



Powell Electronics

Enabling streamlined document delivery out of an SAP solution



Powell Electronics is a leading distributor of standard and custom-assembled electronic connectors, sensors and switches for commercial, industrial and military applications. Founded 60 years ago by Harold Powell in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; the company recently relocated its headquarters to Logan Township, New Jersey. Powell's customers include large aerospace, defense and industrial equipment organizations. Its primary enterprise resource planning solution is SAP 4.7. Nearly all of Powell's 190 employees use the software to manage inventory and coordinate the entire sales process; from the moment an order is placed, products are delivered and payment is received.

Bob Oldrati, the Director of Information Technology and Controller, leads Powell's four-person IT team. In addition, Oldrati is head of the ASUG Special Interest Group for small and medium businesses, sits on the ASUG Finance Committee and is a regular contributing writer of newsletters to fellow SAP customers.

Challenge: To replace a legacy faxing solution with a product that would not only provide more document delivery capabilities than fax alone, but also integrate seamlessly with SAP applications

Serving as the go-between for supply-chain manufacturers and end-users, Powell Electronics understands that efficient customer communication and service is critical to the success of its business. That is why when the company's legacy fax solution from TOPCALL was up for renewal in 2005, Powell's IT team believed it was time to look for another offering.

"We were using TOPCALL to fax invoices, purchase orders and order confirmations out of our SAP solution to our customers. But over time we were becoming more and more frustrated with the lack of service and support, the challenges with faxing out of Microsoft Outlook and the overall unwieldiness of the solution," said Oldrati. "As a small company we didn't have the time or resources to be dealing with these technology issues. And we certainly couldn't afford to risk losing our credibility as a good business partner."

Oldrati's first goal was to find a replacement document delivery solution that would integrate with their SAP application.

Solution: Esker DeliveryWare

As a prominent member of the SAP community, Oldrati was familiar with Esker, having seen the company demonstrate

its technology at several ASUG shows. Esker DeliveryWare was the first alternative solution that he and his team evaluated.

"As soon as we started talking with Esker, we knew Esker DeliveryWare was going to be the best choice," said Oldrati. "In fact, we quickly moved the discussion past just replacing our existing solution and started exploring various ways we could implement additional document delivery capabilities. The real challenge became how to scale back the project because we wanted everything."

Providing a single platform for streamlining the flow of transactional business documents directly into and out of their SAP solution, Esker DeliveryWare keeps all documents electronic, eliminating employee manual order entry and physical document handling, resulting in saved time, reduced costs, and improved accuracy. Organizations can automatically send and receive documents via fax, email and physical mail, as they deem most appropriate. The software's vast electronic data interchange (EDI) capabilities also allow for processes to be customized for specific types of documents.

“Once it goes into Esker DeliveryWare we do not have to worry about it.”

Bob Oldrati ■ Director of Information Technology and Controller ■ Powell Electronics



As we continue to move forward we expect we'll see even greater savings.

Bob Oldrati ■ Director of Information Technology and Controller ■ Powell Electronics

The deployment of Esker DeliveryWare across Powell Electronics was a success. Immediately the company was faxing invoices, purchase orders and confirmation notices directly from Powell's SAP application, just as it was before, but without hassle or frustration. After the initial implementation, in response to increasing customer requests to receive documents via electronic mail, the IT team expanded its use of Esker DeliveryWare to include automatically sending not only invoices and purchase orders out of their SAP solution, but also shipping orders and notifications back to the buyer via email.

"With Esker DeliveryWare you name it, it can be done," said Oldrati. "We had one phone conversation with an Esker technical support person and since then we've been able to easily expand and develop new EDI functionalities to send and receive various documents. We have confidence in that learning new things with the technology, we'll be successful."

In addition, the Esker team provided all the assistance Powell Electronics needed to make the move from its old headquarters in Pennsylvania to its new location in New Jersey.

"It was a seamless transition," said Oldrati. "We had support from Esker throughout the whole process, but ultimately there were no incidents and everything continued to run smoothly."

Future

"We are so enamored with Esker that it's easy for us to get out of hand in planning new things to do with the technology," said Oldrati. "But we know from a financial standpoint we need to implement functionalities in pieces, not all at once, and Esker has been great in supporting that approach. We have plans to continue moving forward because we've been so pleased with the product."

Powell Electronics' future plans include adding Esker DeliveryWare capabilities to receive inbound documents and automate physical mail delivery.

Benefits for Powell Electronics

"Esker DeliveryWare has been more economical than previous document delivery solutions when comparing dollar for dollar," said Oldrati. "But the amount of time, stress and aggravation that it has saved my team has been enormous. If we make a call it gets answered, and it's rare we call. For a small company, the comfort of knowing the technology works is tremendous."

- Meeting customer delivery preferences
- Quicker document delivery turnaround
- Increasing resources spent on business matters instead of technical support issues
- Ability to scale functionalities/autonomy to develop new EDI rules

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