

Sea Star Line Charts Course for Paperless Document Workflow with Esker DeliveryWare

Cargo transportation services company gains process visibility, improves customer service

Madison, WI – November 17, 2008 – Esker, the leader in document process automation solutions, announced today that Sea Star Line, LLC, a provider of cargo transportation services between the United States and the Caribbean, has implemented Esker DeliveryWare to automate processing of inbound master bills of lading and related documents as part of the company's vision to create growth, value and opportunity without paper. Sea Star Line expects to achieve a 50% reduction of document processing time, with projected ROI including \$274,000 of total benefit in year one and \$1.3 million after three years.

Prior to implementation of Esker DeliveryWare, Sea Star Line business operations were largely manual and paper-intensive processes. Master bills of lading and other documents were routed to different inboxes and to different individuals who had access to particular inboxes. Often, the company's sales department would need information about the status of a customer's shipping order, and the document processing staff would have difficulty finding the document. This resulted in the common situation of trying to track down paper to determine when documents were received and what routing path they took.

"With so many documents coming in via fax, email and scan, we knew we wanted an imaging workflow solution," said JoAnn Nordquist, Director of Systems and Programming at Sea Star Line. "We needed to be able to process the documents more quickly and more efficiently, without passing paper. The manual process, even though we were very good at it, was not conducive to growth. What we wanted to accomplish was a leveling out of our resources in relation to the workflow, which was impossible without visibility of when documents came in, when they were worked on, who worked on them and where the documents were."

Sea Star Line carefully mapped out its process and developed a strategic value assessment (SVA). Of the seven responses to its requests for proposal, Sea Star Line selected Esker and two other vendors to present their solutions based on the SVA. "That's when we saw that the Esker platform, which we were already using for faxing, was the imaging and workflow solution we wanted."

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Two key factors in Sea Star Line's decision to choose Esker DeliveryWare were the product's ability to identify types of documents and learn variations within those types, and the ability to archive documents automatically. "Auto-indexing and the capability to teach the system how to process different documents were key features that Esker had and the others didn't," said Nordquist.

According to Brenda Britt, Assistant Vice President, Financial Services at Sea Star Line, "The biggest benefit is visibility into the process and immediately better customer service. Everyone who needs to access a document can access it immediately. Our various port locations are able to see information that they used to have to request by telephone or email and then wait for the information. Now they have the information right at their fingertips. And that's felt throughout the entire company."

Britt also noted that Esker DeliveryWare has improved dispute resolution. "Now, while we have the customer on the telephone, we're able to put the document in their hands and resolve issues much sooner." Esker DeliveryWare is also assisting the company in complying with recently enacted government regulations. "If we did not have the Esker solution it would have been impossible for us to do what we need to do today with these new regulations," said Melanie McCoy, Regulatory Compliance Supervisor at Sea Star Line. In addition, Sea Star Line's freight audit department no longer has to retrieve boxes of paper files to examine documents.

"Process visibility is a core value of using Esker DeliveryWare to automate processing of inbound documents like sales orders, or in this case, master bills of lading," said Steve Smith, VP of Sales and Marketing at Esker. "Not only can companies like Sea Star Line get a clear view of what's happening with their documents, but they can also measure volume-based productivity and other performance metrics in the order-to-cash cycle. That's especially vital in the current business environment where cash conversion speed is absolutely crucial."

A second phase of Sea Star Line's Esker DeliveryWare project is to automate invoice delivery and document bundling for systematic distribution of billing documents based on a matrix of customer requirements. Other plans include replacing a JetForm product for outbound document delivery, automating Accounts Payable workflow using Esker DeliveryWare Dynamic Document Capture capability, and workflow automation to queue master bills of lading and report on production by shipment, employee and other criteria.

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“We are well-positioned right now to switch the whole concept of printing out documents and get rid of paper,” said Nordquist. “We want to have everybody working through Esker DeliveryWare to see the workflow that needs to happen. Our objective is to eliminate the paper chase completely on these documents.”

About Sea Star Line

Sea Star Line, LLC (www.seastarline.com) is a privately held company providing integrated transportation services to and from the United States, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Eastern Caribbean Islands of Antigua, St. Kitts, St. Maarten, and Tortola. Sea Star is headquartered in Jacksonville, Florida, with offices in San Juan, Puerto Rico; Port Elizabeth, New Jersey; Port Everglades, Florida; St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands; St. Johns, Antigua; Basseterre, St. Kitts; Philipsburg, St. Maarten; and Roadtown, Tortola. Sea Star's ships were built and are registered in the United States, fly the U.S. flag and employ American crews.

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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