock goes to control, then to the shelves.
Pull & Push	Both at once, for a segment that must respond as much to a need expressed downstream as to an arrival upstream.

The second decisive setting is the **Supply Method**, which says what the rule does when the goods are not where they should be.

Method	Behaviour
Take From Stock	The rule draws on what is available. If nothing is available, the operation stays pending: no supply is triggered.
Trigger Another Rule	The rule does not look at the stock and systematically calls the upstream step: a purchase, a manufacturing order, a transfer. This is the mechanism of replenishment on order.
Take From Stock, if unavailable, Trigger Another Rule	Draws first on what is available, and only goes back up the chain for what is missing.

Note

This is where the difference is played out between an item held in stock and an item supplied on demand. The **Replenish on Order (MTO)** setting in the settings, described in chapter 10, is nothing but a route whose rule uses **Trigger Another Rule**.

16.3 The everyday setting: the number of steps

Most needs do not call for touching the routes at all. It is enough to say how many steps the receipt and the delivery have; Odoo builds the corresponding routes.

1. Check that **Multi-Step Routes** is active in **Inventory → Configuration → Settings**.
2. Open **Inventory → Configuration → Warehouse Management → Warehouses**.
3. Open the warehouse concerned.
4. Set the **Incoming Shipments**:
   - **Receive and Store (1 step)**: the goods enter stock directly;
   - **Receive then Store (2 steps)**: they pass through a receipt area before being put away;
   - **Receive, Quality Control, then Store (3 steps)**: a check is inserted.
5. Set the **Outgoing Shipments**:
   - **Deliver (1 step)**: a single document, from stock to the customer;
   - **Pick then Deliver (2 steps)**: picking, then shipping;
   - **Pick, Pack, then Deliver (3 steps)**: picking, packing, then shipping.
6. Save.

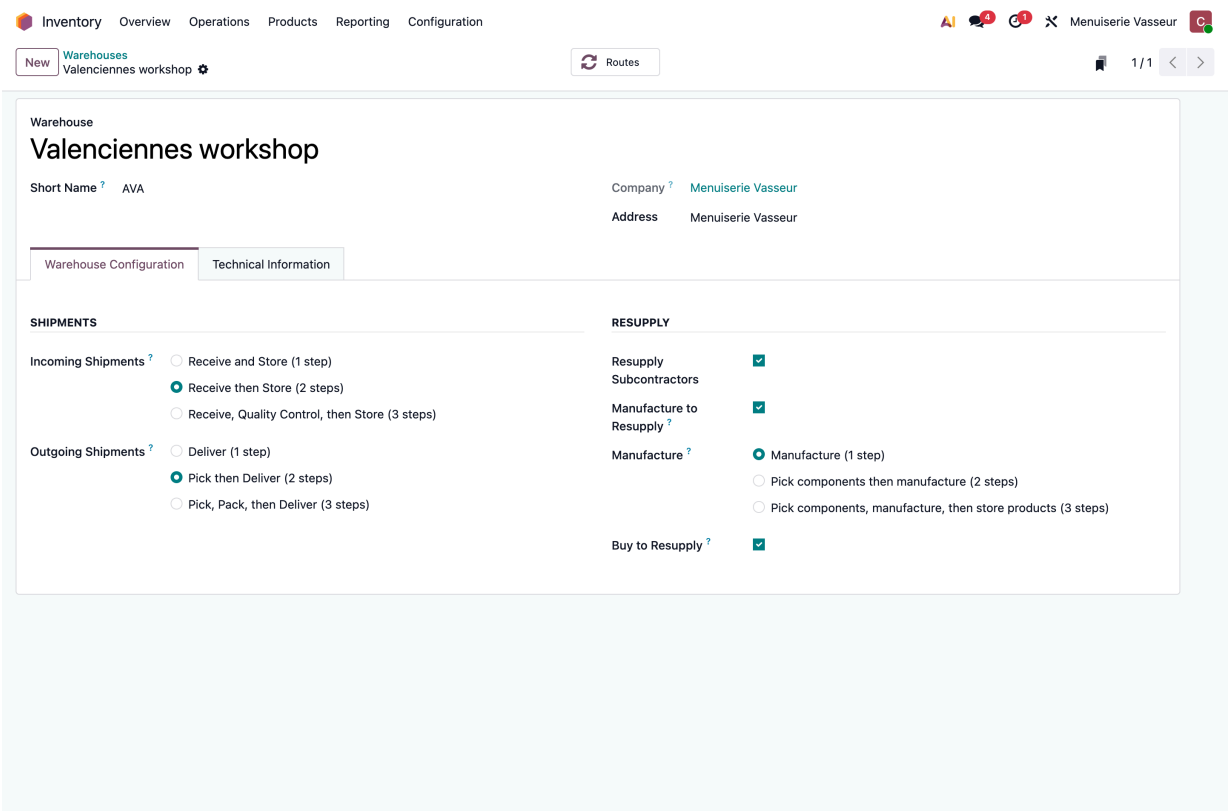


Figure 16.1: Setting the receipt and delivery steps

Setting the way to resupply. The **Resupply** block on the same record governs where the goods come from when they are missing:

- **Buy to Resupply** allows the warehouse to trigger requests for quotation;
- **Manufacture to Resupply** allows it to trigger manufacturing orders;
- **Manufacture** sets the number of steps of production, on the model of the receipts: **Manufacture (1 step)**, the picking of the components separated into two steps, or the storage of the finished products separated into three;
- **Resupply From** designates the warehouse or warehouses that feed this one, covered later in this chapter. This field only appears with the multi-warehouse option active.

Note

Unticking either of these two options removes the corresponding path from this warehouse: a trading site can thus buy without ever manufacturing, and a workshop manufacture without buying. They do not decide what happens for a given product (that is settled by the route carried by its record) but what the warehouse is allowed to do.

Odoo then creates the intermediate locations needed (receipt area, quality control, packing, departure area) along with the operation types and the routes that link them. Nothing else has to be set up.

Tip

Choose the number of steps according to your real organisation, not according to an ambition. Each step is one more document to validate: three steps in delivery assume that the picking, the packing and the handover to the carrier are actually done by different people or at different moments.

16.4 Where a route applies

A route is only worth something if it is assigned. Six assignment levels exist, and the corresponding box must be ticked on the route for it to be offered at that level.

Level	Scope
Products	The route is offered in the **Inventory** tab of the product record. It applies to that item only.
Product Categories	The route is offered on the category, and applies to every product it contains.
Warehouses	The route becomes the default behaviour of the goods passing through that warehouse.
Package Type	The route applies according to the packaging used: a rare case, useful when the pallet and the parcel take different paths.
Shipping Methods	The route applies according to the carrier chosen. Assumes the **Delivery Methods** option.
Sales Order Lines	The route is offered on the quotation line, where the salesperson chooses it case by case. Assumes the **Sales** application.

Tip

These boxes only define *where the route will be offered*. Ticking **Products** applies it to no product at all: it still has to be added in the **Inventory** tab of the records concerned. It is the most frequent confusion about this configuration.

Which one wins

When several routes could apply, Odoo takes the first one it finds going down this order:

1. the route carried by the **sales order line** itself, chosen by the salesperson;
2. the route of the **package type**;
3. the routes of the **product**;
4. the routes of its **category**;
5. the route of the **warehouse**.

The most precise therefore wins over the most general, and a route set on a product takes precedence over the default behaviour of the warehouse. At an equal level, the order of the routes among themselves decides.

Tip

This ranking gives you what to do when in doubt: to change the behaviour of a single item, act on its record; for a whole family, on its category; for the whole site, on the warehouse. There is no need to create a route for every special case.

16.5 The routes provided

Odoo installs ready-made routes, which cover very nearly every need. They appear in **Inventory → Configuration → Warehouse Management → Routes**.

Route	What it triggers
Buy	A request for quotation to the vendor of the product. This route is set on the **warehouse**, by the **Buy to Resupply** box: it is not ticked on an item. It only applies to products carrying at least one vendor in their **Purchase** tab.

Route	What it triggers
Manufacture	A manufacturing order. This route too is carried by the warehouse, by the **Manufacture to Resupply** box, and it only applies to products that have a bill of materials.
Replenish on Order (MTO)	Supply at the moment of the sale rather than to rebuild stock. It is ticked on the product or its category; the *how* follows from the vendor or the bill of materials, not from a second route to tick.
Dropshipping	Shipment straight from the vendor to the customer, without passing through the warehouse.

To these are added the multi-step receipt and delivery routes, one per warehouse, created and kept up to date by Odoo. They carry the name of the warehouse.

Watch out

Do not modify the routes that Odoo manages itself: those of the receipt and delivery steps. A change in the number of steps rebuilds them, and your modifications would be lost. For a particular behaviour, create a separate route and assign it to the products concerned only.

16.6 Supplying one warehouse from another

When a site supplies itself from another rather than from the vendors, the route creates itself.

1. Open **Inventory → Configuration → Warehouse Management → Warehouses**.
2. Open the warehouse that is to be supplied.
3. In **Resupply From**, tick the supplying warehouse or warehouses.
4. Save.

Odoo creates a transfer route between the two sites. It remains to be assigned to the products concerned, on their record or on their category.

Note

The same product can be resupplied from several sources: a central warehouse and a vendor. The order of the routes among themselves determines which one is tried first.

16.7 Refining placement within the warehouse

Routes say between which locations the goods circulate. Two other mechanisms specify what happens *inside* each of them: where to put away what arrives, and what to draw from on the way out.

Both assume the **Storage Locations** option is active.

16.7.1 Putting away automatically

A **putaway rule** directs goods to a precise location as soon as they arrive, rather than leaving the operator to choose. Heavy products on the floor, small parts in bins, chilled goods in the cold room: the rule carries the knowledge of the warehouse, not the operator.

1. Open **Inventory → Configuration → Warehouse Management → Putaway Rules**.
2. Click on **New**.
3. Fill in:
   - the **Product** targeted, or its **Product Category** to cover a whole family;
   - the entry location in **When product arrives in**
   - the destination in **Store to**.
4. Save.

The destination proposed is then carried over to the receipt operations.

Note

When several rules could apply, the most precise wins, and this hierarchy is automatic: package type, then product, then exact category, then parent category. You have nothing to set for that. The order of the lines, which the drag handle lets you change, only decides between rules of equal precision.

Tip

Start with the families, not with the items. A dozen rules per category covers the bulk of the putaway work, where one rule per item quickly becomes a set impossible to keep up to date.

16.7.2 Choosing which stock to draw from

A **removal strategy** determines which stock leaves first when the same quantity is held in several places.

Strategy	What leaves first
First In First Out (FIFO)	The stock that entered longest ago. The default behaviour, and the right choice in most cases.
Last In First Out (LIFO)	The stock that entered most recently. Restricted use, and incompatible with the accounting rules of many countries.
First Expiry First Out (FEFO)	The lot whose expiry date is nearest. Only appears once the **Expiration Dates** have been activated, which belong to a separate application.
Closest Location	The stock nearest to the output point, to shorten the journeys.
Least Packages	The stock that lets the quantity be served with the fewest packages broken into.

It is set in two places:

- on a **location**, through the **Removal Strategy** field, for everything stored there;
- on a **product category**, through the **Force Removal Strategy** field, which applies whatever the source location.

Watch out

The second name says it: set on the category, the strategy *forces* the behaviour and ignores what the locations indicate. Reserve it for the cases where the nature of the product requires it, perishable goods first of all , and let the locations decide for the rest.

Note

In the absence of a setting on the location, Odoo goes back up to the parent locations before falling back on the default behaviour. Setting the strategy on a whole zone is therefore enough to cover every location it contains.

16.8 Creating a bespoke route

The case is rare and deserves weighing up: a special route is one more behaviour to be understood by whoever takes the database over.

1. Open **Inventory → Configuration → Warehouse Management → Routes** and click on **New**.
2. Name the route explicitly: that name will appear on the product records.
3. Tick the assignment levels you want.

4. Add the **Rules**, one per segment of the journey, filling in for each one:
   - the **Action** and the **Supply Method**
   - the **Source Location** and the **Destination Location**
   - the **Operation Type** under which the transfers will be created;
   - the **Lead Time**, if that segment takes time.
5. Save, then assign the route to a test product.

Watch out

The locations of the rules must chain together: the destination of one rule is the source of the next. A break in the chain shows up as a flow that stops with no message, the next step finding no applicable rule.

Tip

Try every new route out on a test product and a test order before assigning it to the catalogue. A badly chained flow shows up in use, rarely on reading.

16.9 Diagnosing a flow

When the behaviour obtained is not the one expected, the cause is almost always in one of these four points.

Symptom	What to check
No document is created	Is the route assigned to the product, to its category or to the warehouse? A route that exists but is not assigned never applies.
The wrong number of steps	The setting of the warehouse, not the route: that is what governs it. Check as well that the sales order is indeed on the expected warehouse.
Nothing is supplied despite zero stock	The supply method of the rule. In **Take From Stock**, the operation waits without triggering anything.
One route applies instead of another	The order of priority in section 16.4: a route set on the product wins over that of the warehouse.

Note

The **Routes** and **Rules** menus are only visible once **Multi-Step Routes** has been activated, and are reserved for users holding the administration right on **Inventory** (see chapter 6).

CHAPTER 17

Manufacturing

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER

- declare your work centres and compose your products in bills of materials;
- launch a manufacturing order and run it operation by operation;
- track the cost price and post the work in progress;
- entrust a manufacturing order to a subcontractor and control quality.

The **Manufacturing** application drives production: composition of the products, scheduling of the operations, launching and tracking of the orders, valuation of the costs, and use of subcontracting.

17.1 Configuring manufacturing

Manufacturing → Configuration → Settings brings the options together in two blocks.

17.1.1 Operations

Option	What it brings
Work Orders	Breaks the manufacturing order down into operations carried out at work centres, with time tracking.
Subcontracting	Allows all or part of a manufacturing order to be entrusted to a third party.
Shop Floor	Opens an interface dedicated to the operators, in tiles, designed for a tablet at the foot of the line rather than for a desk.
Barcode Scanner	Allows orders to be processed with a scanner, without going through the management screens.
Quality	Inserts checks into the flows. Belongs to a separate application.
Unlock Manufacturing Orders	Allows the quantities to consume to be modified without prior approval.
By-Products	Allows a manufacturing order to produce several items: the main one and its residues.
Allocation Report for Manufacturing Orders	Shows which sales orders the quantities produced can be allocated to.

17.1.2 Planning

The **Master Production Schedule** plans manufacturing and purchasing from sales forecasts, rather than in reaction to the orders received. It suits productions with long cycles or marked seasonality.

1. Tick **Master Production Schedule**.
2. Save: an add-on module is installed and creates the screen.
3. Go back to the settings and set the **Default Time Range** (**Yearly**, **Monthly**, **Weekly** or **Daily**) and, for each of them, the **Number of Periods** shown as columns, then save.

It then becomes reachable by two paths, which open the same screen: **Manufacturing → Planning → MPS → Master Production Schedule** and **Inventory → Operations → Procurement → Master Production Schedule**.

Tip

The range chosen governs the planning grain: twelve monthly columns cover a year of forecasts, thirty daily columns a month of workshop activity. Choose it according to the horizon of your sales forecasts, not according to the level of detail you would like: a monthly schedule can be detailed afterwards, whereas a daily schedule over twelve months becomes unreadable.

Note

These two menus are reserved for users holding the manufacturing management right: an operator does not see them. The module moreover belongs to the Enterprise edition, and brings with it the installation of the purchasing part of Inventory if it is not already there: the schedule planning what is bought as well as what is manufactured.

Note

Without **Work Orders**, a manufacturing order consumes the components and produces the result in a single operation. That is enough for a simple assembly, insufficient as soon as times have to be tracked per work centre or steps sequenced.

Watch out

Unlock Manufacturing Orders removes a safeguard: operators can then change the quantities consumed without anyone approving the difference. On a production whose components are valued, this feeds straight through to the value of the stock.

Only activate it if consumption differences are frequent and legitimate: material cut to measure, variable offcuts , and if the control is carried out some other way.

Tip

The **Shop Floor** and the **Barcode Scanner** are meant for operators, not for managers. Only activate them if someone is really working at the station: in a workshop of two people entering data from a desk, they add screens without simplifying anything.

17.2 Declaring the work centres

Note

Work centres assume the **Work Orders** option is active. Without it, the menu does not exist and a manufacturing order runs as a single operation, with no work centre and no duration.

1. Open **Manufacturing → Configuration → Work Centers**.
2. Click on **New**.
3. Fill in the **Work Center Name** and its **Code**.
4. Choose the **Working Hours**, which define the operating range of the work centre.
5. In the **Production Information** block:
   - the **Time Efficiency** weights the theoretical durations: 80% lengthens the times by a quarter, 120% shortens them;
   - the **OEE Target** sets the overall equipment effectiveness aimed for, serving as the reference for the indicators;
   - the **Setup Time** and the **Cleanup Time** are added to each operation, before and after production.
6. In the **Costing Information** block, fill in the **Cost per hour**: a value *per workcenter*. In the Enterprise edition, a second amount with no label follows it, followed by the note *per employee*, for labour billed separately.

7. Fill in, if need be, the **Expense Account**, which receives the costs of the work centre when the manufacturing order is done, for a product under perpetual valuation and if the production location carries a **Cost of Production** account. Left empty, the expense account of the finished product is used.
8. Save.

Note

Capacity is not set on this page but in the **Product Capacities** tab: a work centre may handle four pieces of one item at once and only one of another. With no entry in this tab, the work centre handles one unit at a time.

Tip

The **Cost per hour** is split in two for a precise reason: the first amount covers the machine (depreciation, energy, maintenance), the second the operator running it. Separating them lets you compare an automated work centre with a manual one on the same basis.

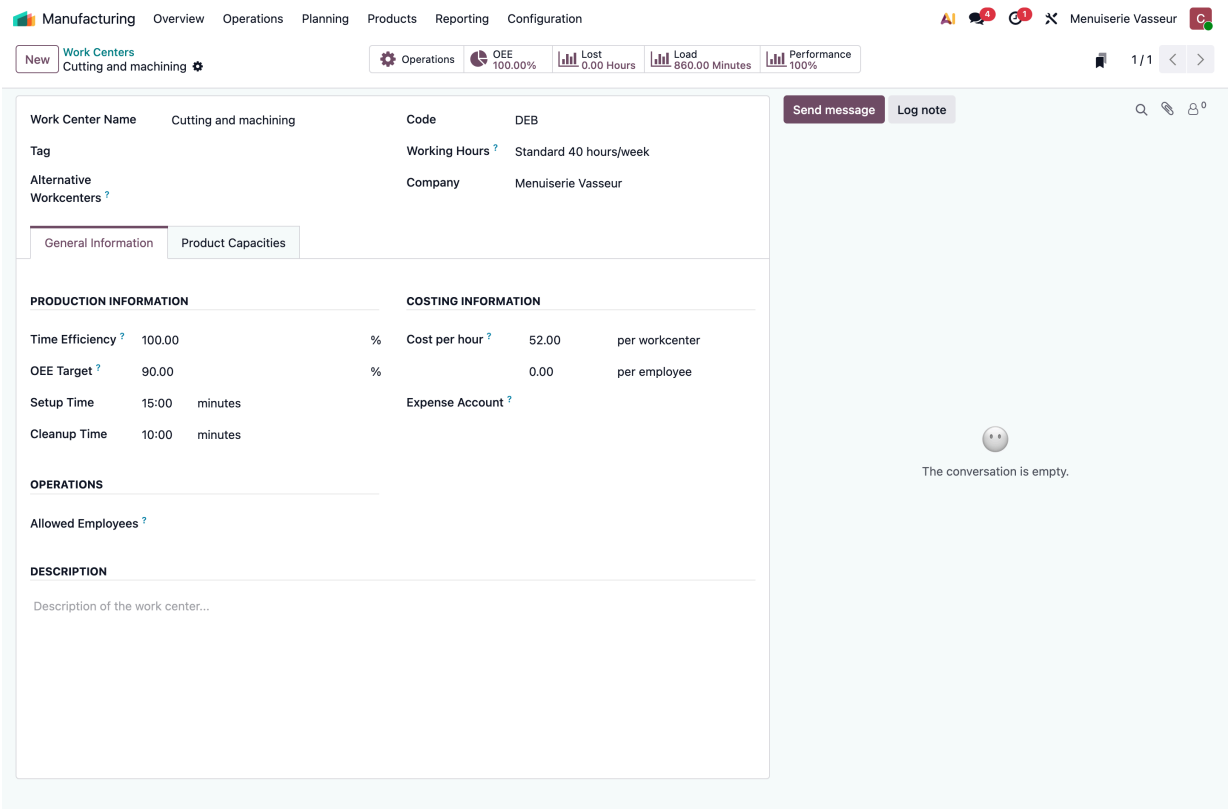


Figure 17.1: A work centre record

Watch out

The hourly cost of the work centre and the operation durations determine the cost price of the products manufactured. Approximate values produce approximate margins across the whole of production.

