

Customer Satisfaction Blooms at Ball Horticultural Company

Esker DeliveryWare implementation offers self-service tool to help customers quit paper

Madison, WI – September 15, 2008 – Esker, the leader in document process automation solutions, announced today that Ball Horticultural Company, a leader in every facet of floriculture, with distribution capabilities in all major world markets, has implemented Esker DeliveryWare to automate processes of delivering order confirmations, invoices and statements for improved service to customers and suppliers.

After several years of planning, Ball launched a major IT project to standardize business processes, streamline business communication and improve access to information throughout Ball's global enterprise. The project included an upgrade of Ball's SAP solution to ECC 6.0, and a retooling of its WebTrack Plus customer portal to enhance order management and help customers go paperless.

A key objective of the project was to satisfy the varying customer and supplier preferences for receiving documents. "Some people want to have their documents mailed to them," said Mark Morris, Director of IT at Ball. "Many in our industry still rely on fax and will for years to come. And there are those who can and want to have documents sent by email or other electronic means." Ball recognized the need to put control in the hands of customers and suppliers, and to be able to react to their requests automatically. A second objective was to be able to direct different documents in different formats to different contacts within an organization.

"We looked at some of the standard solutions, and nothing offered what we needed — a hybrid between contact management and document management," said Morris. "We actually considered writing a solution ourselves, and then I saw a demonstration of what Esker DeliveryWare could do."

Ball and Esker worked together to integrate Esker DeliveryWare output subscription management functionality with the WebTrack Plus portal. Now a single sign-on gives customers the self-service ability to choose electronic delivery and designate recipients for order confirmations, invoices and account statements. Customers also can store and retrieve the documents, eliminating the need for printing and manual filing.

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Within the first 8 weeks after implementing Esker DeliveryWare, Ball was mailing about 8,000 fewer documents, which could be 5 to 10 pages each, and 140 customers and suppliers created subscriptions for themselves, allowing Ball to stop printing their documents and start sending them electronically. In addition, mail center workload is reduced with the ability to merge order confirmations and invoices automatically. “We save the time and costs associated with printing, postage, mailing, filing, and internal handling,” said Morris. “And this was in response to customer requests, so we’re providing them much better service. Improving customer service was our primary objective.”

Along with improving customer satisfaction, Esker DeliveryWare supports Ball’s green business initiatives. Morris notes, “At Ball, we have pillars that we base our decisions on, called ‘Pillars of Growth’. One of those pillars is to grow a green and sustainable future. What we’re doing with Esker is right in line with that.”

“Working with Ball has been a real win-win partnership,” said Steve Smith, VP of Sales and Marketing at Esker. “In helping Ball achieve its objectives to quit paper and improve customer satisfaction, we’ve increased our depth of knowledge to help companies distribute a full range of order-to-cash documentation to customers, sales reps and partners automatically, using recipients’ preferred delivery methods and formats.”

Multi-language capability was a key factor in Ball’s decision to choose Esker. “We are an international company, and we’ll be rolling this out to our other enterprises throughout Europe over the next 16 months,” said Morris. Ball also plans to leverage Esker DeliveryWare for automated processing of inbound Accounts Payable documents, which will streamline mailroom operations and link documentation into Ball’s SAP system for easy access by Ball’s internal staff.

About Ball

Ball Horticultural Company (www.ballhort.com) is an internationally renowned breeder, producer and wholesale distributor of ornamental plants. A family-owned business since it was founded in 1905, Ball has introduced many innovative, award-winning varieties to the world of horticulture, including the *Wave*[®] petunia family; *Dazzler*[®] and *Super Elfin*[®] impatiens; and *Fiesta*[™] double impatiens. The company offers the *Simply Beautiful*[®] and *Circle of Life*[™] programs exclusively for independent garden centers. Ball has worldwide production, sales and marketing through its many subsidiaries on six continents.

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About Esker

Esker is a recognized leader in helping organizations eliminate manual processes, gain process visibility and control, and reduce the use of paper by automating the flow of documents into, within and out of the organization. With patented document delivery automation software and hosted document delivery services, Esker offers a total solution to automate every phase and every type of business information exchange. Customers achieve significant and immediate operational efficiencies, cost savings and measurable ROI in as little as three to six months. Founded in 1985, Esker operates globally with more than 80,000 customers and millions of licensed users worldwide. Esker has global headquarters in Lyon, France and U.S. headquarters in Madison, Wisconsin. For more information, visit www.esker.com.

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