CUSTOMER STORY

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Transforming Invoice Management

How Chantiers de l’Atlantique reduced manual work, empowered accounting teams, and built stronger supplier relationships with Esker Accounts Payable

CHANTIERS DE L'ATLANTIQUE



ESKER®

Chantiers de l'Atlantique

- Shipbuilding and fleet services
- 4,000 employees
- ERP SAP
- Founded in 1862
- 2.5 billion euros in revenue



Challenges

Freeing accounting teams from low-value, time-consuming work

Based in Saint-Nazaire, France, Chantiers de l'Atlantique is Europe's largest shipyard and a global leader in the design, manufacture, assembly, and commissioning of commercial, naval, and passenger ships. Its 150-hectare site brings together approximately 10,000 people, including 4,000 direct employees, and generates nearly 100,000 supplier invoices annually.

Managing such a high volume of invoices placed significant demands on the company's accounting teams, particularly when it came to meeting payment deadlines. Before implementing Esker Accounts Payable, each supplier follow-up required multiple searches in the accounting system, often followed by a time-consuming search for the original paper invoice.

"The goal was to make our accounting teams' day-to-day work easier by freeing them of low-value-added tasks while enabling them to manage increasing workloads," explained Thierry Pralong, Accounting Manager at Chantiers de l'Atlantique.

With a strong order backlog and large-scale projects, Chantiers de l'Atlantique needed an efficient solution to modernize its accounts payable (AP) process while supporting its competitiveness and sustainability goals.

Objectives

- Reduce invoice processing time and improve compliance.
- Lighten the workload of accounting teams by automating low-value tasks.
- Strengthen supplier relationships through more efficient payment management.
- Manage increased invoice processing demands driven by growing order volumes while maintaining operational efficiency.
- Modernize financial processes to support the company's digital transformation.

Solution

Fostering a more efficient, centralized, collaborative AP environment

In searching for a new solution, one of Chantiers de l'Atlantique's top priorities was eliminating repetitive, low-value tasks so accountants could make better use of their skills and expertise. Pralong involved his accounting team from the outset to ensure the chosen solution would address their needs and day-to-day challenges.

"We wanted something that would be very easy for users to adopt and that would help us prioritize our various daily tasks within the organization," said Pralong. "A big priority was finding a solution that would allow our accountants to focus solely on interesting issues or disputes within the supplier cycle."

With Esker Accounts Payable, Chantiers de l'Atlantique has streamlined its entire supplier invoice management process, reduced manual work, and enabled accounting teams to focus on more meaningful activities. "Thanks to Esker's recognition technologies, we've eliminated the non-value-added tasks we used to have like data entry, scanning, opening and sorting mail, and stamping."

Where Esker Accounts Payable adds value

Esker Accounts Payable centralizes all invoice-related information, making it easier to track invoices, manage priorities, and identify potential payment delays. Previously, the main causes of late payments included missing invoices, disputes, and internal delays due to employee absences.

With real-time metrics, tracking, and reporting dashboards, accounting teams have greater visibility into invoice status and processing progress, allowing them to prioritize tasks and address issues more efficiently.

Each month, the team analyzes late payments to identify their root causes and take corrective action. Complete invoice histories and traceability make it easier to understand where delays occur and prevent recurring issues.

With customizable dashboards and a user-friendly interface, Esker also improves communication and collaboration across departments. Accountants can share information more easily, demonstrate their expertise, and take a more proactive role in managing supplier relationships.

"Esker Accounts Payable has transformed the way our finance and accounting teams work by giving them a cutting-edge, efficient solution. It has been unanimously welcomed by our IT, accounting, and operational teams. Everyone benefits."

Thierry Pralong
Accounting Manager, Chantiers de l'Atlantique





Highlights

- Improved on-time payment rates for supplier invoices
- 3x fewer late-payment penalties
- Better workload distribution across accounting teams
- Stronger supplier relationships through fewer follow-ups and faster issue resolution
- More time for higher-value work by reducing repetitive tasks
- Easier invoice approvals on the go with mobile app

Results

Greater productivity, less stress & stronger supplier relationships

With Esker Accounts Payable, Chantiers de l'Atlantique has accelerated invoice processing and improved visibility for both accounting teams and suppliers. The collaborative supplier portal provides direct access to invoice status, reducing follow-up calls, and emails. When inquiries do arise, accountants can respond quickly and resolve issues with greater confidence.

"Since implementing Esker, responding to supplier inquiries has become so much easier," explained Pralong. "We can immediately check the status of an invoice and resolve issues in just five minutes. It's made us much more responsive and strengthened our credibility with suppliers."

Faster invoice processing and smoother processes have also strengthened supplier relationships. "We've introduced a reverse factoring program with BPI that enables our suppliers to receive payment almost immediately after their invoices are issued," added Pralong.

Customizable dashboards have also transformed workload management. Managers can monitor invoice volumes, distribute tasks more evenly, and prevent bottlenecks before they affect the team. "We can see exactly how many invoices each accountant needs to process at any given time, which allows us to distribute tasks more evenly and reduce pressure on the team," explained Pralong.

This improved visibility also supports better resource planning. Managers can use reliable data to anticipate staffing needs and make informed decisions. "Today, I can identify peaks in workload and use accurate data to inform management when additional staff are needed."

Beyond the accounting department, Esker has also simplified invoice approvals for 500 managers, many of whom frequently travel or work away from their desks. With the Esker mobile app, they can review and approve invoices on the go, keeping processes moving without disrupting their daily responsibilities, and allowing them to focus on what matters most: building the world's largest cruise ships.

"Esker has exceeded our expectations. The solution is intuitive and offers powerful capabilities. Customizable dashboards, intelligent invoice sorting, and task prioritization are just some of the features we hadn't anticipated that have transformed the way our teams work every day."

Thierry Pralong
Accounting Manager, Chantiers de l'Atlantique

Do you want to transform your AP process like Chantiers de l'Atlantique?

We're here to help.



About Esker

Esker's Agentic AI Suite for the Office of the CFO combines proven automation with AI agents that turn data into action across source-to-pay and order-to-cash processes — improving working capital and cashflow, scaling productivity, and strengthening financial performance. This blend of expertise, trusted technology, and continuous innovation enables greater autonomy across workflows while keeping people in control of the decisions that matter. Headquartered in Lyon, France, Esker has 1,200 employees across 15 global locations.

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