



SIMPLIFYING FAST, COST-EFFECTIVE DOCUMENT COMMUNICATION WITH ESKER

When one of its pharmacy benefit manager (PBM) clients was looking for a solution to get contract information to pharmacies within the network and receive documents back, The Pharmacy Verification Network turned to Esker. Since its initial project, The Pharmacy Verification Network has continued to expand the use of Esker's on-demand services to automate a range of document processes.

Challenge: Higher Speed and Visibility, Lower Costs

Delivering 3 to 4 documents per month to groups of a few hundred to several thousand, the PBM had a fully staffed mailroom and was sending all of the contract documents via postal mail. Call center staff made phone calls to follow up and confirm that the documents were received. When documents came back in, other staff had to review them and then all of the paper had to be filed and stored.

According to the Manager of Integration Services at The Pharmacy Verification Network, "It was a very burdensome and expensive process that took a lot of man hours and created a lot of waste with so much paper. There were a large number of people involved in making the process happen, and they all had other responsibilities in addition to the follow-up calls and sorting through the paper documents." Along with looking for a faster and more cost-effective alternative to the mail process, the PBM was moving to a new location and wanted to create a greener, more paperless environment.



We were interested in the 'flashy' aspects of an on-premises software solution, but as soon as we saw Esker we knew it would give us the flexibility we needed and would allow us to move very quickly with the automation project.

Manager of Integration Services

Project Execution

"We had an extremely tight schedule of about a month-and-a-half from when the project started to when we had to start sending out the contract documents," said the Manager of Integration Services. As his team began developing a process to track the documents, they implemented a Laserfiche document management system to house the documents as they went out and came back in. He added, "But at that point we hadn't really looked into how we were going to send documents out of Laserfiche. Previously we had used an online fax service for some documents, but we tried to minimize that because of cost and difficulty in getting anything custom set up to work."

Esker was recommended to The Pharmacy Verification Network by Unity Business Systems, who did the Laserfiche installation and had done several implementations for other organizations integrating Esker solutions with Laserfiche.

Solution: Esker on Demand

While faxing represents the majority of its Esker on Demand traffic because so many independent pharmacies still rely on fax communication, The Pharmacy Verification Network also uses Esker on Demand for email and mail communications. The Manager of Integration Services recalled, "On the very first job sent out, we still had a manual component to the mailing because we hadn't fully explored the abilities of Esker. It took six people almost 10 days to put the mailing together — about 3,000 pieces. Then we found that we could use for the mailing component as well, which has really been a lifesaver for me."

Hosted rules

The Esker on Demand service monitors an "In" folder into which files are saved by Pharmacy Verification Network staff. These files are uploaded to an Esker-hosted business rule for processing based on transport modes (email, fax and postal mail) and the order in which to attempt them, based on a configuration file that accompanies the document files.

An increasing segment of The Pharmacy Verification Network's contacts, particularly nationwide pharmacy chains, prefer to have documents sent via email. For these clients, Esker on Demand first attempts to email; if email is unsuccessful then it faxes, and if fax is unsuccessful it sends postal mail:

- If the transport listed is email, the hosted rule captures the email address from the document and sends the document, as a PDF attachment, to that address. Esker on Demand allows Pharmacy Verification Network to track when the email has been opened by the recipient.
- If the transport listed is fax, the hosted rule captures the fax number from the document and sends the document to that fax number.
- If the transport listed is mail, the hosted rule captures the mailing address from the document and submits the document to Esker for production and postal delivery to that address.

Reporting

When messages are sent, document and job identifiers from the configuration file are displayed in the Esker on Demand web interface, allowing for reporting and searching based on ID and final status.

Final status of each document is contained in an XML file created upon successful sending of the document. Once all documents have been successfully sent, the XML file is automatically downloaded to an "Out" folder on The Pharmacy Verification Network server and saved there.

Benefits

"With Esker the PBM's process was dramatically improved and made more efficient," said the Manager of Integration Services. "Now just a few people can review the documents through electronic workflow rather than having to go and find all of the information."

Esker has helped to:

- **Free up time** that the PBM's staff formerly spent on manually sending documents, making follow-up calls and filing documents

- **Reduce costs** of 5 FTE positions
- Move from a 1% error rate to a **0% error rate** in merging account information into The Pharmacy Verification Network's own mailings to customers, returning more accurate data for contracts and the pharmacy database
- **Cut mailing costs** by one-third in addition to eliminating printing and envelope stuffing
- **Reduce overall faxing costs** and gained flexibility in comparison with the online fax service previously used

Going Forward

Since the initial deployment, the Manager of Integration Services' group has found many other ways to use Esker on Demand, including sending marketing communications and inbound fax automation. The addition of fax numbers for inbound faxing allows for tracking of separate workflows in a variety of ways. These numbers route into an FTP server; the documents are automatically retrieved and automatically fed into the Laserfiche document management system and routed to start the workflows.

The Manager of Integration Services also had a positive experience working with the Esker Professional Services team. "The team has really been great. Beyond meeting our own requirements, they've helped understand how to make the best use of Esker to achieve our goals," he said. "They've given us a lot of valuable input on best practices for our internal processes."

The Pharmacy Verification Network

The Pharmacy Verification Network is an online service established to provide a single-source, secure database of pharmacy-managed profiles required for the verification and credentialing of pharmacy partners. For pharmacy owners and operators, The Pharmacy Verification Network provides an easy way to share pharmacy profiles with pharmacy benefit managers, managed care organizations and health plans that credential their pharmacies. In addition, the network alerts pharmacy owners and operators when industry data sources report information that differs from their pharmacy profile on the network.

www.pharmacyverification.com

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