17.3 Composing the products

17.3.1 Creating a bill of materials

1. Open **Manufacturing → Products → Bills of Materials**.
2. Click on **New**.

3. Select the finished product and the reference quantity.
4. Choose the **BoM Type**:
   - **Manufacture this product**: classic in-house production;
   - **Kit**: the product is sold as a set but delivered as components, with no manufacturing order;
   - **Subcontracting**: the transformation is entrusted to a third party. This type is only offered once the **Subcontracting** option has been activated in the settings.
5. In the **Components** tab, add each item with its quantity for the reference quantity.
6. Save.

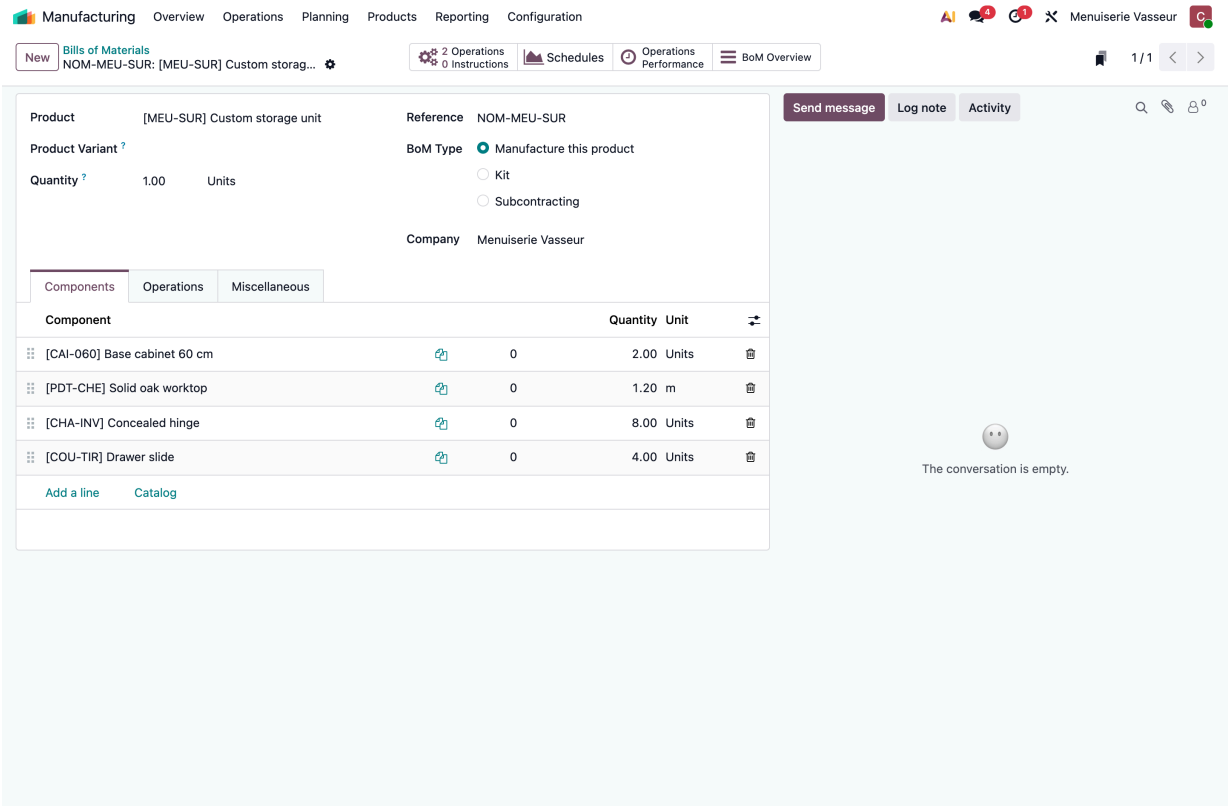


Figure 17.2: Bill of materials of a finished product

17.3.2 Adding the operations

Note

The **Operations** tab only appears on the bill of materials with the **Work Orders** option, and only for the **Manufacture this product** and **Kit** types.

1. Open the bill of materials.
2. Select the **Operations** tab.
3. Add the operations in the order of execution, filling in for each one:
   - its title;
   - the **Work Center** where it is carried out;
   - the expected duration;
   - the work instructions, which the operator can consult.
4. Save.

Note

Components can be attached to the operation that consumes them. The operator then sees only the items needed for their step, which limits picking errors.

17.3.3 Multi-level bills of materials

A component may itself have a bill of materials: it is a sub-assembly. Odoo handles these levels in cascade, creating the manufacturing orders needed at each level when the sub-assembly is not available in stock.

17.4 Launching a manufacturing order

17.4.1 Creating the order

1. Open **Manufacturing → Operations → Manufacturing Orders**.
2. Click on **New**.
3. Select the product to be manufactured: the bill of materials is proposed automatically.
4. Enter the quantity and the planned date.
5. Click on **Confirm**.

The components are reserved as far as the available stock allows. The forecast column shows for each one whether it is available or to be supplied.

17.4.2 Supplying the missing components

1. From the manufacturing order, click on the **Overview** smart button.
2. The screen presents the full tree of the need: components, sub-assemblies, planned dates and supply status of each line.
3. Use the replenishment button next to the missing lines: Odoo creates the requests for quotation for the purchased items and the manufacturing orders for the manufactured ones.

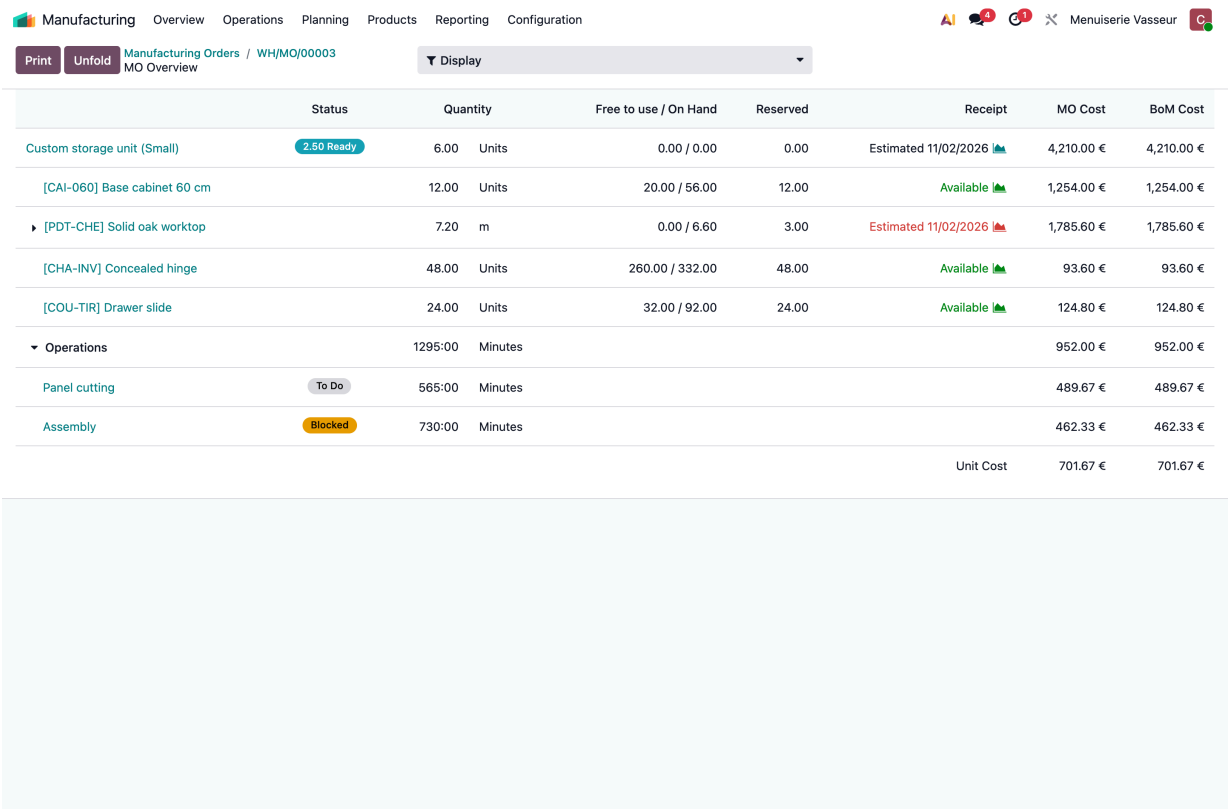


Figure 17.3: Overview of a manufacturing order

Note

A favourable indicator on the sales order while components are flagged as to be ordered is not a contradiction: Odoo reckons that the time left still allows supply to arrive on time. It is a projection, which assumes vendor lead times are kept.

17.4.3 Running the operations

1. Open the manufacturing order and select the **Work Orders** tab.
2. On the first operation's row, click the green play button, whose tooltip reads **Start**: the time starts being recorded.
3. At the end, click the tick button on the same row, tooltip **Done**.
4. Chain the following operations in the order planned.

17.4.4 Unbuilding or scrapping

Two operations deal with what has not worked out, and they do not do the same thing.

Operation	Effect
Unbuild Orders	Takes a finished product apart to recover its components. The finished product leaves stock, the components enter it, according to the bill of materials. To be used on an item assembled by mistake, or whose parts are to serve again.
Scrap	Definitively takes a quantity out of stock to a scrap location, with nothing in return. To be used on damaged components or a failed production, from which nothing can be recovered.

Both are reachable from **Manufacturing → Operations**, and unbuilding also from the button of the same name on a completed manufacturing order.

Watch out

Scrapping makes the corresponding value disappear from the stock: it is a loss, recognised as such in accounting. Unbuilding, for its part, transfers the value of the finished product to its components. Choosing one for the other distorts the valuation in one direction or the other.

17.4.5 Closing the order

1. Go back to the manufacturing order.
2. Check the quantities consumed and the quantity produced.
3. Click on **Produce**.
4. Confirm.

The order moves to the done status: the components leave stock, the finished product enters it.

Tip

For a partial production, enter the quantity actually obtained and validate: Odoo offers to create a backorder for the balance, which keeps the traceability of both orders.

17.5 Tracking costs

17.5.1 Cost price

1. Open the record of the manufactured product.
2. Use the computation of the cost price from the bill of materials.

The computation adds up the cost of the components and, for each operation, its expected duration multiplied by the hourly cost of its work centre.

17.5.2 Posting the work in progress

On long manufacturing runs, the value of the components already consumed and of the time already spent is reflected nowhere as long as the order is not closed. A work in progress entry lets that value be recognised during the financial year.

Recognising what is committed. On the manufacturing order in progress:

- the **Components** tab, **Consumed** column, gives the quantities already picked;
- the **Work Orders** tab, **Real Duration** column, gives the time already spent;
- the **Overview** button compares the cost from the bill of materials with the cost actually committed, work centre charges and labour included.

Posting the entry. The operation is triggered from the **Actions** menu, from the record of an order as well as from the list.

1. Open **Manufacturing → Operations → Manufacturing Orders**.
2. Tick the order or orders to be recognised, or open directly the one concerned.
3. Click on **Actions** then **Post WIP Accounting Entry**.
4. In the window that opens, check the **Journal**, the **Reference** and the **Date**.
5. Check the **Reversal Date**: the reversing entry is created and posted immediately, but carried at that date: generally the first day of the following period.
6. Check the lines proposed: the two credits **WIP - Component Value** and **WIP - Overhead**, and the work in progress debit that balances them. Check their accounts and their amounts; a line can be added if need be.
7. Click on **Post WIP**.

Watch out

This action is reserved for users holding the accounting rights. A production manager does not see it in the **Actions** menu, even on a database where everything is correctly configured.

The reversal is not to be done by hand: the **Reversal Date** schedules it from the moment of posting. That is what makes the entry reversible without intervention, and gives it its character of an inventory entry.

Watch out

The computation covers what is **committed but not finished**. On an order already in the **Done** state, the amounts proposed are nil: the work in progress has been cleared by the production, and there is nothing left to recognise.

The entry is therefore posted on **Confirmed**, **In Progress** or **To Close** orders, at the closing date.

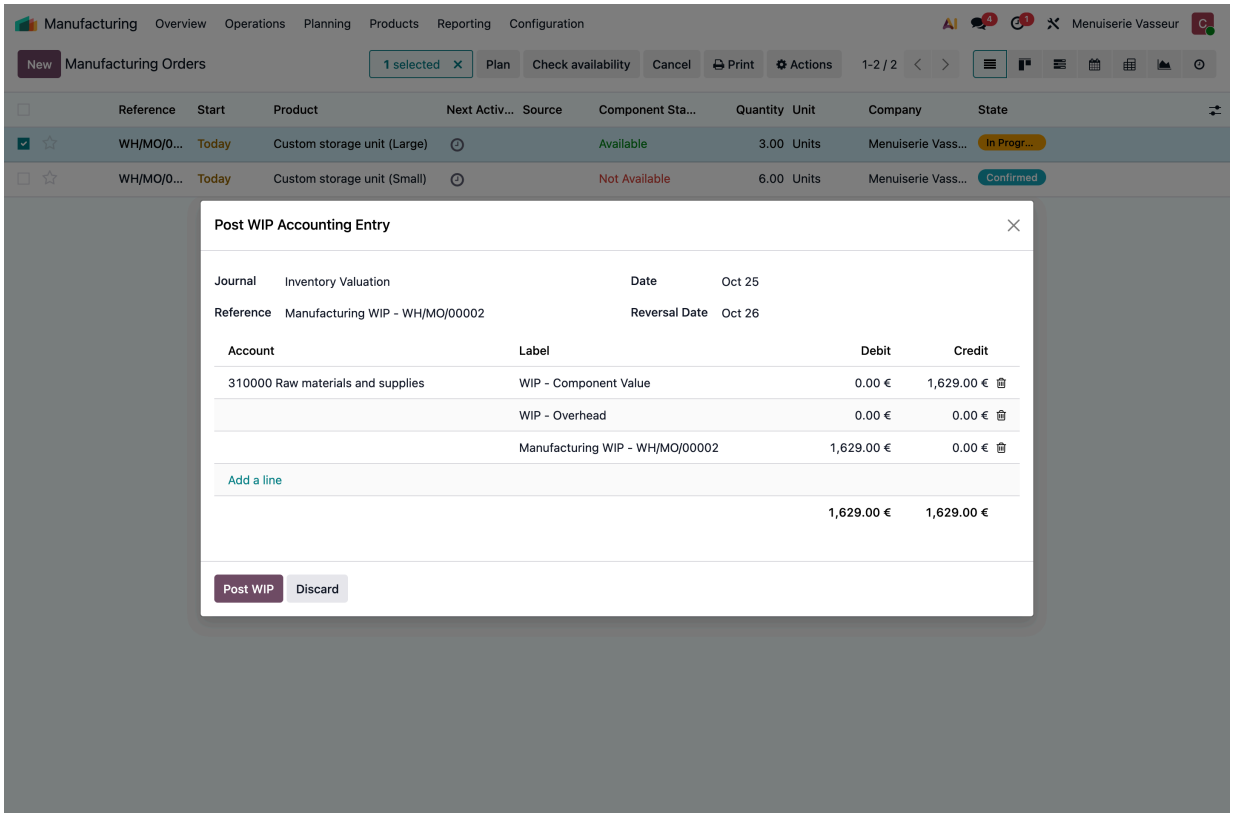


Figure 17.4: Work in progress posting wizard

Note

The **WIP** button only appears to an accounting user, and only once at least one work in progress entry has been posted on the order. It then opens the corresponding documents.

Note

The triggering itself stays manual: it is a closing decision, not an automatism. It is done at the period ends (monthly, quarterly or annual) for the orders whose duration exceeds the period.

Watch out

Posting work in progress changes the result of the period. It is put in place with the accountant, who validates the accounts used and the periodicity retained.

17.6 Planning

17.6.1 Work centre load

Open **Manufacturing** → **Planning** → **Work Orders** → **Planning by Workcenter** to view the forecast load per work centre, spot the bottlenecks and move the orders.

Note

This view assumes the **Work Orders** option is active: with no work centres, there is no load to spread. It moreover belongs to the Enterprise edition.

17.6.2 Master production schedule

When production relies on forecasts rather than on firm orders:

1. Activate the master production schedule in **Manufacturing** → **Configuration** → **Settings**.

2. Open **Manufacturing → Planning → MPS → Master Production Schedule**.
3. Add the products to be planned.
4. Enter the forecast demand per product and per period, correcting it by hand when history does not reflect what is expected: a seasonality, a new market.
5. Odoo computes the net requirements, taking account of the stock, the orders in progress and the stock targets entered, then proposes the quantities to be replenished.
6. Create the corresponding purchase orders and manufacturing orders.

Watch out

Set to **Manual** (the default value of the **Replenishment Trigger** field) the master schedule **suggests** quantities without creating anything. Set to **Automatic**, a daily scheduled action creates the corresponding orders without intervention; **Never** excludes the line from replenishment. Adding a product to the schedule triggers no purchase order and no manufacturing order: it is up to the user to create them from the proposals.

Watch out

Do not combine the master production schedule and the reordering rules on the same product. The two mechanisms each compute the same need on their own side: the forecast becomes false and unnecessary orders appear. A product belongs to one or the other.

Note

The master production schedule addresses products with long supply lead times or seasonal demand, for which the decision must be taken ahead of the customer order. For replenishment as you go, the reordering rules are enough and call for less upkeep.

17.7 Subcontracting a manufacturing order

Note

Subcontracting assumes the option of the same name is active in **Manufacturing → Configuration → Settings**. It installs an add-on module, which adds the bill of materials type, the subcontractors field and the locations of the stock left with the third party.

17.7.1 Preparing the subcontracted product

1. Create the bill of materials of the product and choose the **Subcontracting** type.
2. Fill in the **Subcontractors** in the field that appears.
3. Add the components to be supplied to the subcontractor in the **Components** tab.
4. On the record of the subcontracted product, **Purchase** tab, list the subcontractor as a vendor, with its processing price and its lead time.

17.7.2 Allowing the subcontractor to be resupplied

1. Check, on the warehouse record in **Inventory → Configuration → Warehouse Management → Warehouses**, that the **Resupply Subcontractors** option is ticked in the **Resupply** block.

Note

This option only appears on the warehouse record once the subcontracting module is installed. On a database where the **Subcontracting** option in the settings is not ticked, the **Resupply** block only carries **Buy to Resupply**, **Manufacture to Resupply** and **Manufacture**: plus **Resupply From** if the multi-warehouse option is active. There is nothing more to look for.

17.7.3 Running the operation

1. Order the subcontracted product from the subcontractor, like an ordinary purchase.
2. Confirm the order: two transfers are created automatically: the sending of the components and the receipt of the finished product.
3. Open the resupply transfer, check the component quantities, and validate the sending.
4. On receipt of the transformed product, open the receipt and validate.
5. Check and settle the subcontractor's bill, which covers the transformation service.

What subcontracting brings

- **Traceability**: the link is kept between the components sent and the product received.
- **Costs**: the processing price is built into the cost price of the finished product.
- **Stock**: the components held by the subcontractor stay valued in your stock, at a dedicated location.

17.8 Controlling quality

Watch out

Quality checks belong to a separate application, in the Enterprise edition. Ticking **Quality** in **Manufacturing → Configuration → Settings** installs it.

The procedures that follow assume that installation has been done; without it, neither the menus nor the buttons described exist.

Once the application is in place:

1. Open **Quality → Configuration → Quality Teams** and create the teams responsible for the checks.
2. Open **Quality → Quality Control → Control Points** and create a control point.
3. Fill in:
   - the title of the check;
   - the product or the category concerned;
   - the operation type triggering the check: receipt, manufacture, delivery;
   - the type of test: pass/fail, measure with tolerances, or instruction to follow;
   - the team responsible.
4. In the instructions tab, describe precisely the operating procedure and the acceptance criteria.

During the corresponding operation, a quality check button appears on the document. The operator runs the test and records the result before being able to carry on.

Note

Combine traceability by lot or serial number with the control points: the results are then attached to a precise lot, which allows a quality incident to be confined instead of a whole production being suspected.

17.9 Analysing production

The reporting menu of the application gives access to the production reports: quantities produced, adherence to lead times, differences between expected and actual durations, scrap rate, production costs.

A production dashboard is also available in the **Dashboards** application.

Tip

> The gap between expected duration and actual duration is the most useful indicator in the workshop: it reveals both badly filled-in bills of materials and work centres in difficulty. Analyse it by work centre and by product before adjusting the times.

CHAPTER 18

Project management

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER

- create a project, from scratch or from a template;
- organise the work into tasks, sub-tasks and dependencies;
- set milestones for progress and track the time spent;
- invoice a service and measure its profitability.

The **Project** application organises work into tasks, tracks the time spent, marks progress with milestones and feeds the invoicing of services.

18.1 Configuring the application

The application has only two general settings.

1. Open **Project → Configuration → Settings**.
2. **Tasks Management** block: tick **Project Stages** to track the progress of the *projects* themselves, in addition to that of the tasks.
3. **Time Management** block: tick **Timesheets** to record the hours spent on the tasks.
4. Save.

