

Century Furniture Crafts Automated Sales Order Entry with Esker DeliveryWare

SAP customer quits paper to improve process visibility, accuracy and cost control

Madison, WI – March 17, 2009 – Esker, the leader in document process automation solutions, announced today that Century Furniture LLC, a premier manufacturer of fine quality residential furniture, has implemented Esker DeliveryWare to automate entry of sales orders into its SAP application. Century Furniture’s Esker DeliveryWare implementation is part of the company’s ongoing efforts to drive cost out of processes and products, support green business and continually improve customer service.

In Century Furniture’s previous process for orders received via fax, email or hardcopy, employees would check fax machines periodically and sort the orders by placing them in the appropriate wire basket. Emails would be printed and delivered to the wire basket, and hardcopy was delivered to the wire basket. Changes to existing orders followed the same process. All order-related documentation was filed in file cabinets.

The company formed a “paperless committee” that included representatives from its accounting, help desk and network teams to understand cost per page, lease costs and yearly paper purchase costs, which exceeded \$300,000 annually. The goal was to reduce that number and address the labor associated with paper.

“Our focus was to effectively remove the baskets,” said Stacy Duncan, Technical Services Manager at Century Furniture. “We looked at the costs associated with paper, but also the fact that access to the data was manual. If customer service got a call with a question that required the original order, they would have to call back with an answer after they retrieved the documentation. This required pulling the file and copying, faxing or printing the pages and sometimes all three. So we also looked at how much labor was involved in the sales order process, and the affect on accuracy when you consider the inherent risk of paper getting lost.”

After researching options from several different vendors, Duncan and his colleagues at Century Furniture met with Esker at a SAPPHIRE conference and came away convinced that Esker DeliveryWare was the right solution for the sales order entry automation project.

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Sales order processing and customer service at Century Furniture have been positively affected by reducing the time spent handling paper orders and improving response time. If there is a question about an order, the need for a return call is eliminated because customer service staff no longer have to look up the customer and order details and then go to the filing cabinet to retrieve the information. Original order data is also accessible from remote locations for confirmation or to reconcile a complaint.

Transparency and control were key advantages that Century Furniture sought to gain from its Esker DeliveryWare solution, particularly within the customer service and credit departments. “The manager of our customer service group had no real-time insight into the daily workflow in order to move work around accordingly,” said Duncan. “Now if managers see that workload is too heavy in one area of the customer service group, they can take a portion of those orders and have another area address those. And they can do it wherever they are. The ability to balance out and distribute workload makes the whole department more efficient. The credit department also has direct access to data concerning orders received and billed. All of the internal groups affected by this solution are now more self-service oriented.”

According to Duncan, new efficiencies with Esker DeliveryWare have created the potential to take hours per order out of the order entry process. Specific results include:

- All printing in the customer service group cut in half
- 10% reduction of order reprocessing due to lost documents
- 50% reduction of Days Sales Outstanding rate in order entry, from 5 days to 2.5 days
- 99% reduction of paper costs
- 100% reduction of manual archiving costs
- 4 fax machines 3 leased multifunction devices removed

“Century Furniture shows the great results that happen when a company recognizes it’s time to make a change and really zeroes-in on quitting paper — and creates a sense of ownership in that effort,” said Steve Smith, U.S. Chief Operating Officer for Esker. “One of the most interesting outcomes of this story is that Century Furniture actually saw a reduction of common illnesses like colds being passed around among employees in the office after they eliminated so much of the paper handling.”

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Century Furniture's future plans for Esker DeliveryWare include automation of quotes, proof of delivery and Accounts Payable processing, which would leverage the solution's OCR, workflow, and invoice reconciliation capabilities. Automating return authorizations is another possible next phase.

About Century Furniture

Founded in 1947, Century Furniture is one of the world's largest privately owned manufacturers of upper-end residential furniture. The company's broad product line of wood and upholstered and outdoor furniture consists of bedroom, dining and occasional collections in traditional, transitional and contemporary styling. Century Furniture is recognized in the industry as a leader in design, expertise in finishing and the details of craftsmanship. Its pieces grace fine homes throughout America, including the White House.

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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