



Tessengerlo Kerley, Inc.

Expanding use of document process automation to quit paper in accounts receivable invoice approval



Tessengerlo Kerley, Inc. (TKI), headquartered in Phoenix, Arizona, is a world leader in the production and marketing of specialty fertilizers and chemical solutions to markets in the United States, Mexico, Central and South America and other countries around the world. With sales exceeding \$100 million, Tessengerlo Kerley has a considerable share of the U.S. market for liquid sulfur solutions. TKI is part of the Belgium-based Tessengerlo Group, a \$2 billion international chemical company founded in 1919, and has 8 manufacturing plants in North America as well as an extensive terminal network.

Challenges

TKI took on the challenge of automating a paper-heavy, labor-intensive customer invoice approval process within accounts receivable. Invoices were batch-printed daily to a physical printer, then employees would check each document to make sure the pricing was accurate. Once an invoice was correct, it would be added to a stack. These approved invoices would go to other employees to be collated, folded, stuffed, stamped and delivered by mail.

With its high monthly order volume, TKI sought to reduce the amount of time and money it spent handling all of the paper involved in invoice approval. TKI needed to maintain the interim pricing-check step for each invoice prior to delivery, and simply wanted to take the high cost and inefficiency of paper out of the process.

Solution: Esker DeliveryWare

TKI had implemented Esker DeliveryWare several years earlier, primarily to integrate automated faxing with its SAP system. Working together, Esker and TKI determined that the best way to automate the invoice approval process was to send each invoice through the Document Manager interface of Esker DeliveryWare.

In the automated process, invoice jobs batch-print to Esker DeliveryWare and are accumulated in a queue for presentment. Employees log in to the Document Manager to review invoices.

Invoices that are correct are approved and then emailed, faxed or printed for physical mail delivery, depending on individual customer preferences. Invoices with pricing exceptions are returned to the originator for re-issuance, and then come back through the Document Manager for approval and delivery.

As part of the project, Esker worked with TKI to switch from only using BC-XOM print output from SAP applications. BC-CON integration gave TKI the option to use fax, email and Mail on Demand — a service through which invoices are electronically sent to Esker production facilities where they are printed, folded inserted and delivered by mail.

Benefits

Creating a paperless environment has produced significant efficiency gains in moving invoices through the process as well as cost savings from fax and email delivery. According to Dan McMenemy, Director of Business Systems at TKI, the approval process is much faster. "Processing an invoice used to take 1 to 2 minutes, and now it's only taking about 30 seconds," he said. "The CSR group loves this new tool. Our only regret is not implementing it sooner!"

Going from a paper-based system to the electronic system with Esker DeliveryWare has also given TKI the capability to gradually reduce mail delivery as more and more customers accept electronic invoices.

Future plans

For invoices that need to be delivered by mail, TKI is well-positioned to take full advantage of Mail on Demand. Offloading mail preparation and delivery to the Esker service will free-up resources and lead to a fully automated process as the use of physical mail lessens over time.

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Dan McMenemy ■ Director of Business Systems
■ Tessengerlo Kerley, Inc.

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