Note

Recurring tasks, dependencies and milestones are not general options: they are set **project by project**, in the **Settings** tab of each one. An internal project can thus do without milestones where a customer engagement uses them.

Tip

Do not confuse the two notions of stage. *Task* stages (To Do, In Progress, Done) always exist and structure the working kanban. **Project Stages** qualify the progress of the project as a whole, and only serve those managing a portfolio of engagements.

18.2 Creating a project

1. Open the **Project** application and click on **New**.
2. Fill in the name of the project.
3. Open the project and complete:
   - the **Project Manager**
   - the **Planned Date**, as a start and end range;
   - the **Allocated Time**, the envelope of hours planned for the project as a whole;
   - the **Name of the Tasks**, which replaces the word *Tasks* with the vocabulary of the trade

: interventions, lots, episodes;
- the **Tags**, to classify the project.

1. Open the **Settings** tab and set what is specific to this project:
   - the **Visibility**, which governs the opening to the customer portal. Four levels: **Invited internal users**, **Invited internal and portal users**, **All internal users**, and the broadest (the one retained by default) **All internal users and invited portal users**
   - the **Email Alias**, which creates a task from an email received;
   - in **Tasks Management**: **Recurring Tasks**, **Task Dependencies**, **Milestones**

- in **Sales & Invoicing**: **Billable**, which allows time and materials to be reinvoiced, the box is also offered in the project creation window;
- in **Time Management**: **Timesheets**, to encode the hours on the tasks.

2. Save.

Note

These settings are not global: each project carries its own. An internal project does without invoicing and milestones where a customer engagement uses both, without one getting in the way of the other.

Tip

The **Allocated Time** is what gives timesheet tracking its meaning: with no reference envelope, the hours pile up without anyone knowing whether they are within budget. Fill it in from the creation, even if it has to be corrected afterwards.

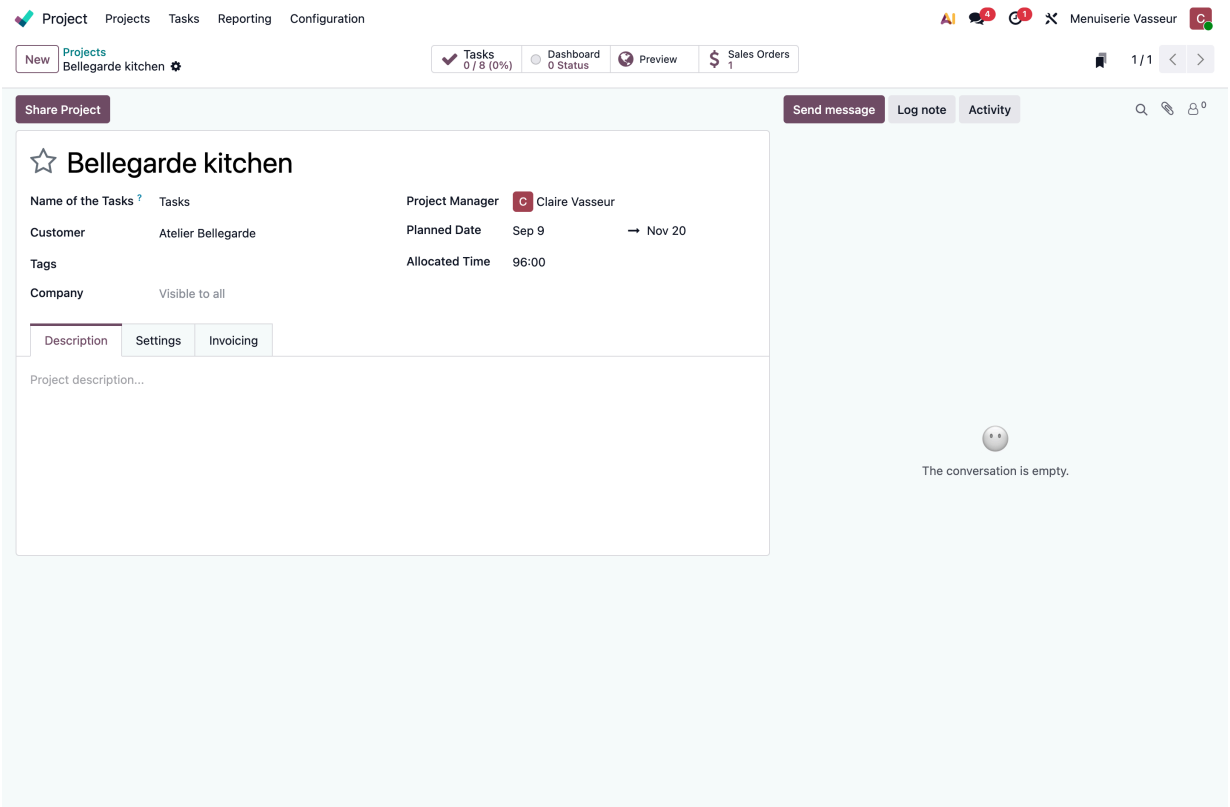


Figure 18.1: Creating a project

18.2.1 Starting from a template

When projects resemble one another (a standard installation, a recurring service) a template saves rebuilding the task tree every time.

1. Create a representative project: stages, standard tasks, durations, assignments.
2. Open the project, then the **Actions** menu and **Convert to Template**. The action is reserved for project managers and is only offered from the record, not from the list.
3. To find the templates again, apply the **Templates** filter in the list of projects.
4. To launch a new engagement, create a project from the template: the task structure is reproduced, ready to be adapted to the customer.

Tip

A well-designed template carries the method of the company. It does more for the consistency of deliveries than a written procedure nobody rereads.

18.3 Structuring the work

18.3.1 Stages

1. Open the project in kanban view.
2. Create the columns matching your method: to do, in progress, in review, done.
3. Set for each stage its sequence, its colour, and the closing automations.

18.3.2 Tasks

1. From the project, click on **New**.
2. Fill in the title, the description, the **Assignees**, the deadline and the priority.
3. Add **Tags** to group tasks by theme independently of their stage.
4. Fill in the allocated time if the workload is tracked.
5. Save.

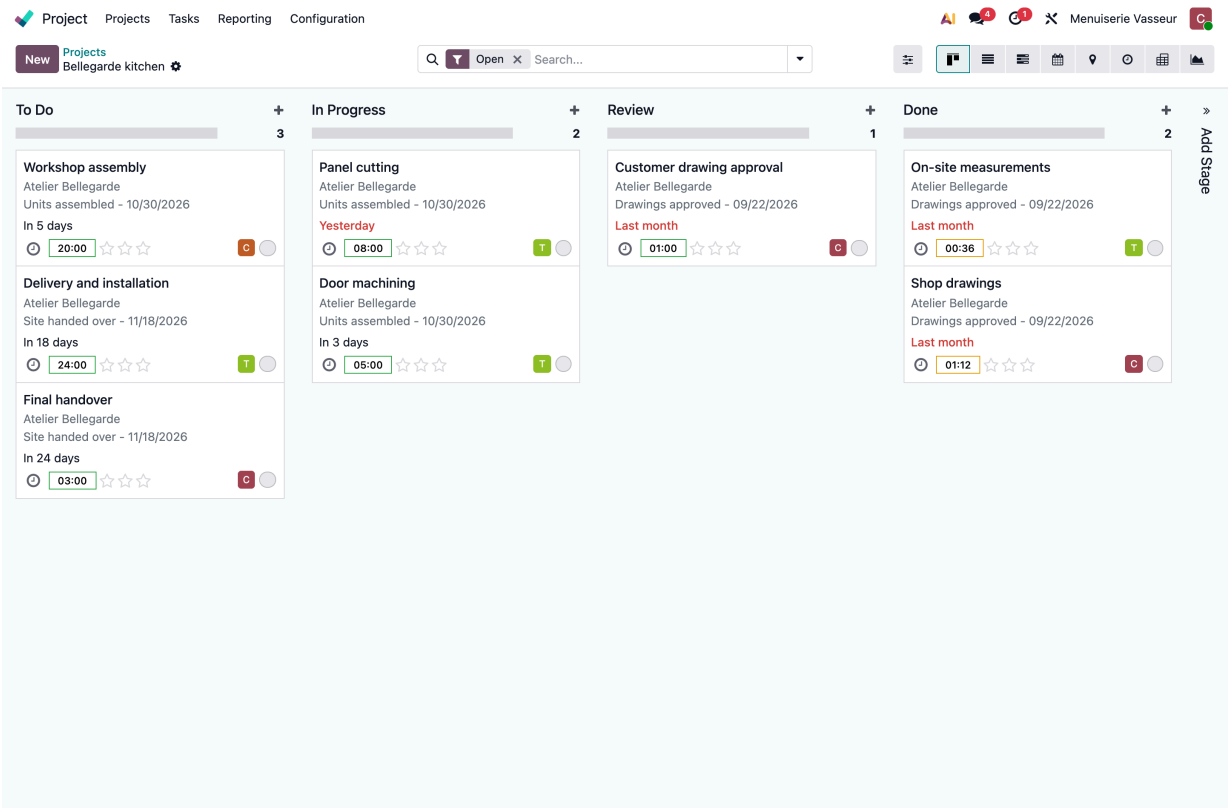


Figure 18.2: Tasks of a project in kanban view

18.3.3 Sub-tasks and dependencies

- **Sub-tasks** break down a complex piece of work while keeping the attachment to the parent task, whose progress is consolidated.
- **Task Dependencies** declare that a task cannot start before another is completed. They are ticked in the **Settings** tab of the project, **Tasks Management** block. The dependencies are then displayed in the Gantt view and flag knock-on delays.

Note

The Gantt view belongs to the Enterprise edition. It makes the dependencies between tasks visible, and the effect of a slippage on the whole schedule.

18.4 Setting milestones

Milestones give substance to the contractual stages of a project: sign-off of a specification, acceptance of a lot, going live.

Watch out

Milestones are activated **project by project**. Open the project, **Settings** tab, **Tasks Management** block, and tick **Milestones**. As long as the box is unticked, the button described below does not appear.

They do not figure on the project form but in its **Dashboard**, reachable through the smart button of the same name.

1. Open the project and click on **Dashboard**.
2. In the right-hand side panel, find the **Milestones** section.
3. Click on **Add Milestones** and fill in the title and the **Deadline**.
4. Attach to the milestones the tasks that condition their achievement, through the **Milestone** field of each task.
5. Click on the milestone to toggle it between **Mark as reached** and **Mark as incomplete**.

Note

The same panel carries, at the top, a row of buttons depending on what is activated on the project (**Tasks**, **Timesheets**, **Burndown Chart**) and, below the milestones, the **Profitability** section when the project is billable.

Milestones and profitability read together: a milestone reached without the corresponding instalment being invoiced can be seen at a glance.

Tip

The central part of the dashboard hosts the **project updates**: a progress note written periodically, to be shared with the customer or with management. It is the natural medium for a steering committee, it keeps the history of the successive reviews, where an email gets lost.

On a project billable by milestone, reaching a milestone makes the corresponding instalment of the order invoiceable: the invoice is then created from the order.

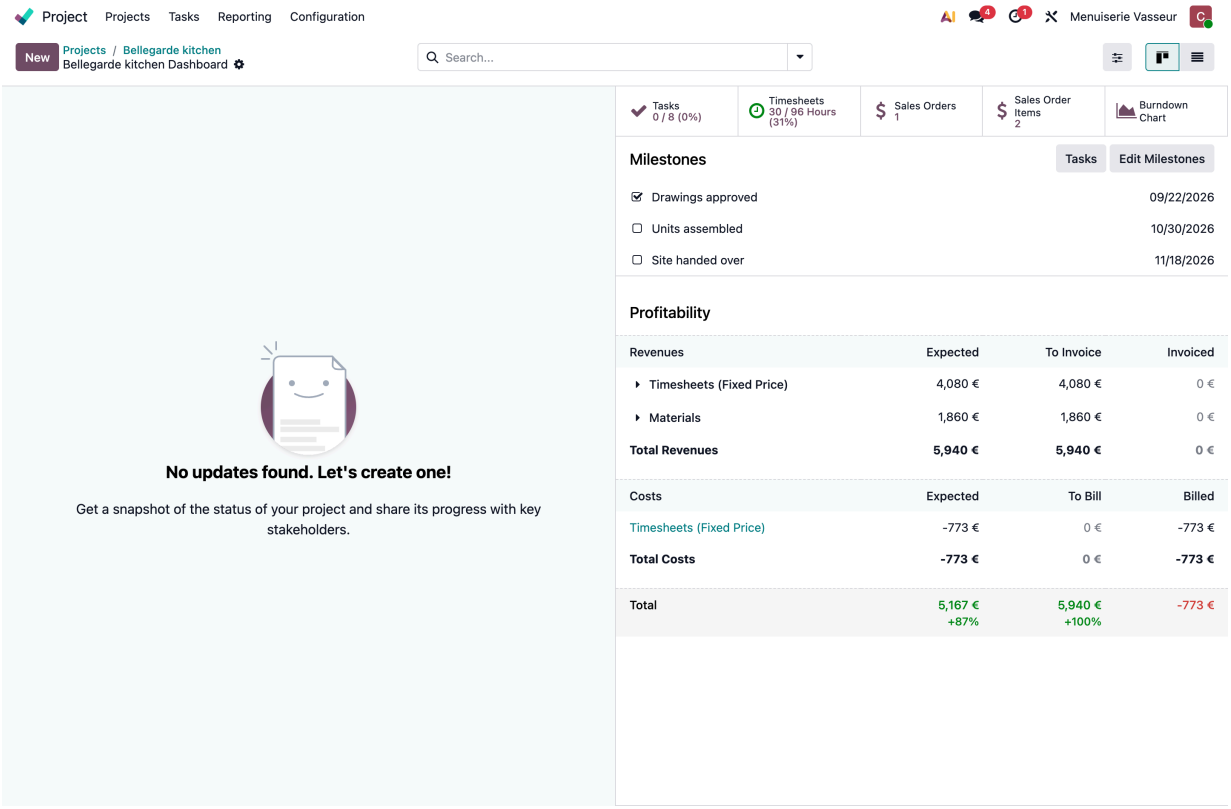


Figure 18.3: Milestones of a project

Tip

A milestone is worded as a verifiable result, not as an activity: “functional acceptance signed” rather than “testing phase”. The difference is measured at the moment when it has to be decided whether the milestone has been reached.

18.5 Tracking time

18.5.1 Recording the hours

Two modes coexist:

- **As you go**: on the task, start the counter at the beginning of the work and stop it at the end.
- **After the fact**: enter the hours in the **Timesheets** application, by day or by week.

18.5.2 Validating

The manager checks and validates the timesheets of their team. The validated hours feed the profitability analysis and, where applicable, the invoicing.

Watch out

Timesheets are only usable if they are entered regularly. An entry reconstructed at the end of the month produces invoicing data that can be contested and a profitability analysis with no value.

18.6 Invoicing services

Four invoicing modes are available:

Mode	Principle
Prepaid/Fixed Price	A fixed amount is invoiced, whatever the time consumed.
Based on Timesheets	The hours encoded are carried onto the invoice.

Mode	Principle
Based on Milestones	Each milestone reached makes its instalment invoiceable.
Based on Delivered Quantity (Manual)	The quantity to invoice is entered by hand.

Watch out

This mode is set neither on the project nor on the task, contrary to what one might expect: it is carried by the **service product** sold, in its **Invoicing Policy** field. It therefore follows from the order line that feeds the project. Two services invoiced differently call for two distinct service products.

18.7 Collaborating

18.7.1 Internally

- The chatter of each task keeps the exchanges and the decisions.
- Activities schedule the follow-ups and the checkpoints.
- Useful documents are attached directly to the task.

18.7.2 With the customer

1. Activate portal access on the project.
2. Grant access to the customer contact (see chapter 5).

The customer then consults progress, comments on the shared tasks and signs off the deliverables, without consuming a user licence.

Note

Visibility is set project by project and task by task. Check what is actually exposed before opening access: internal notes stay private, messages do not.

18.8 Steering

18.8.1 Dashboards

The project displays a summary dashboard: progress, time consumed against time allocated, costs committed, profitability for billable projects.

18.8.2 Analyses

The reporting menu allows the data to be broken down by customer, by project type, by manager or by period, and planned hours to be compared with actual hours.

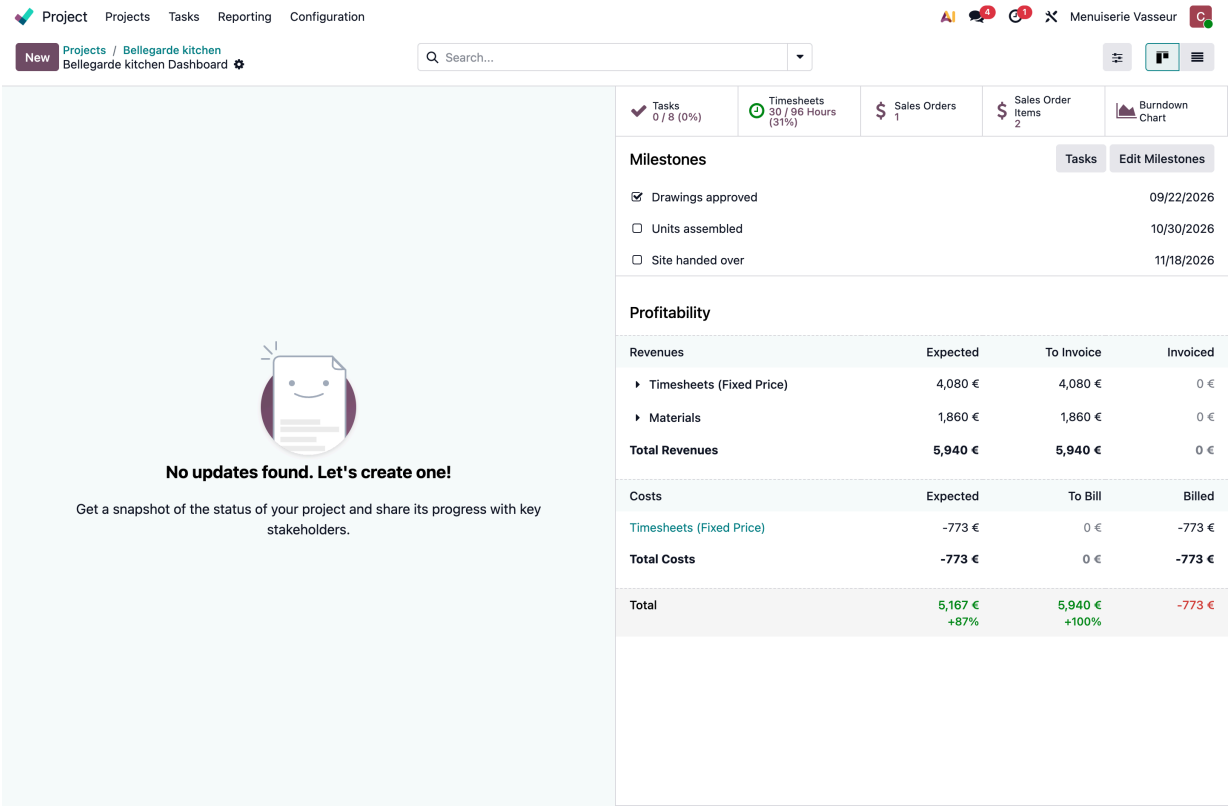


Figure 18.4: Profitability dashboard of a project

Tip

On fixed-price projects, systematically compare the time consumed with the amount sold, project by project. It is that comparison, and not overall turnover, that shows whether the fixed prices are correctly calibrated.

18.9 Adapting the method

18.9.1 Sequential approach

Structure the project in phases, set milestones between each phase, declare the dependencies, and follow the schedule in Gantt view.

18.9.2 Iterative approach

Configure the stages as flow columns (to do, in progress, in review, done) use the tags to mark the work batches, and run the daily stand-ups from the kanban view.

18.10 How it fits with the other applications

- **Sales**: an order for a service can automatically create the project and its tasks.
- **CRM**: an opportunity won gives rise to the implementation project.
- **Timesheets**: feed the costs and the invoicing.
- **Accounting**: costs and revenues are allocated to the analytic account of the project.
- **Purchase**: purchases assigned to the project enter into its cost.

CHAPTER 19

Reporting and analysis

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER

- build an analysis with the graph and pivot views;
- make use of the dashboards shipped with the applications;
- rework data in a connected spreadsheet;
- set up alerts and periodic reports.

Odoo produces its analyses from the data entered day to day, with no export and no reprocessing. This chapter covers the analysis views common to every application, the dashboards and the connected spreadsheets.

19.1 The analysis views

Two views are dedicated to analysis and are found on most screens. Some analyses also have a specific view, suited to their subject.

