

Organic Valley makes the natural choice for on-demand fax automation



Organic Valley is America's largest cooperative of organic farmers and one of the nation's leading organic brands. Organized in 1988, it represents 1,617 farmers in 35 states and three Canadian provinces, and achieved \$619 million in 2010 sales. Focused on its founding mission of saving family farms through organic farming, Organic Valley produces a variety of organic foods, including organic milk, yogurt, soy, cheese, butter, spreads, creams, eggs, produce and juice, which are sold in supermarkets, natural foods stores and food cooperatives nationwide. The same farmers who produce for Organic Valley also produce a full range of organic meat under the Organic Prairie label.

www.organicvalley.coop/

Food Production Industry

Configuration

- SalesLogix CRM
- Adage ERP
- Business drivers: Paperless processes, VMware integration

Organic Valley was using an outdated version of a RightFax fax server software product to send 500–1,000 faxes once a week over its 4 analog lines. Looking for more reporting, management and prioritization capabilities, Organic Valley turned to Esker.

Challenges

With RightFax, faxing would be backed up for at least 6 hours, with no way to monitor the fax queues. "When someone needed to send a fax, RightFax would actually pause it until the mass fax job was done," said Brett Janzen, Network Administrator for Communications at Organic Valley. "And there were no administrative tools to help us do our job." In addition, the connector between RightFax and Organic Valley's SalesLogix CRM system was no longer supported.

Green concerns

Sustainability and environmental responsibility are highly visible within all aspects of Organic Valley's operations. "We have our trucks converted over to biodiesel, and we're always looking for new ways to conserve energy, like wind towers to provide electricity for our distribution center," said Janzen. "Along with that, we're looking to get away from the amount of paper we use. Right now our average monthly paper usage — just paper — is right around \$1,500 a month, and that's not including toner or maintenance. So quitting paper is definitely a major focus for us."

“ We see Esker Fax as the gateway to go further with our paperless solutions. ”

Brett Janzen ■ Network Administrator ■ Organic Valley

Solution

Organic Valley first looked into upgrading its RightFax solution and uncovered limitations in the product and its support contract. They also considered a Microsoft BizTalk fax server solution, but ultimately decided to take a different path to reach its paperless goal.

Janzen had previous experience with Esker, and he saw Esker Fax as a step toward rules-based document process automation using intelligent data capture and other Esker capabilities to achieve Organic Valley's long-term objectives. "We see Esker Fax as the gateway to go further with our paperless solutions," said Janzen.

"Migration from RightFax to Esker Fax went swimmingly," said Janzen. "Getting Esker Fax up and running was as smooth as anyone could hope for. We're a virtual shop; we're trying to go green — we have a VMware infrastructure and only a few physical server computers, and we're running about 150 operating systems. Knowing Esker could be a part of that solution made it all even better because our RightFax system was a physical box with a fax board. We wanted to go to Fax over IP as part of the upgrade, and with Esker it was not a huge effort to get there."

Benefits

Working with Esker, Organic Valley found that it didn't need telco lines to handle their mass fax blasts. Instead, they could take advantage of Fax on Demand overflow capabilities of the Esker Fax solution, leveraging Esker-hosted infrastructure for delivery of faxes. "Anything over 20 pending faxes I just send to Fax on Demand," said Janzen. "It allows us to reduce our telco cost — we can just pay for the on-demand service as we need it, plus we have reporting capabilities that we didn't have before. That's huge for us."

Janzen continued, "From a management perspective I would say RightFax is more difficult to manage than the Esker solution, which seems to take care of itself. I really don't have to do a lot of manual management. Once the queue reaches its limit, any additional faxes are automatically sent using the on-demand solution."

As a result, Organic Valley has been able to:

- Reduce fax queue time from 6 hours to 20 minutes
- Save at least \$700 per month in paper costs

Productivity boost

"We've seen an increase in productivity because of the simplicity of sending faxes," said Janzen. "Users can mark the priority of their document right from the Esker Fax Document Manager so the people who are sending mass faxes can manage other documents based on their priority. Anything that comes in as a normal or high priority gets moved ahead of the mass fax batch job. The users prefer the new email-to-fax solution, and it has decreased help desk calls significantly."

“With the Esker solution, we've seen an increase in productivity because of the simplicity of faxing.”

Brett Janzen ▪ Network Administrator ▪ Organic Valley

Now, Organic Valley staff uses the web-based Esker Fax Document Manager for mass faxing. "They just export their contact lists in CSV format, upload it, and send the sheet that they need to fax," said Janzen. "They really like it; it's a lot more convenient for the end-users than what they had before."

Labor savings

"The time and money we're saving with Esker Fax doesn't even include all the labor for order entry and filing," said Janzen. "We had two people dedicated to filing alone, so there's a lot of manual handling that we're eliminating with the paperless Esker Fax solution."

Future Plans

Looking ahead, Organic Valley is planning to tighten Esker Fax integration with its CRM system even further. "After we have our new VMware infrastructure in place and switch our internal VoIP telephones to a Microsoft PBX, we're planning to enhance the Esker Fax integration with automatic updates so users can see directly in the CRM package that faxes were sent," said Janzen.

In addition, Organic Valley plans to take full advantage of rules-based automation technology with the Esker platform. "From the webinars I've attended and the experience I have with Esker, I believe it's going to be a great fit because of the DeliveryWare rules helping us integrate different software packages that we use," said Janzen. "For example, our ERP and CRM solutions are two completely different systems that are not integrated. We need to be able to pass information between those two systems, and we feel that Esker is the best way to do that. Knowing what Esker can do for us, we believe it has the ability to incorporate all of our software to create an integrated, user-friendly interface for all of our faxing needs."

Janzen continued, "We're looking at paperless solutions with our ERP system, and I think Esker can help us with that. Right now we have filing cabinets filled with hard copies. We are looking to reduce those storage needs by going paperless. One of the drivers for us to go to Esker Fax was to get to the full Esker platform. Some of our senior management had taken a look at Esker in the past, so it's nice to know there was already some interest in the technology making it easier to get to the paperless solution we're looking for."

Support

"The support I've gotten from Esker has been excellent," said Janzen. "I get same-day service and great answers; they do a great job of supplying the right information I need to solve any issues I have. We work with a lot of small businesses, and obviously we can't control the quality of their equipment. Esker has been really great in helping me do what I can on my end to ensure the quality of the faxes that we receive and send to those customers is as good as possible."

Janzen added, "Working with Esker Sales has been one of the best vendor relationships I've had in a long time, and it's always a plus knowing they are there for us. When we were first testing the Esker FoIP solution, my rep had a demo license cut for me the same day I requested one, as well as documentation to integrate with my telco solution. Another reason we went with Esker is because Organic Valley has a strong relationship with CDW. Finding out that CDW was a partner with Esker made the project much simpler."

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