



FACILITATING A 40% ANNUAL GROWTH RATE WITH ORDER PROCESSING AUTOMATION

Parts Town utilized Esker's cloud-based solution to automate order processing and got more than cost-savings in return — it transformed the dynamics of the entire company.

Challenges of Manual Processing

Prior to Parts Town utilizing Esker's cloud-based automation solution, the company had relied on traditional methods to process approximately 2,000 customer orders daily. Eventually, as Parts Town's order volumes grew, it became obvious that the manual nature of its operation would be unsustainable.

Low efficiency, low visibility

Parts Town receives purchase orders (POs) through a variety of channels (email, fax, Web). In its previous process, Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) would print out paper copies of the POs, manually enter the data into Part Town's SYSPRO™ ERP system, and then file it in a personal folder or inbox.

"As we continued to grow as a company, our order processing operation became more and more chaotic," said Amy Argentine, Director of Customer Experience at Parts Town. "Because everything was done manually, we were running into a lot of errors and had very little visibility into the workflow."



Ultimately, we found that automation could help us provide higher quality customer care and faster turnaround time versus simply hiring more staff.

Amy Argentine – Director of Customer Experience



Going beyond quality focus

Parts Town had already enacted quality focus measures within order processing a few years prior to automating with Esker. However, despite the initiative's success in helping to reduce common errors (e.g., wrong shipping address, incorrect customers, etc.), Parts Town knew more was needed.

"Our emphasis on quality focus helped get our accuracy rate up to 99.7% but it required a lot of time and resources on our end,"

said Argentine. "When it came down to it, our process had fewer errors but we were still doing things manually."

Adding Staff vs. Automating

In addition to increasing workflow efficiency and visibility, another influential factor in Parts Town's decision to automate order processing involved growth. With an annual growth rate of 40%, Parts Town had to choose between hiring more people to accommodate increasing order volumes or implementing an automated solution — with customer service being its main goal.

"Ultimately, we found that automation could help us provide higher quality customer care and faster turnaround time versus simply hiring more staff," said Argentine. "And, the ability to grow as a company without growing our team was big for our bottom line."

Choosing Esker

When it came time to choose an automation solution provider, Parts Town had an advantage over most businesses in its position, having firsthand familiarity with Esker's services.

Same platform, different solutions

Parts Town had successfully implemented Esker's cloud-based Accounts Receivable solution just a year earlier, which helped the company eliminate the manual steps associated with processing more than 30,000 invoices and a variety of other documents each month.

After learning more about Esker's cloud-based offering for order processing, Parts Town determined that Esker's capabilities (e.g., OCR, automatic approval routing, etc.) would be a great fit for helping accomplish its three main objectives:

- Managing growing order volumes without incrementally adding more staff
- Improving workflow efficiency and reducing errors
- Enhancing process oversight to view orders in real-time and react accordingly

Esker's Order Processing automation solution

Using Esker's cloud-based solution, Parts Town's order management process is now fully electronic. Arriving orders are now automatically entered into Esker's solution where they are imaged and scanned into the ERP system — all with full visibility while minimizing the risk for order entry errors.

"With Esker, everything has become faster and more efficient," said Argentine. "Instead of working with 'blind' piles of paper, everything is right there in front of them on the screen, and they can prioritize what emails to send, phone calls to make, etc. We have a goal set of getting 60% of our orders processed by 3 p.m. so we never have orders run over into the next day, and we're getting closer to meeting that goal every week."

Benefits after Implementation

Even though the project is still in its early stages, Parts Town has already achieved a number of significant business benefits via Esker's Order Processing automation solution, including:

- Eliminated almost all fax machines
- Accelerated order processing time by minutes thanks to reduced manual tasks and "taught" rules within the solution
- Increased visibility and control into every order, allowing for prioritization and real-time tracking
- Reduced employee overtime hours
- Enhanced supply chain and order processing management thanks to fewer manual tasks
- Freed up warehouse space by eliminating PO archiving
- Reduced turnaround time for order acknowledgements

Change in company dynamics

One of the most unexpected yet impactful results of Parts Town's automation initiative was its effect on the company's Distribution Center (DC). Bringing visibility and oversight to Parts Town's DC proved to change the entire dynamics of the company.

"Our DC managers can now see the number of orders in the queue and use that data to allocate resources and forecast what needs to be done with supply chain and staffing," said Argentine. "We used to have people staying late because the CSR team was sitting on orders. Now, people working in the DC are able to go home to their families — it's been a transformational improvement in terms of how we run our operation."



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Amy Argentine – Director of Customer Experience



Future plans with Esker

Parts Town is one of many companies that have taken advantage of Esker's flexible platform by extending its use to multiple business processes. In addition to utilizing Esker's Accounts Receivable and Order Processing solutions, Parts Town recently signed on to automate its accounts payable (AP) operation as well. Once live, the initiative will allow Parts Town to streamline every phase of AP invoicing using Esker's intelligent capture, touchless processing and electronic workflow capabilities.

About Parts Town

Parts Town supplies genuine OEM replacement parts for commercial cooking equipment to the restaurant industry. For over 20 years, Parts Town has been focused on delivering the highest level of customer service for food equipment replacement parts, commercial kitchen accessories and selected food equipment. By recruiting and retaining the industry's leading talent and living its core values, Parts Town has been able to achieve the unique combination of providing the industry's most complete set of value-added capabilities while continuing to provide enthusiastic and expert customer service.

Parts Town has been named to the Crain's "Fast 50" list, recognizing the fastest growing companies in the Chicagoland area for five consecutive years as well as the "Inc 5000" list of fastest growing privately held companies in North America for six consecutive years.

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