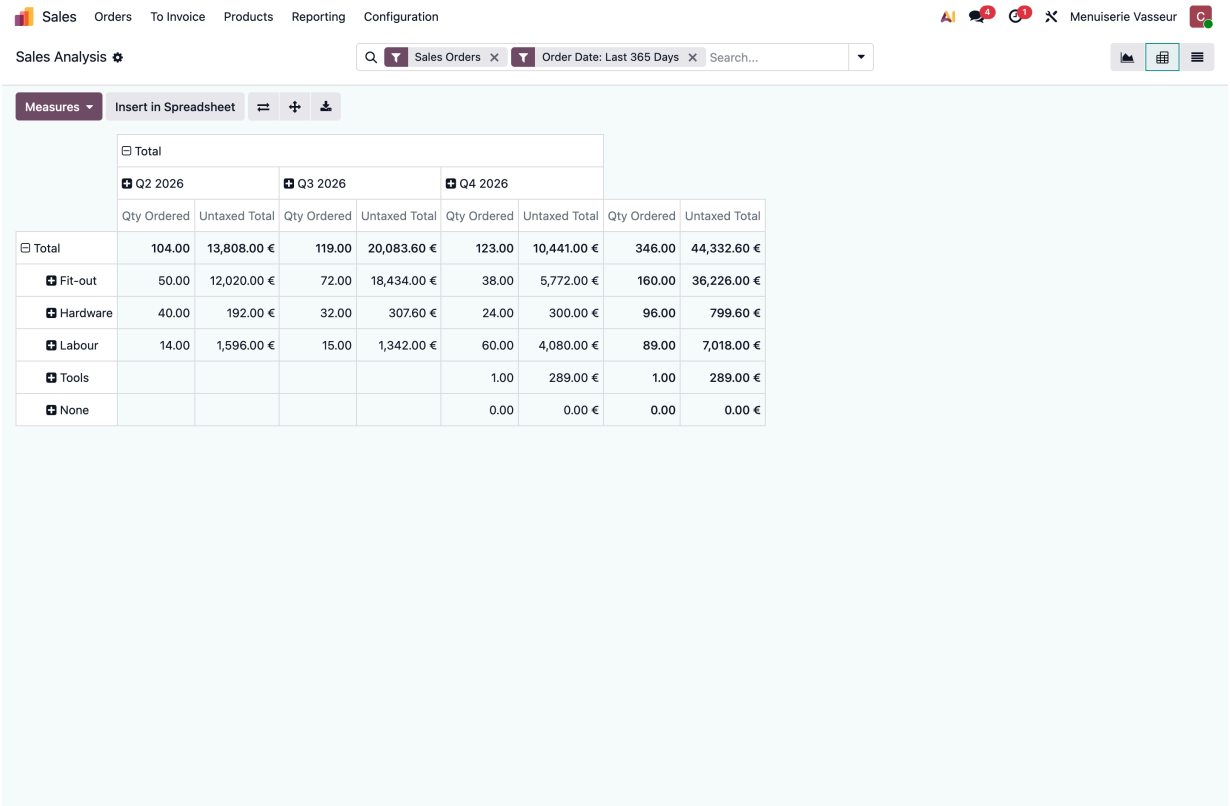
19.1.1 Graph view

1. Open an analysis screen: for example **Sales → Reporting → Sales**.
2. Click the graph icon, top right.
3. Choose the type of representation: bar, line, pie.
4. Select the **Measures** to represent.
5. Choose the breakdown criterion with **Group By**.

Bars can be stacked to compare subsets, and sorting by value ranks the results from largest to smallest.

19.1.2 Pivot view

1. Click the pivot table icon.
2. Place one criterion in rows and another in columns, by clicking the headers.
3. Select the **Measures** to display: amounts, quantities, margins, record count.
4. Expand the levels to drill down into the detail.



	Total							
	Q2 2026		Q3 2026		Q4 2026			
	Qty Ordered	Untaxed Total	Qty Ordered	Untaxed Total	Qty Ordered	Untaxed Total	Qty Ordered	Untaxed Total
Total	104.00	13,808.00 €	119.00	20,083.60 €	123.00	10,441.00 €	346.00	44,332.60 €
Fit-out	50.00	12,020.00 €	72.00	18,434.00 €	38.00	5,772.00 €	160.00	36,226.00 €
Hardware	40.00	192.00 €	32.00	307.60 €	24.00	300.00 €	96.00	799.60 €
Labour	14.00	1,596.00 €	15.00	1,342.00 €	60.00	4,080.00 €	89.00	7,018.00 €
Tools					1.00	289.00 €	1.00	289.00 €
None					0.00	0.00 €	0.00	0.00 €

Figure 19.1: Pivot table analysis

Tip

The pivot table answers questions about figures, the graph answers questions about trends. Start with the pivot to establish the numbers, switch to the graph to present them.

19.1.3 Cohort view

The cohort view tracks over time the behaviour of groups formed on the same date: how many of the opportunities created in January are still open in March, how many of the subscriptions taken out in the first quarter are still running a year later.

Watch out

Unlike the list, kanban, pivot and graph views, the cohort is **not** available everywhere. It belongs to the Enterprise edition and exists only on the screens where it has been provided for.

To see for yourself, open **CRM** → **Reporting** → **Pipeline**: the cohort icon appears in the view switcher, top right, next to the graph and the pivot table.

Note

The screens that offer it, depending on the applications installed:

Application	Screens concerned
CRM	pipeline analysis
Helpdesk	ticket lists and their analysis reports
Subscriptions	subscriptions and their report
Events	registrations

Application	Screens concerned
Recruitment	the stages of the process

Elsewhere, the view switcher does not offer it. This is not a missing setting: the view has not been declared for those screens, and no option will add it.

Reading the screen. Each row is a cohort: the items that entered in the same period. The columns that follow count the periods elapsed since: `+0` for the starting period, `+1` for the next, and so on. The cell gives a percentage of the group, the value showing on hover: the share remaining, or the share that has left on the screens that track churn, such as the CRM pipeline analysis. The **Average** row aggregates all the cohorts.

Three controls govern the display: **Measures** chooses what is counted (**Count** by default, or an amount, the adjacent selector sets the granularity) **Day**, **Week**, **Month**, **Quarter**, **Year**, and the download icon exports the table to spreadsheet format.

Tip

On the screens where it exists, the cohort answers a question that neither the graph nor the pivot table can ask: *what becomes, over time, of the items that entered together?* That is the reading which reveals a gradual deterioration (a conversion rate that collapses beyond six weeks, for instance) invisible in a monthly total.

19.2 Building an analysis

1. Open the analysis screen concerned.
2. Narrow the scope with **Filters**: period, company, team, status.
3. Choose the axis of reading with **Group By**.
4. Select the relevant **Measures**.
5. Switch between views without losing the filters applied.
6. Save the result in **Favorites** to come back to it directly.

Watch out

Always check the period filter before reading a figure. Most analysis screens apply a default filter (the current year, the current month) which is not necessarily the one you think you are reading.

19.3 The standard reports

Each application provides its ready-to-use analyses:

Area	Available analyses
Sales	Revenue by customer, product, salesperson; margins; forecasts.
CRM	Pipeline, conversion rate, lost reasons, forecasts.
Purchase	Spend by vendor, lead times, price differences.
Inventory	Stock, valuation, move history, forecasts.
Manufacturing	Quantities produced, duration variances, costs, scrap.
Accounting	Balance sheet, profit and loss, general ledger, aged balances, taxes.
Project	Progress, time spent, profitability.

19.4 The dashboards

The **Dashboards** application gathers ready-to-use dashboards, fed live by the data in the database.

19.4.1 Viewing

1. Open the **Dashboards** application.
2. In the left-hand panel, select the section you want: for example **Logistics**.
3. Click the name of the dashboard: it opens in the main view.

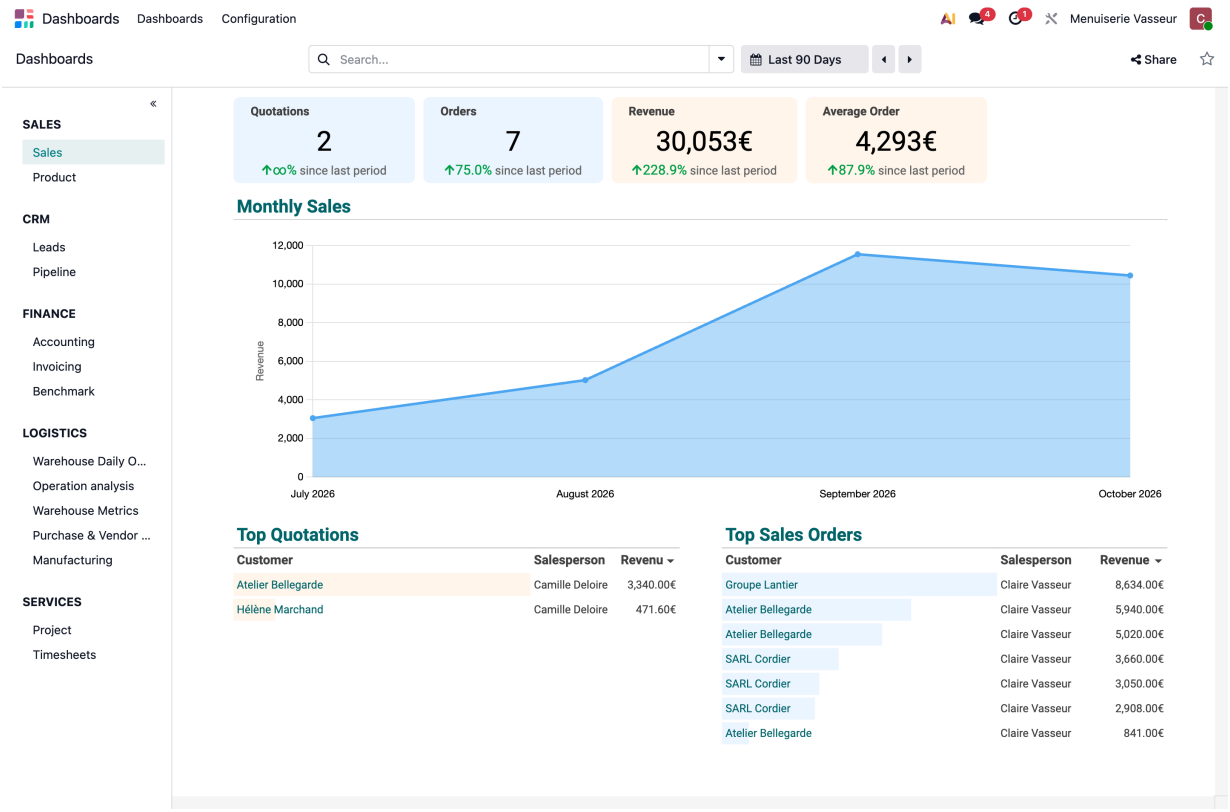


Figure 19.2: Dashboards application

19.4.2 Filtering

- The period selector, above the dashboard, restricts the analysis to an interval. Most dashboards open on a default period, for example the last 90 days for sales: check it before reading a figure.
- The time granularity (day, week, month, quarter) is set on the charts concerned.
- The search bar filters on a dimension: a customer, a vendor, a team.
- Global filters apply simultaneously to every element of the dashboard.

19.4.3 Customising

The screen that displays a dashboard is read-only in everyday use: no button on it allows any change. Modification goes through the application's configuration.

1. Open **Dashboards → Configuration → Dashboards**.
2. The list shows the **sections**: Sales, Finance, Logistics, Services, Marketing, Website, Human Resources, to which CRM and Subscriptions are added depending on the applications installed. These are the entries in the application's left-hand panel.
3. Open a section. The **Spreadsheets** tab lists the dashboards it contains, one per row.
4. Click **Edit** at the end of the row: the dashboard opens in the spreadsheet editor, with the tools described in section 19.5.
5. **Add a line** creates an additional dashboard in the section.

Each row also carries the distribution settings:

Column	Role
Name	Label shown in the application's left-hand panel.
Group	User groups allowed to see the dashboard. Defaults to **Role / User**.
Companies	Restricts visibility to certain companies. The column only appears in a multi-company environment; left empty, it shows `Visible to all`.
Data	The spreadsheet file, in `.osheet.json` format. Column reserved for developer mode.
Is Published	Toggle. Unpublished, the dashboard disappears from the application. A section in which no dashboard is published disappears from the left-hand panel as well.

Watch out

Reworking a dashboard shipped by Odoo is not recommended: the changes are lost on version upgrades. Odoo flags those rows by tinting their **Edit** button. To keep an adaptation over time, create a separate dashboard in the section rather than writing into the standard one.

Note

Configuring dashboards requires membership of the **Admin** group of the **Dashboard** privilege. Without it the menu remains visible but the list is read-only.

Tip

There is a shortcut for whoever holds that group: in developer mode, a pencil icon appears directly on the displayed dashboard and opens the editor without going through the configuration. It is tinted as a warning on the dashboards shipped by Odoo.

Note

Modifying dashboards belongs to the Enterprise edition. In Community the configuration menu exists and the distribution settings (groups, companies, publication) remain accessible, but the list offers neither an **Edit** button nor **Add a line**: the dashboards shipped can be viewed, not modified.

19.5 Connected spreadsheets

An integrated spreadsheet lets you rework Odoo data without exporting it: the values stay linked to the database and refresh.

19.5.1 Creating a spreadsheet from an analysis

1. Build the analysis you want in pivot view.
2. Use the insert-into-spreadsheet action.
3. Choose the destination spreadsheet: a new one, or an existing one.

The inserted table keeps its link with the database: the amounts update when it is opened.

19.5.2 Working in the spreadsheet

- Calculation formulas and Odoo-specific functions, allowing values to be called directly from the database.
- Refreshable pivot tables.
- Charts, including hierarchical representations in concentric rings, useful for breaking a total down into nested subcategories.
- Conditional formatting, to colour cells automatically according to thresholds: margins below a floor, payment delays, budget variances.

– Global filters, applied to the whole spreadsheet.

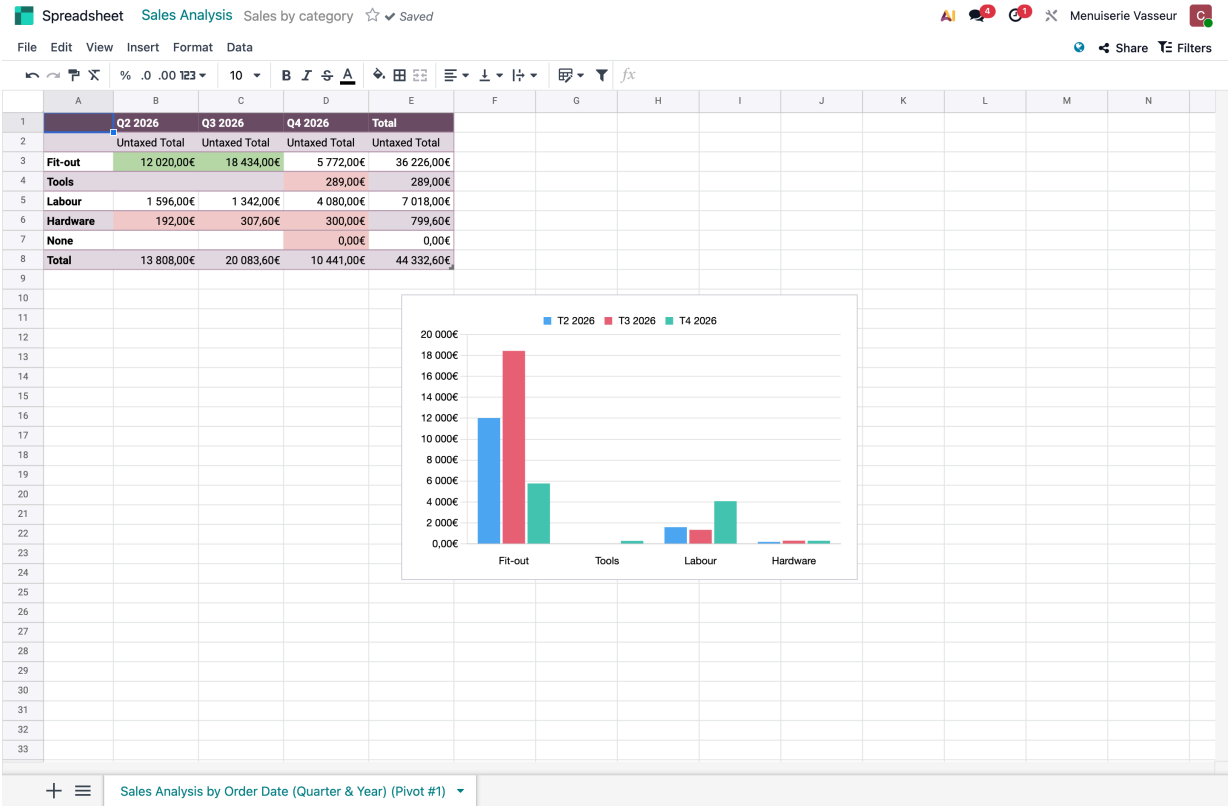


Figure 19.3: Connected spreadsheet with conditional formatting

19.5.3 Sharing

Spreadsheets can be shared with other users, commented on and embedded in dashboards.

Note

Connected spreadsheets belong to the Enterprise edition.

Tip

Keep the spreadsheet for reprocessing: weightings, assumptions, presentation. For a question of fact, Odoo's pivot view answers faster and with no risk of a stale formula.

19.6 Exporting

1. Open the list view and apply the filters you want.
2. Select the records.
3. Click **Actions** then **Export**.
4. Choose the fields and the format.
5. Save the export template for periodic analyses.

19.6.1 Connecting a business intelligence tool

An external business intelligence tool can connect directly to the database to build advanced analyses.

Watch out

This access is set up by the system administrator, with a dedicated read-only account. An external tool plugged into the production database with write rights, or with no load limiting, degrades performance for every user.

19.7 Alerts and periodic reports

19.7.1 Being alerted on a condition

An analysis answers a question that has been asked; it assumes someone thinks to ask it. An automation rule takes over whatever has to be watched continuously: it observes a data model and warns of its own accord as soon as a condition is met: internal notification, email, activity creation.

The situations that lend themselves to it: stock below the critical threshold, a high-stakes deal with no activity for a week, a customer approaching their credit limit, a quotation margin below a floor.

Creating a rule, its triggers and its actions are covered in chapter 21, which also gives the module to install beforehand (see section 21.1.1).

19.7.2 Receiving a periodic report

Odoo can send, at regular intervals, a summary email covering a selection of indicators. The feature is provided by the **KPI Digests** module, which is almost always present already: accounting, inventory, CRM, sales, projects and automation rules all depend on it. Were it missing, it would be installed from **Apps** by removing the **Apps** filter, the module not being an application.

Once the module is in place:

1. Open **Settings** → **General Settings**.
2. In the **Emails** block, tick **Digest Email**.
3. Choose the summary to send in the drop-down list that appears.
4. Click **Configure Digest Emails** to open the summary and set its frequency, its indicators and its recipients.

Note

The same list is reached directly through **Settings** → **Technical** → **Email** → **Digest Emails**, in developer mode. The entry is reserved for users allowed to manage access rights, which includes administrators.

Watch out

Ticking the box does not subscribe existing users: the setting automatically adds *new* users as recipients. Accounts already created must be added by hand in the summary.

19.8 Filing documents automatically

The **Documents** application centralises the company's files and can sort incoming items: it assigns them a workspace and tags based on their content, then presents them for validation. It then feeds the other applications: a vendor bill dropped into the accounting space becomes an entry to check, a signed quotation goes back up onto the order.

Note

Documents belongs to the Enterprise edition and is a full application in its own right, with its own notions (workspaces, rights per space, tags, processing rules, validation flows) and some twenty integration modules with accounting, human resources, projects and electronic signature.

This guide, devoted to core features, does not go into that detail. Setting it up calls for dedicated support: do not hesitate to contact us (www.irokoo.fr, info@irokoo.fr).

19.9 Good practice

Analyses that serve a purpose

- Make data entry reliable before building analyses: an elaborate report built on incomplete data gives false confidence.
- Use tags and categories consistently: they are the axes of every grouping.
- Limit a dashboard to what triggers a decision. Three indicators watched are worth more than fifteen consulted once.
- Always compare against a reference: previous period, target, budget. An isolated figure cannot be read.
- Drill down to the detail before concluding: double-clicking a value opens the records that make it up.

CHAPTER 20

Artificial intelligence

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER

- place the four levels of intelligent assistance and know which one answers which need;
- check the technical prerequisites before opening usage up to the teams;
- create an agent, give it source documents and put it to the test;
- entrust a decision to a server action, knowing what it does and does not control.

Odoo 19 builds artificial-intelligence assistance into several places in the software. These are not variants of one and the same feature: they have neither the same prerequisites, nor the same degree of autonomy, nor the same consequences when they get it wrong. This chapter tells them apart before detailing the ones that are configured.

