

Brady Corporation: Simplifying the SAP landscape with fax as a service



Manufacturing

Highlights

- Architectural landscape simplification
- Replacement of fax servers
- Global deployment of fax as a service
- Standardized and scalable postal mail automation as a service
- Productivity gains and labor savings
- Business process improvement beyond fax

Results

- Saved \$100,000 in infrastructure costs
- Reduced DSO by 1 day
- Saved 9 hours per day in customer service
- Increased productivity by 155 orders per day

Brady Corporation is a world leader in identification solutions that help companies improve productivity, performance, safety and security. Its more than 50,000 products include high-performance labels, precision die-cut materials, signs, software, printers, and automatic identification and data-collection systems. Founded in 1914, the company serves the Fortune 1000 companies and hundreds of thousands of other companies worldwide in markets ranging from telecommunications and electronics to transportation equipment to education.

The Challenge

Of Brady Corporation's total volume of customer orders received each day, nearly half came in via fax. Brady sought to optimize fulfillment by minimizing the amount of manual tasks involved in receiving and processing fax orders into the company's SAP system.

As an alternative to fax machines, scanning equipment (plus the associated consumables and maintenance) third-party imaging software and manual data entry, Brady wanted a solution to automate the process of routing faxes based on whether the order was a stock order, a custom order or a rush/urgent order.

“Clearly what Esker provided us was infrastructure as a service to standardize and normalize our faxing technologies. It was a huge architectural win.”

James Vander Heyden ▪ IT Value Manager ▪ Brady Corporation

Brady was experiencing growth, which meant an increasing number of fax orders. “We recognized that faxing technology can bring complexity to the landscape,” said James Vander Heyden, IT Value Manager at Brady. “And that could have a direct affect on business processes.”

Brady's fax infrastructure included a fax server software product and several secondary components. Costs associated with this infrastructure could be difficult to predict and bill back to the business.

“Along with the fax server we also had underlying faxing technologies for desktop faxing and functions like converting inbound faxes to email addresses,” said Vander Heyden. “We wanted to consolidate fax technology based on our business usage, and we didn't want to have to replace or rebuild servers and modem boxes as dictated by the vendor.”

Solution: Esker on Demand Fax Services

Vander Heyden and others at Brady gained familiarity with Esker through SearchSAP web seminars and the SAP TechEd conference. “In enterprise architecture we're always looking for the most efficient and cost-effective IT offering that we can come up with for standardization, simplification, re-use and retirement of legacy applications,” said Vander Heyden. “We considered

fax an infrastructure-as-a-service play for landscape simplification, and we saw great value in the Esker on Demand platform."

Brady made a smooth transition, with no interruptions in service, to Esker on Demand fax services for:

- SAP enterprise resource planning applications
- GETPAID receivables applications
- Desktop and web-based email

Along with enhancing the return of information back to business users on the status of faxes, the Esker on Demand platform added a variety of functionality to support faxing. "Even something as simple as being able to copy and paste out of a fax makes getting information into our systems much easier," said Vander Heyden. "It sounds like a small thing, but it was a big benefit to some of our business units."

With the fax service from Esker we simplified our landscape, rationalized our costs and tied IT costs to business volume. And through that process we laid down a good foundation not only for fax technology but also business process improvement.

James Vander Heyden ▪ IT Value Manager
▪ Brady Corporation

In phase 1 of the solution, Esker on Demand would capture all of the faxed orders and link each one to the SAP transaction, passing the electronic image to the SAP system based on order number.

Benefits

Without paper handling, scanning and manual routing of orders to customer service representatives, Brady is able to ensure same-day processing of fax orders. Orders can be retrieved immediately to answer customer questions or for auditing purposes.

Key outcomes with Esker on Demand fax services include:

- 9 hours labor saved per day
- Immediate access to orders
- 99% reduction of average turnaround time for entry of incoming fax orders into SAP

Other Esker on Demand projects Brady has undertaken include workflow for electronic versions of faxes to multiple work queues to be entered into the SAP system with a document attached to the fax image, and forwarding of captured faxes to a shared e-mail inbox.

Going Forward

A subsequent phase of the project will be to add document capture and extraction of data from orders. "We're on a solid footing now for a whole range of business process improvements that go well beyond standard faxing and order processing," said Vander Heyden. "With Esker we have the foundation for OCR technology, workflow tools and workflow outside of our ERP system."

Mail Services for SAP

Continuing to look at ways to simplify the architecture within the organization and create highly scalable components in the IT landscape, Brady also worked with Esker to automate postal mailing processes for business units that have moved onto SAP. With Mail Services for SAP, Esker delivered what Brady was looking for — an integrated way to mail collection letters, remittances and invoices from the SAP system.

Printing of outbound invoices was becoming a challenge as the business grew. Scaling output volume was driving investments in printers, staff and processes to handle higher volumes of print and mail. Brady recognized that by using Esker on Demand mail services, a standard for mailing could be deployed throughout the organization. Esker on Demand mail services brought landscape simplification and gave Brady the ability to easily scale up on invoice print and mail when needed.

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