

SanLucar — Processing Customer Orders 84% Faster via Globally Supported Automation Solution



Founded in 1993 by a German fruit merchant, SanLucar is an international company that produces and sells fruits and vegetables. Headquartered in Valencia, Spain, SanLucar has subsidiaries in Germany and Austria as well as other locations in Italy, France, Portugal, Turkey, Egypt, Tunisia, South Africa, and Central and South America.

In addition to its 100 employees in Valencia, the company has thousands of people around the world working hard to continue making SanLucar's fruits and vegetables the best available in the international market. Currently offering 90 varieties of fruits and vegetables from more than 30 countries, the SanLucar brand has the broadest selection in the world. SanLucar's core philosophy is based on a century of knowledge combined with modern methods of cultivation that allow for sustainable land use and the rejection of genetically modified seeds.

Food & Beverage

Configuration

- ERP: Microsoft Dynamics AX
- Environment: Windows Server 2008 R2, IIS (Internet Information Server) for the web interface, Esker Document Manager (electronic archiving).
- Objectives:
 - Faster customer order processing to absorb volume increases arising from the company's growth
 - Resource optimization to maintain control over costs and support the company's growth
 - Improve processing speed and accuracy so that new customers can process orders in less than an hour
 - Availability of local fax numbers for customers to send their orders

Headquartered in Valencia, Spain, with 20 years of experience, SanLucar has become a leading international fruit and vegetable distributor with subsidiaries across the globe. The acquisition of a new German customer, Edeka, prompted the company to find a solution to automate orders received by fax and speed up its order processing. By automating order processing, SanLucar would be able to keep pace with its optimistic growth predictions, as well as the strong market growth forecasts of FEPEX (Spanish Federation of Associations of Producers and Exporters of Fruits, Vegetables, Flowers, and Live Plants).

Objective: To export full-flavored fruit to the world

For SanLucar, being able to deliver a fresh, quality product anywhere in the world in the shortest possible time is essential — and engrained in the company's philosophy. "Our highly praised and award-winning fruits and vegetables are carefully cultivated, inspected and handpicked by SanLucar partners all over the world, who share the brand's philosophy and comply with strict quality guidelines," said Willy Piquer, IT Project Manager at SanLucar.

For these reasons, the company relies on the latest technologies to meet delivery deadlines using its own logistics infrastructure and various document flow management systems that must meet rigorous demands. In the spring of 2012, SanLucar's technical director spoke with Esker about the automated capture of non-EDI customer orders. Two months after the contract was signed, the automated solution was already working.

Thanks to Esker, SanLucar has gained a number of benefits including:

- 84% faster processing times
- Two fewer administrative staff members required for manual order entry
- Elimination of errors and lost documents
- Capacity for sustainable future growth
- Positive impact on customer service: With fewer manual processing requirements, customer service has improved through on-time deliveries and full traceability, which is especially crucial for products with shorter cycle times.

“ Our objectives were to optimize our order processing resources and improve the quality of our customer service. With Esker, we are now able to meet the needs of our customers across the world in a timely manner thanks to their global, efficient and easily implemented technology. ”

Willy Piquer ▪ IT Project Manager ▪ SanLucar

Background

In addition to receiving customer orders via EDI, SanLucar also receives orders by fax and email. Previously, these orders were handled manually and, once entered, were archived in physical file folders for future reference. Data entry errors, lack of process visibility, and the limited order-processing capacity of the manual system threatened the quality of SanLucar's customer service, particularly when Edeka, Germany's largest retailer, signed a contract for product volumes that SanLucar had never managed before. When SanLucar first met with Esker, the problem was simple: automate the manual entry of fax and email orders into their MS Dynamics AX software.

“ SanLucar will be increasing its own production, as well as its sales of third-party fruit in several countries and continents. With Esker, we can be sure that this growth is sustainable thanks to automated order capture. ”

Willy Piquer ■ IT Project Manager ■ SanLucar

Given the nature of the goods sold and Edeka's exceptionally high quality standards, orders had to be processed very quickly for the fastest possible delivery. Furthermore, Edeka required immediate order confirmations from SanLucar. One of the main reasons SanLucar chose Esker was due to the solution's ability to process and validate 1,000+ orders per hour to meet this customer's needs.

SanLucar's functional requirements for the Esker solution:

- **Automated order capture by fax and email** via cloud fax services with local (German) numbers
- **Ability to automatically redirect orders** to multiple partners, as well as the ability to redistribute work (load balancing)
- **Automated data capture**
- **Automated validation**
- **Automated storage of digital documents** (reducing the cost of physical paper storage)
- **Integration of data in MS Dynamics AX** in parallel with orders received by EDI

Solution

In order to meet each of SanLucar's requirements, Esker DeliveryWare was installed in stages over a two-month period by Esker Professional Services. First, a cloud fax service was set up to receive orders sent via fax, while a POP3 account was created for orders sent by email. Esker DeliveryWare publishes captured orders to a window that contains fields with the extracted order information. The information is validated and integrated into MS Dynamics AX via a TXT file for later use.

Thanks to an intelligent, fully automated process that's capable of learning new document layouts on an ongoing basis and continually improving its recognition and extraction capabilities, no manual intervention is required (i.e., touchless processing). The order image is saved in Esker's Document Manager, allowing authorized users to access the document directly from the ERP software.

Deciding factors

SanLucar chose the Esker solution for multiple reasons, including its worldwide capabilities and technical features:

- **Order processing speed:** +1,000 orders/hour, every day
- **International multilingual support:**
 - 24/7 support
 - Proactive support: 1 day/month for a system check
- **Technical functionalities:**
 - Ability to provide working local fax numbers in any country
 - User-friendly validation form for orders not received directly into the ERP software
 - Electronic archiving of indexed documents
- **Esker's international presence** and ability to support SanLucar's operations across the globe
- **Ability to extend automation to other processes** like Accounts Payable