20.1 The four levels of assistance

Level	What it does, and where it is covered
Writing assistance	Writes or rephrases a text on request, in a field or a message. The user reads it over and validates before anything is saved. See section 4.3.2.
AI Field	A field whose value is computed by the assistant from the other data on the record, across a whole table. It is set up with Studio; the procedure is in chapter 9.
Agent	An interlocutor configured for a domain, with its own instructions, its reference documents and its tools. It answers, it does not act of its own accord.
AI server action	Decides on its own which operations to call on a record, and executes them. This is the only level where the assistant **decides** on an operation and applies it without review.

The gap between the last two is the one that matters: an agent proposes an answer that a human reads, a server action applies a decision that nobody sees go by. The precautions are not the same.

20.2 The prerequisites

Three distinct conditions, to be checked in this order.

One clarification first, because it explains what follows: the assistance rests on **two** modules both named **AI**, and they do not install the same way.

Module	Installation
The assistance foundation	Installs **by itself**, provided the server supplies the PostgreSQL extension described below. It is the one that brings writing assistance, AI fields and AI server actions. It does not appear in the list of applications.
The **AI** application	**Does not install by itself** and must be added by hand. It brings no new capability: it provides the screens for configuring agents, topics and default prompts.

In other words, a database may perfectly well offer writing assistance without any **AI** menu being visible: the foundation is there, the application is not.

20.2.1 The PostgreSQL extension

Agents index their reference documents so as to be able to refer to them. That indexing relies on the PostgreSQL extension `vector`, which the server must supply. Odoo checks **before** installing: the assistance foundation flatly refuses to install if the extension is missing. On automatic installation it abstains with no message and no visible trace; on manual installation the operation fails with an error.

Note

The point does not arise on Odoo Online, where the extension is supplied. On odoo.sh and on-premise hosting, this is the question to put to the host or the system administrator before any other. Without the extension, neither the agents, nor writing assistance, nor AI fields are available: only the **Translate with AI** button of the text editor's toolbar remains. This is not a crippled feature, it is a module that does not install.

20.2.2 The provider access key

Odoo does not host a model: it calls an outside service (OpenAI or Google) and passes it the elements needed for the request. That call requires an access key, whose conditions depend on the hosting. The procedure is in section 3.3.4.

Watch out

What this means in practice: the data sent in an assistance request leaves your database and passes through a third party. The point deserves to be settled before opening usage up to the teams, particularly on documents that name individuals or are covered by a confidentiality undertaking.

20.2.3 The application

The writing-assistance features are used without installing anything. Configuring agents, topics or default prompts, on the other hand, requires adding the application, which never arrives on its own.

1. Open **Apps**.
2. Search for `AI`. The application presents itself as an ordinary application, with no need to remove the default filter.
3. Click **Activate**.
4. An **AI** menu appears, carrying the **Agents** entry. The **Configuration** entry, which gives access to the access keys and the default prompts, is only visible to a settings administrator.

Watch out

Installing the application **moves** the access keys. They leave the integrations block of the **General Settings** described in section 3.3.4 to join the **AI** pane of the settings, from then on reachable through **AI → Configuration → Settings**. A key already entered is not lost: it is its location that changes.

20.3 The agents

An agent is an interlocutor configured for a specific use. It differs from the generic assistant in three ways: a permanent instruction that frames its answers, reference documents it relies on, and topics that give it tools.

20.3.1 Creating an agent

1. Open **AI → Agents → Agents**.
2. Click **New**.
3. Fill in the **Agent Name**, then the subtitle placed just below it, which sums the agent up for its users. This field has no label: it is recognised by its example text.
4. Choose the **LLM Model** from those of the configured providers.
5. Set the **Response Style**: **Analytical**, **Balanced** or **Creative**.
6. Write the **System Prompt**: the permanent instruction that frames the role and the tone.

7. Save.

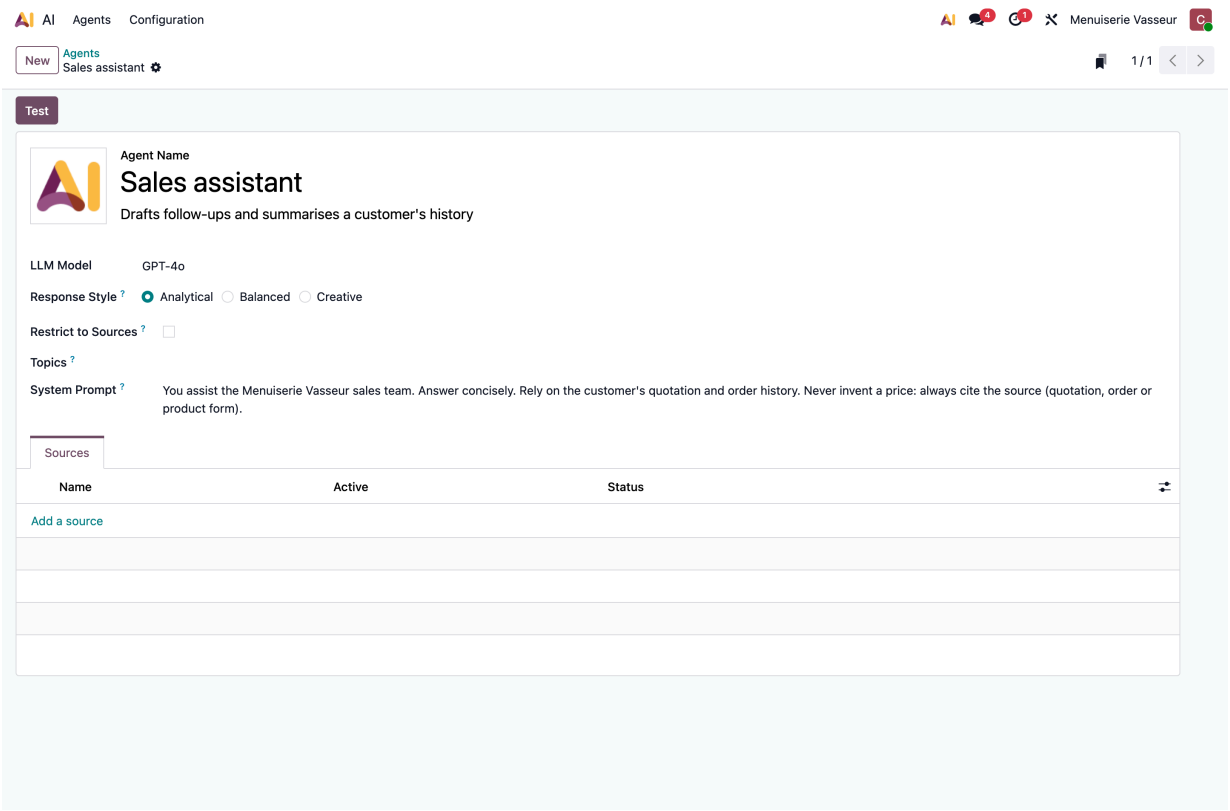


Figure 20.1: AI agent form

Note

On GPT-5 generation models, the **Response Style** is still offered but sets the depth of reasoning: the deepest with **Analytical**, the shortest with **Creative**.

Watch out

Models age. An agent set to a model withdrawn by its provider keeps answering: Odoo then sends the requests to a more recent model, chosen according to the **Response Style**, and reports it with a banner on the agent's form. An agent that has been in service for a long time deserves a check of its **LLM Model**: its answers may come from a model other than the one displayed.

20.3.2 Giving it reference documents

The **Sources** tab gathers the documents the agent relies on: catalogue, terms and conditions, internal procedure, website page.

1. Open the agent's **Sources** tab.
2. Click **Add a source** and choose a file or a web address.
3. Wait for the indexing.

Each row carries a status:

Status	Meaning
Processing	The document is being indexed. It is not usable yet.
Indexed	The document is available. The row's toggle allows it to be taken out of scope without deleting it.

Status	Meaning
Failed	Indexing failed. The detail of the error is kept on the row, and a **Retry** button restarts the operation.

The **Reprocess** button re-indexes a source already processed: it is for web addresses, whose content changes without Odoo being told. An attached file does not need it, its content being fixed.

Tip

The **Restrict to Sources** box confines the agent to its documents: it only answers from them. That is the setting to keep when accuracy matters more than coverage: a support agent that must quote the procedure, not invent it.

20.3.3 The topics

A topic is a skill: a set of detailed instructions together with the tools needed to exercise it. It is then attached to one or more agents, which avoids writing everything in the system prompt and allows the same skill to be reused elsewhere.

Odoo ships some. The list opened by **AI → Agents → Topics** is not empty on a fresh database: the installed modules deposit their topics there, with their instructions and their tools already attached.

Shipped topic	What it brings
Natural Language Search	Interprets a request phrased in plain language and opens the matching Odoo view, filters and groupings included.
Information retrieval	Goes and fetches information from the data models to answer a question.
Create Leads	Assists with lead creation. It only appears if CRM is installed in addition to the AI application.

Opening one of them shows what a finished topic is: several pages of instructions, setting out the rules to respect, the expected formats, the forbidden sequences and the fallback cases , and a dozen attached tools, of the **AI: Search** or **AI: Get Fields** kind.

Tip

Before writing a topic, open a shipped one and read its instructions. They show the level of precision the exercise calls for: what you find there is not a general instruction but a procedure, with its guarantees and its prohibitions. It is also the best way to understand what the mechanism can do before investing time in it.

Creating a topic.

1. Open **AI → Agents → Topics**.
2. Click **New**.
3. Fill in the **Title**, then the unlabelled subtitle placed below it, which sums the skill up in one line.
4. Write the **Instructions**: the procedure to follow, in detail.
5. Designate the **AI Tools** the topic makes available. Odoo ships a dozen, and any server action ticked **Use in AI** is added to them , see section 20.5.2.
6. Save, then attach the topic to the agent you want through its **Topics** field.

Note

A topic's **AI Tools** field is reserved for the database administrator. A user allowed to create topics can therefore write their instructions without being able to attach tools to them.

Watch out

The topics shipped by Odoo can be modified, but the modifications are lost on version upgrade, as with any record shipped by a module. To adapt a skill lastingly, duplicate the topic rather than writing into the original.

20.3.4 Putting the agent to the test

The **Test** button, at the top of the form, opens a conversation with the agent as it is configured. It is the way to check the behaviour before exposing it to users: rephrase the same question in several ways, check that it does cite its sources, verify that it refuses what falls outside its scope.

20.4 The default prompts

When a user triggers assistance, Odoo calls an agent and passes it an instruction. Neither is fixed: they depend on where the request comes from, and that pairing is configured through **rules**.

Each rule answers a question of the form “when users do this, which agent should be addressed and with what instruction”. Odoo ships seven, one per entry point in the interface: eight if the Knowledge application is installed.

1. Open **AI → Configuration → Default Prompts**.
2. Open a rule, or click **New**.

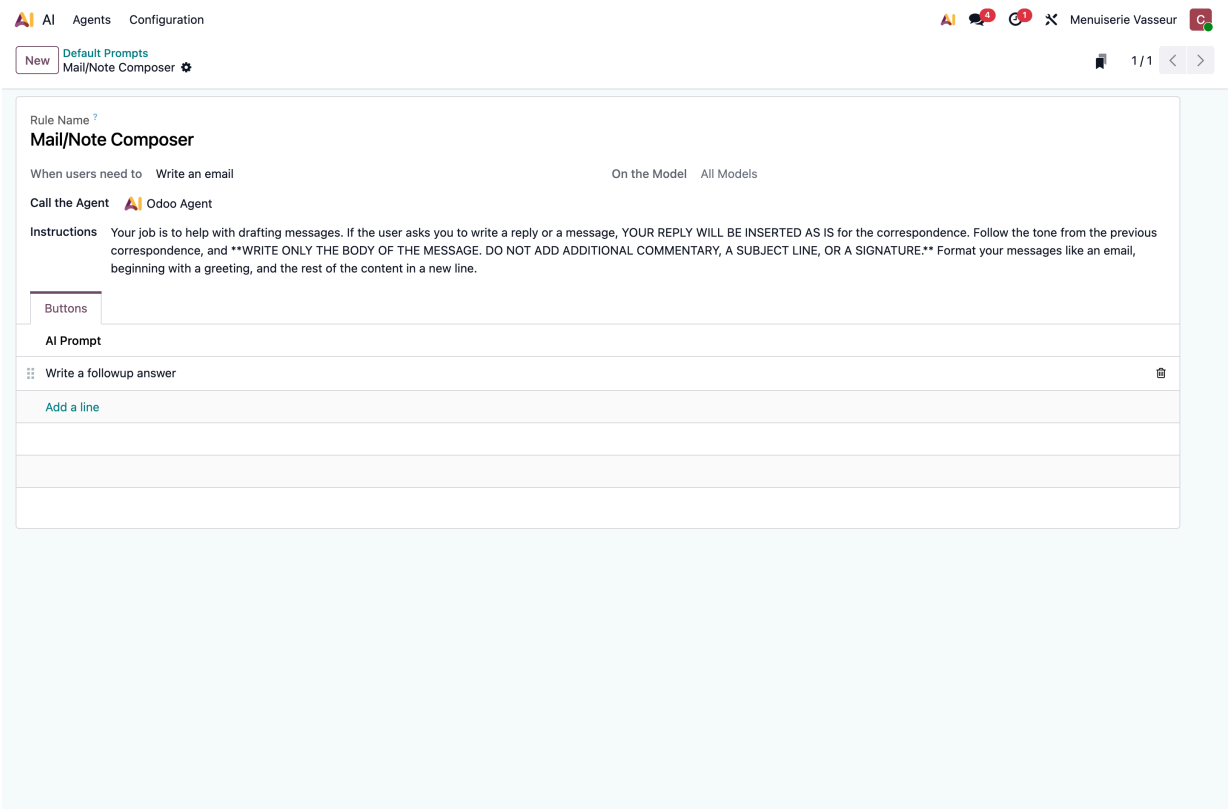


Figure 20.2: Agent call rule

The form holds five fields and one tab:

Field	Role
Rule Name	Internal label, with no effect on behaviour.
When users need to	The interface entry point the rule applies to , see the list below.
On the Model	Restricts the rule to certain data models. Left empty, it shows `All Models` and the rule applies everywhere.

Field	Role
Call the Agent	The agent called upon. It is through this field that an in-house agent is substituted for Odoo's generic agent.
Instructions	The instruction passed to the agent in addition to the user's request.
Buttons tab	Ready-made requests, offered to the user in one click. Each row carries the text sent to the agent, and the order of the rows is set by dragging.

The eight entry points:

Entry point	Where the user meets it
Write in an HTML field	Writing in a rich text field.
Rewrite content	Rephrasing of a selected text.
Write an email	Composing a message or a note.
Convert a prompt in an email	Turning an instruction into a written message, from an email template.
Get help on a record	Assistance from a document's chatter.
Ask AI for help	General assistance from the top bar. This entry point cannot be restricted by model.
Summary Buttons for Voice Transcription Component	Summary of a voice transcription.
Write a new Knowledge article	Writing an article. Only appears with the Knowledge application.

Note

On the eight shipped rules, the **Rule Name**, the entry point and the model are locked: Odoo forbids changing them. What remains editable is the agent called, the instructions and the buttons, which is enough, since that is where the behaviour is decided.

Tip

This is where the company tone is set. Rather than asking every user to specify each time that a certain register must be used, that it must stay short and be signed off a certain way, write it once in the **Instructions** of the **Write an email** rule. The instruction shipped by Odoo sets the tone of the genre: it requires the model to write only the body of the message, with no subject, no signature and no commentary.

Tip

The **System Rules** and **Custom Rules** filters in the search bar separate what Odoo shipped from what you added. Useful for finding your own rules among the others.

20.5 AI-assisted automation

Some decisions cannot be expressed as a fixed condition: classifying an incoming request by its content, choosing a treatment based on free text, extracting a piece of information from a message. A server action assisted by artificial intelligence handles those cases.

20.5.1 The principle

The mechanism keeps the decision and the execution strictly apart.

Role	Responsibility
AI server action	Reads the record and its context, interprets the instruction, and decides which tool to call with which arguments. It modifies no record.
Tool	A classic server action carrying all the execution logic: writes, updates, moves. It is the one that applies the business rules.

20.5.2 Creating a tool

1. Activate developer mode.
2. Open **Settings** → **Technical** → **Actions** → **Server Actions**.
3. Create the action performing the operation you want, or open an existing action.
4. Fill in the **Model** it operates on.
5. Choose the **Type** from the tiles offered. The choice is not free: only certain types can serve as a tool, see the table below.
6. Open the **Usage** tab and tick **Use in AI**.
7. Fill in the free text field that appears to the right of the box, it carries only the example text *Short explanation of what this does*. It is on that description, and on it alone, that the decision action will choose to call this tool.
8. If the type is **Execute Code** (or **Multi Actions** chaining a code action), fill in the **AI Schema**: the JSON-format description of the expected arguments, their type and their constraints. Leave it empty if the tool expects no argument.
9. Save.

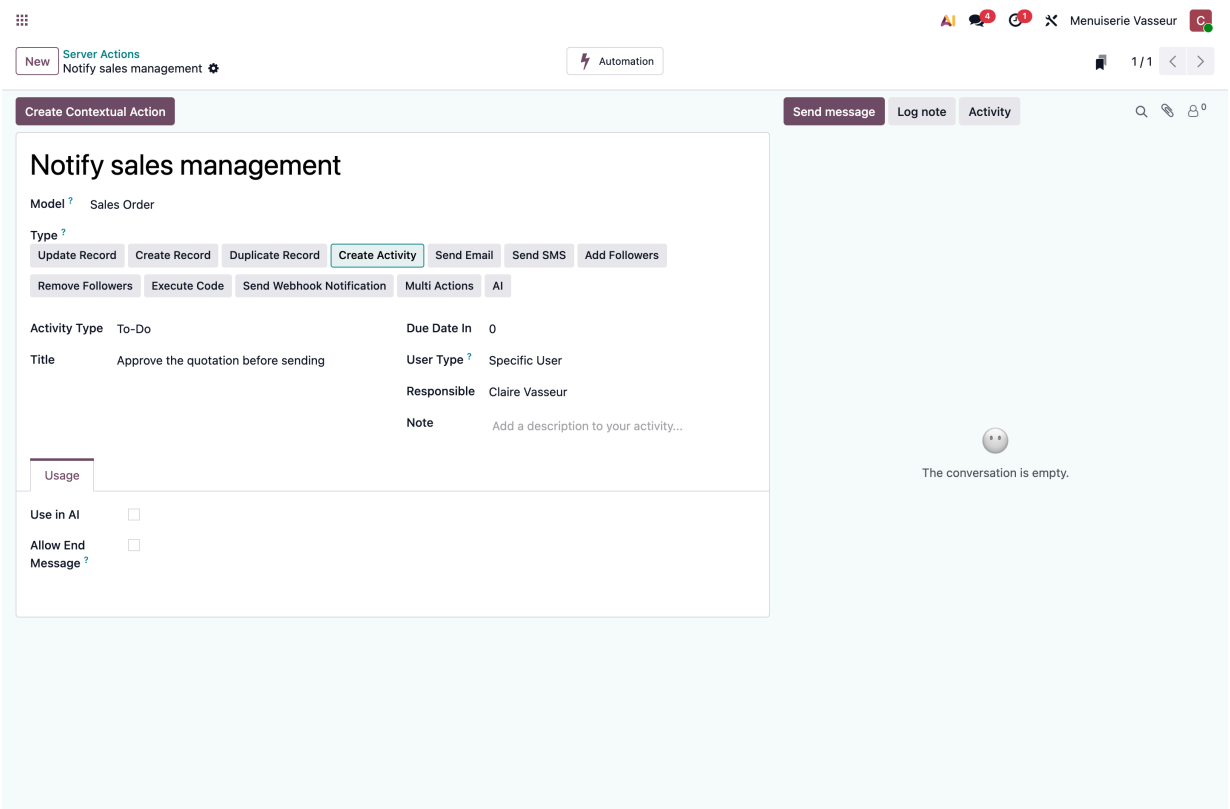


Figure 20.3: Server action and its Type field

Note

The **Usage** tab only appears if the type chosen is eligible. If you cannot find it, it is the **Type** that needs revisiting.

Types usable as a tool	Excluded types
Execute Code **Create Record** **Duplicate Record** **Create Activity** **Send Email** **Add Followers** **Remove Followers** **Send Webhook Notification**	**Send SMS** **AI**: a decision action cannot be its own tool

Two types are eligible under conditions: **Update Record**, if the value comes from an entered value or a sequence and not from a computed expression, and **Multi Actions**, on the sole condition that **all** the actions it chains are themselves eligible.

Watch out

A tool called by an AI server action executes unconditionally. There is no implicit safeguard: all the business rules (ceilings, consistency checks, rights verification) must be written explicitly in the tool's code. A tool that assumes the caller has checked something is a dangerous tool.

20.5.3 Creating the decision action

1. Still from the server actions, create an action and choose the **Type AI**.
2. Select the **Model** concerned.
3. Open the **Prompt** tab, which only appears on this type of action.
4. Fill in the **Tools** field: the actions the decision is allowed to call. The list offered is limited to the actions ticked **Use in AI and** operating on the same model. A tool defined on another model will not appear.
5. Write the instruction in the **AI Action Prompt** field: the context, the decision expected, the criteria to apply.
6. Save.
7. Finally, attach this action to a trigger, through an automation rule (see chapter 21) or a button on the document.

Writing the instruction. The field is a rich text editor, with two commands of its own, called up with `/` as in email templates:

- **Field Selector**, subtitled **Insert a field**: inserts the value of a field of the record being processed. That is how the instruction stays generic while relying on real data.
- **Records Selector**, subtitled **Insert records**: designates specific records the decision will be able to consult: a rate table, a reference list.

What you write is not all the model receives. Odoo automatically adds the current date and time, the identity of the record being processed, and the values of the fields your commands inserted. There is therefore no point restating the date in the instruction.

What happens at execution. The action processes the records **one by one**. For each, it submits the enriched instruction, receives the list of tools to call and executes them in order. The cycle stops when the decision judges it has nothing left to do.

Note

On a model with a chatter, the execution is traced: Odoo logs in the record's chatter the tools called and their arguments, and attributes the changes to an author dedicated to artificial intelligence. That is the only place to read what was actually decided.

Watch out

A tool failing does not interrupt the decision: the error is returned to the model as text, and it is up to the model to draw its conclusions. An action may therefore finish normally while part of the work has failed. On a high-stakes process, plan a downstream check rather than relying on the absence of an error message.

Note

Instructions contained in the documents attached to the record are explicitly ignored: the system instruction states that the content of a document serves to understand the subject, never to order an action. A vendor therefore cannot drive your database by slipping a sentence into a PDF.

Two checks block the saving of an inconsistent configuration: ticking **Use in AI** on an ineligible type refuses the save with the message `The action '…' cannot be used as an AI tool.`, and an **AI Schema** that is not valid JSON is rejected likewise.

Watch out

If one of the tools chosen is restricted to user groups, Odoo shows a warning next to the **Tools** field. The tool's access control is not applied when the decision calls it: the group restriction protects the button, not the execution.

Note

The artificial-intelligence features belong to the Enterprise edition and require, depending on the hosting, prior configuration of the service access (see section 3.3.4). On odoo.sh and on-premise hosting, the calls to the models are billed by the provider chosen, on its own terms.

Watch out

Keep these mechanisms for decisions that cannot be written as conditions. A deterministic rule is faster, cheaper, reproducible and verifiable. Intelligent assistance is justified on free text and uncatalogued cases, not on an amount threshold.

20.6 What the assistance does not do

Watch out

None of the features described here checks what it produces. A text written, a value computed, a decision taken are plausible proposals, not verified results. The checking remains to be done: by a human at the levels that allow it, by a downstream control at those that do not.

CHAPTER 21

Workflows and automation

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER

- create an automation rule triggered by an event;
- tell a rule, a scheduled action and a communication template apart;
- place AI-assisted automation in relation to deterministic rules;
- design a workflow and maintain it over time.

Automating means having the system carry out the repetitive tasks and the systematic checks, so as to reserve users' attention for the decisions that deserve it.

Odoo offers several complementary mechanisms: automation rules, triggered by an event; scheduled actions, triggered by the calendar; and communication templates.

A fourth mechanism exists, for the cases where the decision does not reduce to a fixed condition: the server action assisted by artificial intelligence. It is covered in chapter 20, with the rest of the assistance features.

21.1 Automation rules

A rule executes an action when an event occurs on a data model and conditions are met.

21.1.1 Prerequisite: installing the module

Automation rules are not available on a fresh database: they are brought by the **Automation Rules** module, which does not install by itself and has no toggle in the settings. As long as it is missing, the **Automation** group of the **Technical** menu only offers **Scheduled Actions** and **Scheduled Actions Triggers**.

1. Open **Apps**.
2. Remove the **Apps** filter, active by default, or replace it with the **Extra** filter: the module is not an application and stays invisible otherwise.
3. Search for `Automation Rules` and install it.

Note

The module is already present if Studio is installed: **Studio** depends on it and brings it in automatically. On an Enterprise database where Studio has been used, the menu entry therefore already exists.

21.1.2 Creating a rule

1. Activate developer mode (see chapter 3).
2. Open **Settings** → **Technical** → **Automation** → **Automation Rules**.
3. Click **New**.
4. Fill in an explicit name, describing the effect obtained.
5. Select the **Model** concerned: opportunity, order, invoice, task, manufacturing order.
6. Choose the **Trigger**.
7. Narrow the application with a domain: the rule will only execute on the matching records.
8. Add the actions to execute.
9. Save.

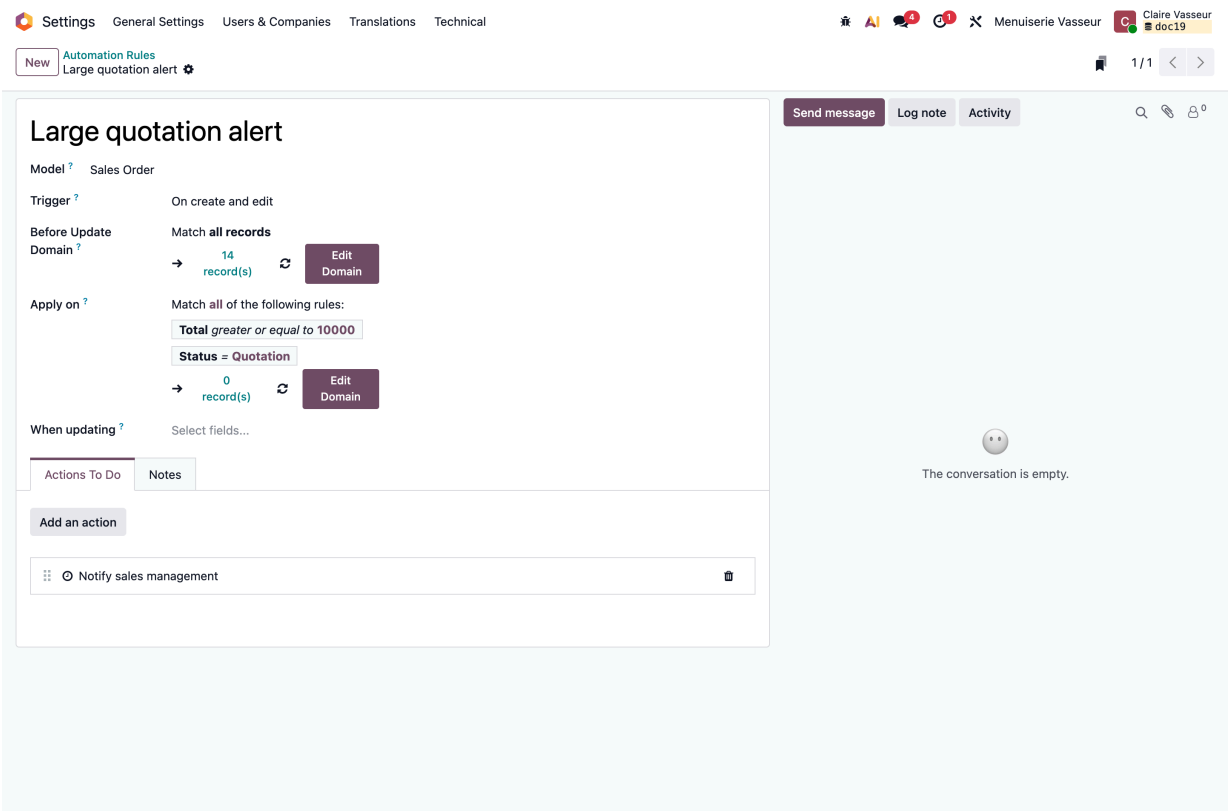


Figure 21.1: Creating an automation rule

21.1.3 The main triggers

The selector offers seventeen triggers, split into five groups; an eighteenth, **On update**, only appears on the rules that already use it. The table below keeps the most common ones.

Watch out

The list offered depends on the model chosen. A trigger only appears if the model carries the corresponding field: **Stage is set to** requires a stage field, **On archived** an archiving field, and the message triggers a model with a chatter. Not finding a trigger is therefore not an anomaly.

Trigger	Moment of execution
On create	A record is created.
On create and edit	A record is created or modified.
Stage is set to	The record reaches a given stage.
On archived	The record is archived.
On unarchived	The record is unarchived.
Based on date field	A delay before or after a date on the document.
On incoming message	A message is received on the document.
On webhook	An external system calls a dedicated address.

21.1.4 The possible actions

- Send an email from a template.
- Create an activity assigned to a user.
- Update a field on the record.
- Create a linked record.

- Add followers to the document.
- Post a message or an internal note on the document , that is the **Send Email** type, whose posting method is set to **Message** or **Note**.
- Execute code, for the cases no standard action covers. This route requires a developer.

Common examples

- Create a follow-up activity three days after sending a quotation that has gone unanswered.
- Notify the manager as soon as an order exceeds a given amount.
- Add the quality manager as a follower of every manufacturing order for a sensitive product.
- Send an acknowledgement of receipt when a customer request is created.
- Alert the credit department when a customer exceeds their credit limit.

Watch out

A rule that modifies a record can trigger another rule, which triggers a third. Before creating a rule on an already automated model, check the existing rules: unintended chains are hard to diagnose and costly in performance.

Tip

Test every rule on a test database before activating it in production, and above all check it on a record that must **not** trigger it. That is where badly written domains show themselves.

21.2 Scheduled actions

Where a rule reacts to an event, a scheduled action executes at regular intervals, without anyone having done anything. Odoo's background processing relies on this mechanism: replenishment computation, generation of recurring invoices, sending of summaries, payment follow-ups, purging of temporary data.

1. Activate developer mode: the **Technical** menu is only visible on that condition.
2. Open **Settings** → **Technical** → **Automation** → **Scheduled Actions**.
3. Open an existing action or click **New**.

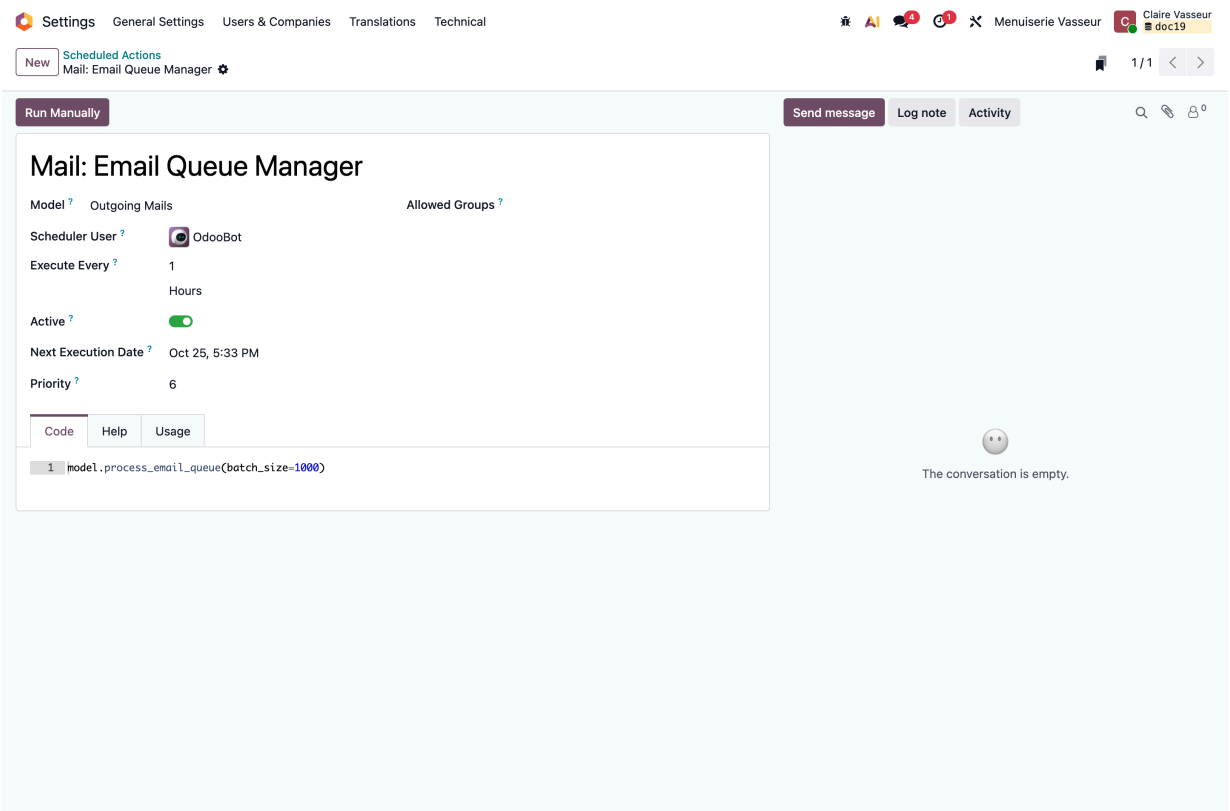


Figure 21.2: Scheduled action form

21.2.1 Reading the form

Field	Role
Model	The data model the action operates on.
Scheduler User	The account the processing runs under. It determines the access rights applied: too restricted a user makes the action fail.
Execute Every	The frequency: a number followed by a unit: **Minutes**, **Hours**, **Days**, **Weeks**, **Months**.
Active	Activation toggle. A deactivated action is not deleted, it simply stops running.
Next Execution Date	The next run planned. Changing it shifts the cycle without changing the frequency.
Priority	Order of execution when several actions are due at the same time. The scale is **inverted**: 0 is the highest priority, 10 the lowest. The default value is 5.

The **Code** tab contains the instruction executed at each run: this is code, not to be reworked without a developer's advice. The **Help** tab documents the available expressions. The **Run Manually** button, at the top of the form, triggers the processing immediately, without waiting for the due date and without shifting the cycle , that is the way to check that an action does what is expected.

Note

The neighbouring entry **Scheduled Actions Triggers** lists the one-off executions queued by Odoo to run an action before its normal due date: for instance when a document has just been created and must be processed without waiting. These triggers are placed by the code, not by hand.

Watch out

Do not change the frequency of the standard scheduled actions without an identified reason. Spacing out the replenishment computation, for example, delays the triggering of orders by as much.

Note

An action that fails is not deactivated at the first incident: Odoo counts consecutive failures and only deactivates it from five failures **and** a week of continuous failures, notifying the administrator. A process that has stopped running with no explanation therefore deserves a check of its **Active** toggle before any other hypothesis. The counter is reset as soon as a run succeeds.

21.3 Communication templates

An email template is a pre-written message, attached to a data model, whose content is filled in from the record being sent. Odoo ships several dozen: quotation confirmation, purchase order sending, due date reminder.

21.3.1 Creating or modifying a template

1. Activate developer mode.
2. Open **Settings** → **Technical** → **Email** → **Email Templates**.
3. Open an existing template, or click **New**.
4. Fill in the header: **Template Name**, **Applies to** (the data model) and **Subject**.
5. Complete the three tabs described below.
6. Click **Preview**: Odoo asks for a real record and shows the message as it will go out, fields resolved.

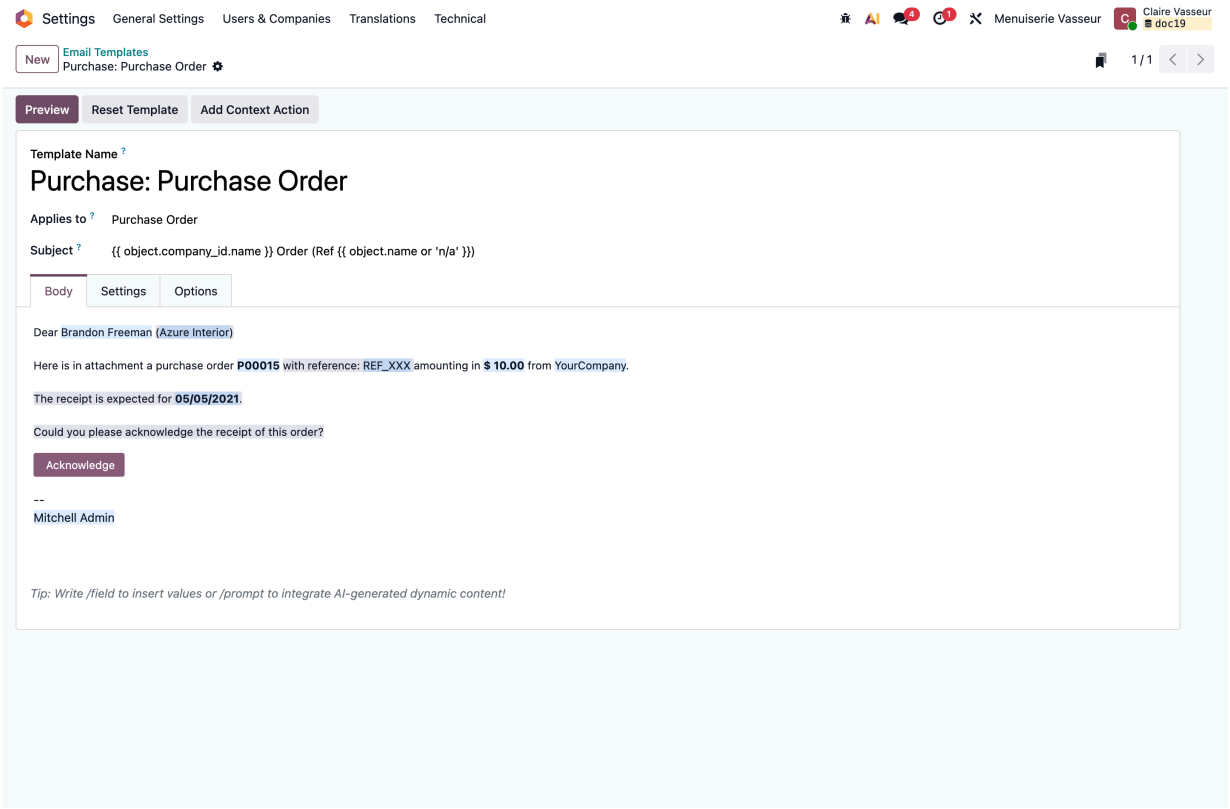


Figure 21.3: Email template and its Body tab

21.3.2 The Body tab

The body of the message is written in the rich text editor. Variable values are not typed by hand: they are inserted through an editor command.

1. Place the cursor where you want it in the body.
2. Type `/` followed by a few letters. The command sought is called **Dynamic Placeholder**, subtitled **Insert a field** and marked with a hash; it appears both by typing `/field` (the search covers the subtitle) and by typing `/dyn`, which targets the title.
3. Confirming it opens the record's field selector: contact name, document reference, amount, scheduled date. Relation fields can be browsed in depth there.
4. Once the field is chosen, Odoo shows **Enter a default value**: the text to write if the field is empty at the time of sending. Leaving it empty is possible, but an unfilled field will then leave a blank in the message.
5. Click **Insert**.

Tip

The same command is reachable without the keyboard: on an empty line of the body, a hash icon appears and opens the selector directly.

The **Subject** accepts the same mechanism, but in the form of an expression between double braces. The purchase order template thus carries `{{ object.company_id.name }} Order (Ref {{ object.name or 'n/a' }})`: the company name then the order reference, with a fallback value if it is empty.

Note

On an Enterprise database with the artificial-intelligence features, a second command `/prompt` is added in the body to produce a passage written on the fly. The hint shown below the editor then mentions both commands.

21.3.3 The Settings tab

This tab only appears in developer mode. It carries two groups.

Sender & Recipients: **Send From** (empty, Odoo takes the alias or the author's address), **Default Recipients**, and **Reply To**. Unticking **Default Recipients** reveals the explicit addressing fields, to be filled in as comma-separated lists.

Technical: **Language** (empty, the message goes out in the main contact's language), **Auto Delete**, **Scheduled Send Date**, which defers the sending instead of letting it go out immediately, and **Outgoing Mail Server**, which only appears if an SMTP server is configured.

Watch out

Auto Delete is **ticked by default**. It permanently erases all trace of the message once it has gone, including from the technical email menu: the gain is in storage space, the price is the disappearance of the proof of sending. On communications with contractual value (purchase orders, invoices, reminders) untick the box.

21.3.4 The Options tab

- **Attachments**: the files attached systematically to every sending.
- **Dynamic Reports**: the PDF documents regenerated at sending time for the record concerned. The purchase order template carries the corresponding report there, which explains why the order goes out as an attachment without any file being stored on the template.
- **Owner**: left empty, the template is shared with all users.
- **Template Description**: an internal note stating when to use the template. It is shown in the list of templates.

21.3.5 The header buttons

Button	Effect and display condition
Preview	Shows the rendering on a real record. Always available.
Reset Template	Restores the version shipped by the module and cancels the local modifications. Only appears on the templates shipped by Odoo (never on those you create) and requires membership of the email template editors group.
Add Context Action	Makes the template appear in the cog menu of the records of the data model concerned. Reserved for developer mode and administrators; becomes **Remove Context Action** once placed.

Templates are then used manually from a document, through the send button, or automatically from an automation rule.

21.4 Designing a workflow

1. Describe the real process, as it happens today, listing the steps and the people involved.
2. Identify the bottlenecks and the repetitive tasks.
3. Determine the conditions for moving from one step to the next.
4. Translate those steps into Odoo: document statuses, tracking fields, access rights controlling who validates what.
5. Automate the transitions and the notifications.
6. Provide for the exception case: what happens if the step is not completed within the time allowed?

Example: approving an expense report

1. The employee enters their expense report: draft status.
2. Automation: notification of the manager for approval.
3. The manager approves: approved status.
4. Automation: creation of an activity for the accounting department.
5. The accountant checks the receipts and validates.
6. Automation: generation of the payment.
7. The payment is executed: paid status.
8. Automation: notification to the employee and closing of the file.

21.5 Integrating external systems

21.5.1 Available interfaces

- External API, to read and write in the database from another application.
- Incoming webhooks, allowing a third-party system to trigger an automation rule.
- Ready-to-use connectors: payment methods, carriers, marketplaces, communication tools.

21.5.2 Use cases

- Synchronisation with an external online store.
- Exchange of documents with a partner, in electronic format.
- Feeding a business intelligence tool.
- Interfacing with a specialised business application.

Tip

Before having an integration developed, check the Odoo app marketplace: a connector maintained by a publisher generally costs less than a bespoke development, and survives version upgrades better.

21.6 Good practice

21.6.1 Proceed in stages

1. Map the processes before automating anything at all.
2. Rank the automations by their real benefit and their complexity.
3. Start with the simple, risk-free cases.
4. Test every automation, including on the cases that must not trigger it.
5. Train the users on what changes for them.
6. Measure the result and adjust.

21.6.2 Pitfalls to avoid

- Automating a process that requires human judgement.
- Building rules so complex that nobody knows what they do any more.
- Creating rules that contradict each other or chain unintentionally.
- Documenting the automations put in place nowhere.
- Neglecting the edge cases: zero amounts, missing dates, archived records.

21.6.3 Monitor over time

- Periodically check that the active rules are working properly.
- Consult the technical logs in case of unexpected behaviour.
- Update the automations when the process they serve changes.
- Appoint an owner for every critical automation.

Note

An automation with no identified owner becomes, at the first process change, a cause of malfunction whose origin nobody knows any more. Keep a list of the active rules, of their purpose and of their owner.

CHAPTER 22

Importing and exporting data

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER

- extract any set of records to a spreadsheet;
- understand the external identifier and what it makes possible;
- load data without creating duplicates;
- link records to one another at import time;
- diagnose a failed import.

22.1 A single mechanism for the whole database

Import and export are not features specific to an application. They are core operations, available from any list view: products, contacts, invoices, tasks, journal entries, stock locations. The procedure is the same everywhere, only the fields change.

That generality makes it the reference tool for three needs:

- **data migration** at go-live, from the previous system or from spreadsheets;
- **mass modification** of existing records: a price increase, a change of owner on three hundred files;
- **extraction** to a spreadsheet, for an analysis or for passing on to a third party.

Tip

These three uses rely on the same round trip: you export what exists, you modify it in a spreadsheet, you re-import it. That is the way of working to favour, it guarantees that the file has exactly the shape Odoo expects.

22.2 Exporting

1. Open the list view and apply the filters that delimit the scope you want.
2. Tick the records, or tick the header box to select everything.
3. Click **Actions** then **Export**.
4. Compose the list of **Fields to export**: look for the field you want in the **Available fields** column, then click the **plus** to its right. It joins the right-hand column.
5. Remove a field from the selection with the **bin** icon beside it, and change the column order by dragging a field by its handle.
6. Choose the **Export Format**: **XLSX** or **CSV**.
7. Click **Export**.

Tip

Fields marked with a chevron expand: they designate a linked record, and their content gives access to that record's fields. That is how you export a contact's country or an order's salesperson, without a second export.

The search box at the top of the column saves browsing a list that often runs to several hundred entries.

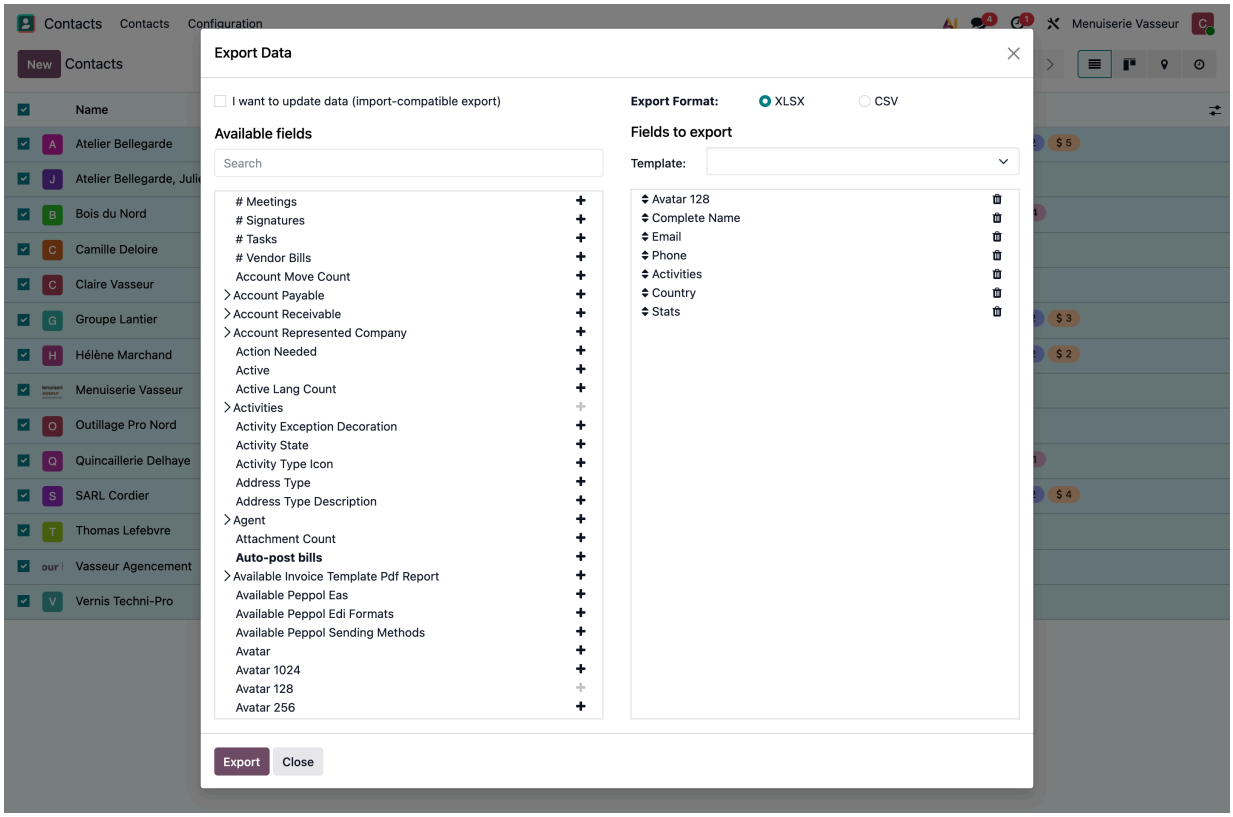


Figure 22.1: Data export dialog

22.2.1 Choosing the format

Format	Use
XLSX	Spreadsheet. Reading, formatting, passing on to a third party. The columns are typed and the numbers directly usable.
CSV	Text file. Re-import, automated processing, large volumes. Raw format, with no formatting, but accepted everywhere.

22.2.2 Preparing a re-importable export

The box **I want to update data (import-compatible export)** changes the nature of the file produced. It adds an external identifier column and only exports the fields Odoo will know how to read back.

It is that box which distinguishes an export for consultation from an export for work. Without it, the file can be read but cannot be re-imported without creating duplicates.

Tip

When a list of fields is to serve again (a monthly statement, a file intended for a partner), save it as a template. The **Template** field, at the top of the right-hand column, offers **New template**: name the selection, and it will be offered on subsequent exports.

22.3 The external identifier

This is the notion to understand before any import. It explains both why an import creates duplicates and how to prevent it.

Every record in Odoo carries an internal number, invisible and specific to the database. It cannot serve as a reference point: product number 412 in one database is not the same in another. The **external identifier** is a second name, textual and stable, which you choose yourself: for example `product_screw_m6_stainless`.

It serves as the matching key at import:

- if the value in the **External ID** column is unknown to the database, Odoo **creates** the record and assigns it that identifier;
- if it is already known, Odoo **updates** the existing record instead of creating another one.

Why this is decisive

Without an external identifier, re-importing the same file twice creates two sets of records. With it, the second import simply corrects the first. That is what makes a data migration repeatable: you can load, spot an error, correct the spreadsheet and reload, as many times as needed, without ever polluting the database.

Tip

Adopt a readable and durable convention: the reference from the original catalogue, the customer code from the previous system, the account number. The external identifier is the bridge between the two systems, and it outlives the migration.

22.4 Importing

1. Open the list view of the record type concerned.
2. Open the actions menu through the cog icon in the top bar, it only appears if no record is ticked , then click **Import records**.
3. Load the file with **Upload Data File**. Once the preview is shown, the button becomes **Load Data File** and serves to replace the file.
4. If the workbook has several tabs, designate the right one in **Sheet:**.
5. Check that **Use first row as header** is ticked when the file carries a heading row.
6. Check line by line the match between the **File Column** and the **Odoo Field**. Odoo proposes a mapping for each column, which a cross allows you to remove and redo.
7. Read the **Comments** column, which flags errors but also the expected entry conventions.
8. Click **Test**: Odoo analyses the whole file without writing anything.
9. Correct the errors, retest, then click **Import**.

Tip

The **Help** pane, on the left, offers a ready-to-use **import template** for the main record types: contacts, products, orders, tasks, employees, journal entries. It carries the right columns, in the right order, with an example row. Less common types have none. It is the safest starting point: safer even than an export, since it contains only what is really importable.

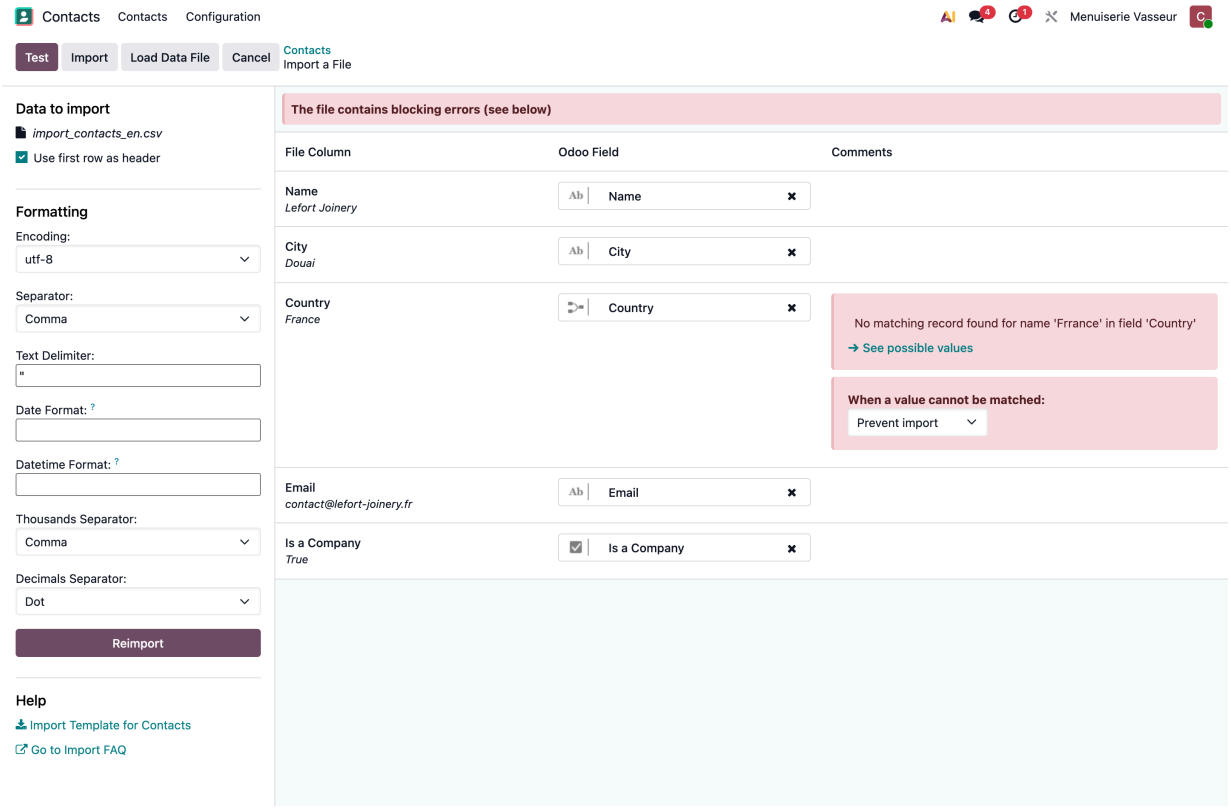


Figure 22.2: Data import dialog

Note

Test writes nothing: the database stays intact, whatever errors are encountered. There is therefore no reason to skip it.

The **Formatting** pane governs the interpretation of the file: column separator, decimal separator, date format, encoding. Odoo detects them on its own in most cases; they are corrected here when numbers or dates come out wrong in the preview.

Note

This pane only appears for **CSV** files. An XLSX workbook carries its own data types, and these settings would serve no purpose: that is in fact a reason to prefer the spreadsheet for a migration, decimal separator errors being the leading cause of wrong amounts at import.

22.5 Linking related records

A product refers to a category, a contact to a country, an invoice to a customer. These links are loaded by the value that designates the target record, in one of three possible ways.

Column	Content	When to use it
`Category`	The displayed name	Readable, but fails if the name is missing; if it is carried by several records, Odoo keeps the first one found and reports it with a warning.
`Category/External ID`	The external identifier	The safest. Insensitive to renaming and to homonyms.
`Category/Database ID`	The internal number	Reserved for transfers between two copies of the same database.

Watch out

The three ways are mutually exclusive: filling in both the name and the external identifier for the same field makes the row fail, Odoo being unable to decide between the two indications.

For a field that accepts several values (a contact's tags, a line's taxes) separate them with commas in the same cell: `Prospect,Key Account,Export`.

Tip

These composite columns are painful to write from memory. First export two or three already correct records with the update box ticked: the headers obtained give the exact syntax, including for linked fields.

22.6 Updating in bulk

Modifying several hundred records always follows the same round trip:

1. Filter the list on the records to modify.
2. Export them with **I want to update data (import-compatible export)** ticked.
3. Open the file in a spreadsheet and modify only the columns concerned, **without touching the external identifier column**.
4. Re-import the file.

Odoo recognises each row by its external identifier and applies the modifications to the existing records.

Watch out

Do not delete rows from the file "so as not to modify them": it serves no purpose, an unchanged row is rewritten identically. Above all, do not delete the external identifier column, which would turn the update into the creation of duplicates.

22.7 Sequencing a data migration

A file that references a non-existent value fails, row by row. The loading order therefore follows from the dependencies: what is designated must exist before what designates it.

1. **Reference data**: categories, units of measure, payment terms, taxes, tags.
2. **Third parties**: contacts, companies, then their linked delivery addresses.
3. **The catalogue**: products, then vendor prices and pricelists.
4. **Transaction data**: opening stock, orders in progress, opening entries.

Tip

On a file of several thousand rows, first isolate a couple of dozen representative rows in a separate file and import them. A format error spotted on twenty rows is corrected in a few minutes; the same error noticed after the full load forces a redo.

22.8 Diagnosing a failure

The errors reported carry the row number and the field at fault. The most frequent ones:

Message	Usual cause
Value not found	The name or identifier designated does not exist yet. Check the import order, the spelling, trailing spaces in the cell.

Message	Usual cause
Multiple matches	Two records carry the same name: the import does not fail, it links the first one found and reports it with a warning. Check the link, or switch to the external identifier.
Unknown field	The header matches no field. Correct the mapping in the dialog, or take the header from an export.
Date or number format	The file does not use the expected separators. Adjust them in the **Formatting** pane.

Watch out

An import is atomic **per batch**, not over the whole file. If a row is refused, no row of the current batch is written and the import stops , but the batches already processed, of 2,000 rows by default, remain in the database. On a file of fewer than 2,000 rows, everything therefore happens as if the import failed as a whole; beyond that, a partial import is possible and that is precisely what the **Start at line** field allows you to resume.

22.9 Loading large volumes

Beyond a hundred rows, a **Batch Import** pane appears in the dialog. It gives access to the **Batch limit** (the number of rows processed at once, 2,000 by default) and to the **Start at line** field, which allows an interrupted load to be resumed where it stopped.

Note

An **Advanced** pane also exists, but it has nothing to do with batches: reserved for developer mode, it carries only two options, tracking history during the import and matching on subfields.

Note

The size of the file loaded is capped at 128 MB, unless the server is configured otherwise.

Tip

Schedule bulk migrations outside working hours. A massive import loads the database and slows other users down.

CHAPTER 23

Customising with Studio

BY THE END OF THIS CHAPTER

- place what Studio allows and what it does not replace;
- measure its pricing and contractual consequences before activating it;
- add a field, reorganise a view, adapt a printed document;
- subject an action to approval;
- maintain your customisations over time.

Studio is a toolbox for adapting Odoo without writing code: adding a field, reorganising a screen, modifying a printed document, imposing an approval. It is aimed at the functional administrator, not at the everyday user.

Note

Studio belongs to the Enterprise edition, and access to it is reserved for database administrators: the icon only appears in the top bar for them.

23.1 What Studio allows

Area	What you do there
Fields	Add a piece of information to the data model, or reuse an existing field on another screen.
Views	Reorganise a form, add a column to a list, a filter to the search, activate a view not offered by default.
Models and applications	Create a data model, or even a complete application, for a need that no standard application covers.
Automation rules	Trigger a process on an event, without going through the technical screens (see chapter 21).
PDF reports	Adapt the presentation of printed documents: quotations, invoices, delivery orders.
Approval rules	Subject a button's action to the approval of one or more people.

Note

Studio acts on the **configuration** of the database, not on its code. What it produces is stored as data, which makes it accessible without technical skills , and also explains the precautions described in section 23.8.

23.2 Before activating Studio

Watch out

Installing Studio on a database on the **Standard** pricing plan automatically triggers the move to the **Custom** plan. This is not an option to tick and then untick: on an annual or multi-year contract, an

additional purchase order is issued with a 30-day term; on a monthly contract, the new price applies when the next invoice is issued. Have this point approved before installing.

Two questions deserve to be settled beforehand:

1. **Does the need really call for Studio?** A field useful in a single context is handled by a property field, without installing anything (see section 4.4). A piece of information to be produced on a one-off basis is written in the editor.
2. **Who will be allowed to touch it?** Studio is open to database administrators. A customisation made without consultation is hard to trace, and nobody dares go back to it.

23.3 Opening and closing Studio

1. Go to the application and the screen to be modified.
2. Click the Studio icon in the top bar.
3. Make the modifications.
4. Click **Close**, top right, to return to normal use.

Note

Studio opens on the screen you are viewing: what you modify there applies to that screen and that model. It is therefore safer to reach the right screen first, then open Studio, than the other way round.

23.3.1 Reading the Studio screen

The screen reorganises itself into three areas, around the view being edited.

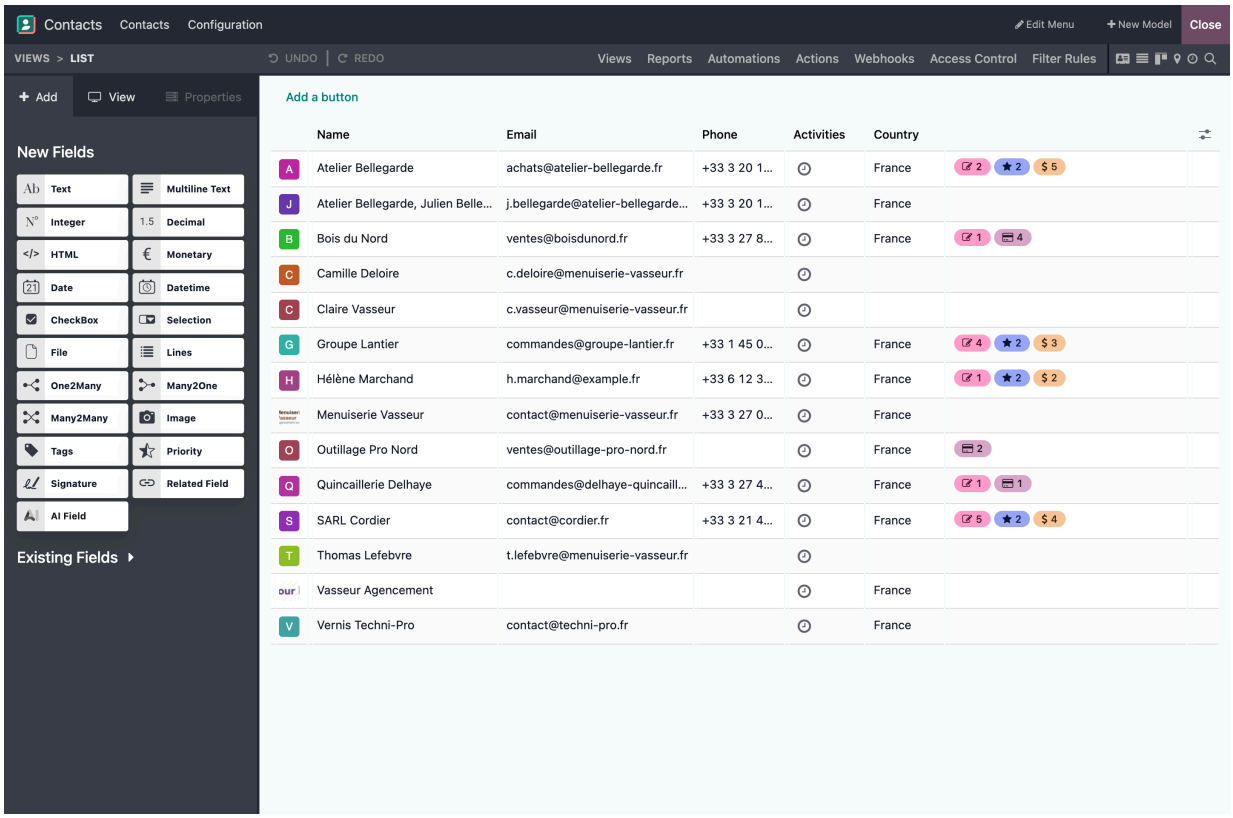


Figure 23.1: Studio editor on a list view

The top bar carries three commands that concern not the view but the application: **Edit Menu** to rework the menu entries, **New Model** to create a data table, and **Close** to leave Studio.

The tab bar, just below, gives access to everything that can be customised on the model. The view is only one part of it.

Tab	What it allows
Views	Modify the presentation of the screens. This is the tab open by default.
Reports	Adapt the printed documents , see section 23.6.
Automations	Create rules triggered by an event, without going through the technical menu (see chapter 21).
Actions	Define processes executable on the records.
Webhooks	Open an address allowing an external system to trigger a process.
Access Control	Set who can read, create, modify or delete the model's records.
Model Pages	Publish on the website pages that list or present the model's records. Tab present when the Website application is installed.
Filter Rules	Manage the model's saved searches (filters, groupings, sorting) and their sharing.

To the left of that bar, a breadcrumb recalls the view being edited: **Views** then the view type, and two commands **Undo** and **Redo** undo or replay the last operation. To the right, a series of icons switches from one view type to another without leaving Studio. Only the types already activated on the current screen appear there; the complete list of possible types is: form, list, kanban, map, calendar, graph, pivot, Gantt, cohort, activity and the search bar.

The left-hand panel carries three tabs: **Add** presents the elements to drop into the view, **View** the settings of the whole view, **Properties** those of the selected element.

The **Add** tab is itself divided into two blocks. **New Fields** offers the palette of field types to create: text, number, date, checkbox, relation to another table, and others. **Existing Fields** lists the fields already present on the model but absent from the view, which you need only drag to display.

Tip

Before creating a field, always expand **Existing Fields**. Odoo defines on its models any number of fields that the standard views do not display: the need is often already covered, and an existing field goes on being filled in by the software, which a created field never will be.

Note

The view itself remains manipulable during editing: on a list view, an **Add a button** button appears above the table to place an action within one click of the selected records.

23.4 Adding a field

1. Open Studio on the form concerned.
2. From the left-hand panel, drag the field type you want to the position you want.
3. Name the field.
4. Set its properties: required, default value, display condition, groups allowed to see it.
5. Close Studio.

Tip

A field exists independently of the screens that display it. Add it once, then place it on the other views where it is useful rather than creating a second one with the same name.

Watch out

A field added by Studio appears for everyone and on every record of the model. If it only concerns one population, restrict its visibility to the groups concerned in its properties.

23.5 Reorganising a screen

Studio allows you to move a form's fields, create tabs and sections, add a column to a list view or a filter to the search bar.

1. Open Studio on the view to be modified.
2. Drag the elements to their new position.
3. For a list view, add the useful columns from the left-hand panel.
4. Close Studio.

Note

Each view type is modified separately: reorganising the form changes neither the list nor the kanban view of the same model.

23.6 Adapting a printed document

Studio's **Reports** tab allows PDF documents to be reworked: quotations, delivery orders, invoices.

Watch out

IROKOO recommendation: do not use this editor in version 19. The reasons are detailed below. Set what can be set through the standard document layout, and entrust the rest to a development, which will produce a maintainable document taken over as is at version upgrades.

23.6.1 What the standard layout already allows

Before considering anything else, check what can be set without Studio: the logo, the colours, the font, the layout format and the footer mentions are configured from the general settings. These settings pass through version upgrades without intervention, which no document customisation guarantees.

The procedure is in section 5.2.

23.6.2 Why the editor is a problem

Three reasons, in order of severity.

The reset spills beyond the document being handled. The **Reset report** button offers an **Include header and footer** box, **ticked by default**. Now the header and footer are not specific to the document: they are shared by all the documents in the database. Odoo says so under the box, but the warning is easily skipped over. Resetting an invoice with the box ticked therefore also resets the header of every other document, including the customisations another contributor may have made to it.

The editing bears on template code. What the editor presents as movable blocks is in reality markup. An unfortunate manipulation does not produce a badly presented document but a document that no longer prints, and diagnosing it then means reading the template.

The copy freezes the document. Duplicating a standard document in order to rework it creates an independent copy, named after the original followed by `copy(1)`. That copy no longer receives any evolution of the standard: neither the corrections, nor the legal mentions added by localisation updates. On an invoice, that is a compliance risk.

23.6.3 If you must nevertheless resort to it

1. Open Studio from a document of the type to be modified.
2. Choose **Reports**, then the document template.
3. Modify the text directly in the document, as in a word processor.
4. Insert the variable values with the `/` command , see below.

5. Save.

Inserting a field. Fields are not dropped from a side panel: they are called up from the keyboard, in the body of the document, by the same mechanism as in email templates. Place the cursor where you want it, type `/` and choose from the two commands in the **Report Tools** category:

Command	What it inserts
Field	A value from the record being printed. The selector allows relation fields to be browsed in depth, and asks for a fallback value in case the field is empty.
Dynamic Table	A table built on a relation field: one row per linked record. That is how a list of order lines or of due dates is obtained.

Edit field does not appear in that menu: the command appears in the floating toolbar when a field already inserted is selected, and allows its expression or its fallback value to be changed without deleting and replacing it.

Note

This way of working explains a good part of the difficulty met in this editor: there is no field panel, and nothing on screen indicates that the `/` command takes its place.

Note

Two precautions in that case. Test the printing after **every** saved modification, on a real document: it is the only way to know which manipulation to go back to if something breaks. And if you reset, untick **Include header and footer** unless you specifically want to reset the layout of every document.

23.7 Subjecting an action to approval

An approval rule makes a button's effect conditional on the agreement of one or more people, confirming an order above a certain amount, approving an exceptional discount.

1. Open Studio on the **form view** carrying the button: the **Approvals** block is only offered in the form editor.
2. Select the button concerned: the **Properties** tab of the left-hand panel shows its settings, under the heading **Button**.
3. In the **Approvals** block, click **Add an approval step**.
4. Designate the **Approvers**, or an **Approver Group**, or both.
5. Fill in, if needed, the **Users to Notify** and a **Description**, shown on the button to indicate what is expected.
6. Set the **Approval Order** and, if necessary, tick **Exclusive Approval**.
7. Close Studio.

Setting	Effect
Approvers	The people entitled to approve or refuse. Each receives an activity when their agreement is requested.
Approver Group	Opens the right to approve to the members of the group, by membership rather than by name. Unlike named approvers, **no activity is created for them**: the request does not appear in their activity list.
Users to Notify	People informed of the decision by an internal note on the document, of which they are recipients: they receive it in Odoo or by email, depending on their notification preference. They do not approve.

Setting	Effect
Approval Order	The rank of the step, from 1 to 9. Several steps chain in that order: the second is only requested once the first has been obtained.
Exclusive Approval	Forbids the person who approved this step from approving another one on the **same** record. It is the setting that imposes a genuine second look rather than a double signature by the same hand.

Note

An activity is created for each approver when their agreement is requested: the request appears in their activity list, it does not depend on an email.

Tip

An approval rule can be conditional: giving it a domain restricts it to the records that satisfy it. That is how an approval is required only above a certain amount, without slowing down ordinary orders.

Note

The same panel carries other settings of the button, unrelated to approval: its **Label**, its **Class**, its **Help Tooltip** and what it triggers (**What should the button do**). Two of them are worth pointing out. **Invisible** hides the button, possibly conditionally. **Rainbow Effect**, offered on buttons that trigger a method and not on smart buttons, triggers a congratulation animation when the button is activated, with a message you write.

23.8 Maintaining your customisations

Watch out

Studio customisations survive updates, but not without supervision. A heavily reworked view can stop working when the standard screen it modifies changes from one version to the next. The symptom is brutal: the screen no longer opens.

A few rules limit the risk:

1. **Add rather than move.** Adding a field to a form is robust; reorganising a standard screen entirely is much less so.
2. **Keep the list of your customisations**: which screen, which field, for what need, at whose request. It is that document which makes it possible to decide, two years later, between fixing and deleting.
3. **Test on a copy before every version upgrade**, and allow time in the schedule for reworking the customised screens.
4. **Entrust to your integrator what has to last.** A customisation carried by a module is deployed on every environment, can be read back and maintained; entered in Studio, it exists only on that database.

Choosing the right tool

- **Property field**: a piece of information specific to a context, without installing anything.
- **Studio**: a lasting need on a model, with no particular business logic.
- **Specific module**: as soon as there is computation, constraints, or a need to deploy the same thing on several databases.

APPENDIX A

Keyboard shortcuts

A.1 The principle

Odoo assigns shortcuts to the buttons of the interface. They are activated by combining a modifier key with a letter:

- on Windows and Linux, the `Alt` key;
- on macOS, the `Ctrl` key.

Holding that key down displays, overlaid on each button, the letter associated with it in the current context. That is the surest way to know which shortcuts are actually available on the screen shown.

Note

The shortcuts depend on the buttons present on screen. The same letter does not have the same effect in a list view, in a form or in a dialog box: it activates the button carrying it at that moment.

A.2 General shortcuts

Windows / Linux	macOS	Action
`Ctrl` + `K`	`Cmd` + `K`	Open the command palette
`Alt`	`Ctrl`	Display the shortcuts available on screen
`Alt` + `H`	`Ctrl` + `H`	Return to the home screen
`Alt` + `B`	`Ctrl` + `B`	Go up one level in the breadcrumb

A.3 Handling records

Windows / Linux	macOS	Action
`Alt` + `C`	`Ctrl` + `C`	Create a record
`Alt` + `S`	`Ctrl` + `S`	Save
`Alt` + `J`	`Ctrl` + `J`	Discard the changes in progress
`Alt` + `N`	`Ctrl` + `N`	Next record
`Alt` + `P`	`Ctrl` + `P`	Previous record
`Alt` + `U`	`Ctrl` + `U`	Open the **Actions** menu

Watch out

`Alt` + `J` discards unsaved changes **without any confirmation prompt**. The shortcut only has an effect on a form carrying pending changes; on an untouched form, it does nothing. Check the state of the document before using it.

A.4 Search and navigation

Windows / Linux	macOS	Action
`Alt` + `Shift` + `Q`	`Ctrl` + `Shift` + `Q`	Open the search menu: filters, groupings, favorites
`Alt` + `V`	`Ctrl` + `V`	Confirm the selection in a dialog box

Windows / Linux	macOS	Action
`Alt` + `Shift` + `U`	`Ctrl` + `Shift` + `U`	Open the company switcher

A.5 In the command palette

Once the palette is opened with `Ctrl` + `K`:

Input	Effect
`/`	Search among the applications and the menu entries
`@`	Search for a conversation: person, channel, room , or start one
`?`	Search for a knowledge article. Requires the Knowledge application
`Enter`	Open the selected result
`Ctrl` + `Enter`	Open the result in a new tab. `Cmd` + `Enter` on Mac, and only on a menu result

A.6 In the text editor

Input	Effect
`/`	Open the insertion menu at the cursor position: blocks, fields, media
`Ctrl` + `K`	Open the command palette. To place a link on the selection, choose the link creation entry there
`@`	Mention a user in a message or a note

Note

Shortcuts may differ depending on the browser, which reserves certain combinations for its own functions, and on the modules installed, which add their buttons. The overlay obtained by holding the modifier key down is always authoritative.

APPENDIX B

Frequently asked questions

B.1 General questions

B.1.1 What is the difference between Odoo Community and Odoo Enterprise?

Community is the open source edition, free of charge, covering the essential management features. It can be installed and used freely.

Enterprise is the subscription edition. It adds applications and features (Studio, full accounting with reports and returns, connected spreadsheets, electronic signature, Gantt and cohort views, artificial-intelligence assistance, mobile applications) as well as official support and guaranteed updates.

This guide flags the features reserved for the Enterprise edition where they appear.

B.1.2 How do I move to a new version of Odoo?

1. Back up the database and the attached files in full.
2. Carry out a trial migration on a test environment.
3. Check the compatibility of the specific modules and adapt them.
4. Check the migrated data and the configurations.
5. Have the result accepted by the key users.
6. Schedule the switch to production and plan the rollback.

Note

A major version upgrade involves production data. It is conducted with an Odoo partner, especially when the database includes specific developments.

B.1.3 Does Odoo work on phones and tablets?

Yes, in three ways: the web interface adapts to the size of the screen, mobile applications exist for iOS and Android, and certain operations remain possible offline, with later synchronisation.

B.1.4 How do I customise the printed documents?

Three levels exist:

1. Change the logo, the colours and the layout from the **Settings** application, **General Settings** pane, then the document layout configuration.
2. Modify the existing reports with Studio, without writing code (Enterprise).
3. Create bespoke reports using the template engine, which requires technical skills.

B.1.5 How do I add a field that does not exist?

- For a need limited to one context (a project, a type of file), use a property field (see chapter 4).
- For a general need, add the field with Studio (Enterprise).
- For a need involving business logic, have a specific module developed.

B.2 Technical questions

B.2.1 How do I improve performance?

- Size the server and the database correctly.
- Archive old data rather than keeping it active.
- Limit the number of fields displayed in the most consulted list views.
- Check that the external tools connected to the database are not saturating the resources.
- Check the automations: a badly written rule can execute thousands of times.

B.2.2 How do I back up the database?

Depending on the hosting: automatic backups provided by the platform in managed hosting, or scheduled backups to be set up in on-premise hosting.

Watch out

A backup that has never been restored is not a backup. Periodically test a full restore on a separate environment, and measure how long the operation takes: it is that duration which defines your real recovery time.

B.2.3 How do I install an additional application?

1. Open **Apps**.
2. Remove the **Apps** filter to also see the technical modules.
3. Search for the module and click **Activate**.

For a third-party module, it must first be placed in the server's module directory, then the list of applications must be updated.

B.2.4 How do I configure email sending?

1. Open the **Settings** application, **General Settings** pane.
2. Fill in the outgoing mail server with the parameters supplied by your provider.
3. Test the connection.
4. Configure the domain authentication records to prevent your messages being classified as spam.

B.3 Functional questions

B.3.1 How do I configure taxes?

1. Open **Accounting → Configuration → Accounting → Taxes**.
2. Check the taxes installed by the fiscal localisation.
3. Assign the default taxes to the products or to their categories.
4. Create the fiscal positions matching your customers' special regimes: intra-Community, export, exemption.
5. Assign the fiscal position on the record of each customer concerned.

B.3.2 How do I manage access rights?

Rights are set at several levels: the user's role, the access levels per application, and for particular cases the detailed technical permissions (see chapter 5).

Apply the principle of least privilege: grant only what is necessary, and extend later if need be.

B.3.3 How do I manage several companies?

1. Create each entity in **Settings → Users & Companies → Companies**.
2. Configure for each one its chart of accounts, its journals and its documents.
3. Assign to the users the companies they have access to and their default company.
4. Set up inter-entity operations if they trade with one another.

B.3.4 How do I import a volume of data?

1. First export a few records of the target type to obtain the exact template.
2. Prepare the file respecting that format.
3. Import in dependency order: reference data first, linked data next.
4. Test on a sample before the full import.

B.3.5 Where do I find the indicators for my business?

Each application has its reporting menu, with graph and pivot views. The **Dashboards** application also gathers ready-to-use dashboards, notably for logistics and purchasing (see chapter 19).

B.3.6 Is the intelligent assistant reliable?

It produces proposals from the context of the document: a text, a classification, a suggested action. Those proposals are not verified and must be read over before being sent to a third party or recorded in a file.

For processes that can be expressed as conditions (a threshold, a status, a date) prefer a classic automation rule: it is reproducible, verifiable and costs nothing to use.

B.3.7 What happens if I lose the connection?

The screens and records already opened during the session remain **viewable**, served from a local cache. They cannot be modified, however: data entry resumes when the connection is restored. A forced reload of the browser clears that cache.

B.3.8 Who do I turn to in case of difficulty?

1. Consult the chatter of the document concerned: it retraces the actions carried out and often explains the behaviour observed.
2. Check your access rights and the active company.
3. Consult the online documentation from the help icon.
4. Contact your IROKOO representative, describing the screen, the manipulation carried out and the result obtained.

APPENDIX C

Glossary

C.1 Interface terms

Activity Action to be carried out, dated and assigned to a user, attached to a document.

Agent Assistant configured for a specific use, with its own instruction, its data scope and the tools it is allowed to use.

AI Field Field whose value is computed by the intelligent assistant from an instruction and the context of the record, then written automatically onto the records concerned.

App Main module adding a complete functional area: Sales, CRM, Inventory, Accounting.

Breadcrumb Path shown at the top of the screen, retracing the navigation and allowing you to go back without losing the context.

Chatter Area at the bottom of a document, gathering the messages, the internal notes, the activities and the history of tracked changes.

Command palette Universal search bar opened with `Ctrl` + `K`, giving access to the applications and menus, to the conversations (people and channels), to the knowledge articles and to the assistant.

Favorite Saved search (filters, groupings, sorting) reusable and shareable.

Filter Condition restricting the records displayed.

Kanban View presenting the records as cards spread across columns, movable by drag and drop.

Partner Generic term for a third party: customer, vendor, prospect, subcontractor.

Pivot table Two-way analysis view, crossing two criteria and displaying one or more measures.

Portal Simplified interface giving an external third party access to their own documents only, without consuming a user licence.

Property field Field added to a record without modifying the data model, defined at the level of a parent record and available on its children.

Smart button Button at the top right of a form, giving access to the linked documents and showing a counter.

View Way of representing data: list, form, kanban, calendar, graph, pivot, Gantt, cohort, activity.

C.2 Business terms

Aged balance Statement presenting receivables or payables classified by age.

Backorder Transfer carrying the quantities left to deliver or to receive after a partial operation. On validation, Odoo asks whether to create it; the operation type can be set to create it systematically, or never.

Bill of materials List of the components and operations needed to manufacture a product.

Credit note Document cancelling all or part of an invoice already issued.

Fiscal position Set of rules adapting the taxes and accounts to a third party's tax regime.

Lead Incoming contact not yet qualified, liable to become an opportunity.

Lot Group of units of a product sharing the same origin, tracked for traceability.

Matching Reconciliation of journal items that offset each other, allowing a partner account to be cleared.

Milestone Approval step in a project, associated with a target date and sometimes with an invoicing instalment.

Opportunity Identified business deal, tracked in the pipeline until it is concluded.

Pipeline Representation of the deals in progress, spread by stage of advancement.

Pricelist Set of rules determining the price applied according to the customer, the quantity, the period or the product.

Quotation Priced commercial proposal, which becomes an order once confirmed.

Route Supply path of a product: buy, manufacture, replenish on order, resupply a subcontractor.

Subcontracting Entrusting a third party with the transformation of supplied components, the resulting product being received as a purchase.

Work in progress Value of the components consumed and the time spent on a manufacturing order not yet completed, recognised in the accounts by a work-in-progress entry.

C.3 Configuration terms

API Interface allowing an external system to read and write in the database.

Automation rule Process triggered by an event occurring on a document, subject to conditions.

Developer mode Mode giving access to the technical settings: fields, views, access rules, automations.

Module Extension adding features. An app is a main module.

PostgreSQL Database management system on which Odoo relies. The name will be useful to you when talking to your host, notably about the prerequisites of intelligent assistance.

Scheduled action Process executed at regular intervals, independently of any user action.

Server action Configured process performing an operation on one or more records.

Studio Code-free customisation tool (fields, views, reports, automations) available in the Enterprise edition.

Webhook Dedicated address allowing an external system to trigger a process in Odoo.