ACHIEVING EFFICIENT PAPERLESS OPERATIONS VIA ESKER

Spanish-based Agua Mineral San Benedetto, an early adopter of document automation technology, set out to eliminate paper from its operations. In just a few years, the company succeeded in creating a paperless environment thanks to the hard work and close collaboration of all departments involved (e.g., accounting, sales, logistics and IT). The company ultimately automated three critical business processes with with Esker: order processing, accounts receivable and accounts payable.

Equipped with Fujitsu scanners, a Microsoft Dynamics AX business environment and Esker document process automation technology, Agua Mineral San Benedetto was determined to eliminate paper from its business processes and put in place a zero-paper policy. In three years, the company successfully reduced annual paper consumption from 120,000 to 40,000 pages.

Sales Order Management

The first process to be automated was the automatic capture and processing of all non-EDI orders into Microsoft Dynamics AX ERP. In the past, employees at Agua Mineral San Benedetto manually processed orders that were received via fax, email or telephone. These represented 35 percent of its global orders (about 16,000 documents per year). This time-consuming process, coupled with the multiple order reception channels, generated significant bottlenecks that resulted in delays, errors and an increased risk of lost documents. Thanks to Esker's Order Processing automation solution, San Benedetto's order management process now involves four steps: 1) Automatic order data capture; 2) Electronic validation; 3) Order creation; and 4) Archiving in the ERP system.

Order processing automation benefits:

- **Significant reduction in time spent** managing the sales cycle
- **Better overall management** thanks to complete process visibility
- **Cost savings** due to the elimination of fax machines, fax lines, printers, 46 physical sales order files and consumables
- **Improved customer service** with optimised human resources (archived files indexed for quick retrieval when a customer calls)
- **Environmental savings:** 2 trees, 205 kg of CO2 emissions and 2,000 litres of water per year

Accounts Receivable

As a natural consequence of order processing automation, accounts receivable was the next process in line. It was important to Agua Mineral San Benedetto that its customers have the choice to receive their invoices electronically or continue to receive them in paper format. While electronic invoices are considered more professional and more efficient, some customers preferred paper or were not yet ready to move to electronic invoices. Agua Mineral San Benedetto required an automation solution which would facilitate the move to electronic invoicing while allowing customers to adapt at their own pace.

> By automating order entry, we have successfully eliminated paper from our entire sales management process. Our customers thank us, as does the environment.
>
> Juan Francisco Cerezo — Director of IT

Capable of automating both the delivery of paper and electronic invoices, Esker's Accounts Receivable automation solution (along with Esker Mail Services) was the perfect fit. Agua Mineral San Benedetto's paper invoices are sent to Esker's international network of mail production facilities where they are printed and handed off to the postal services in less than 24 hours after being generated. A bar code is added to each page for traceability, giving Agua Mineral San Benedetto full visibility on the status of each invoice. Electronic invoices are directly issued from Agua Mineral San Benedetto's MS Dynamics AX ERP and customers receive them by email in a signed PDF format. Whether an invoice is sent via the Esker mail production facility or electronically via email, there is no paper used within the organisation.

Accounts receivable automation benefits:

- **Positive company image** — efficient and cutting-edge

- **Substantial cost savings** — invoice printing and mailing are eliminated

- **Significantly reduced DSO** — time between invoice generation and customer payment is shortened

- **Improved customer satisfaction** — customers appreciate the choice of receiving paper or electronic invoices and regard their provider as being a true professional

> It is important to look for efficiencies whenever possible, particularly in difficult economic times. Automating business processes improves profitability and delivers a clear business advantage.
>
> Juan Francisco Cerezo — Director of IT

Accounts Payable

Once the order-to-cash document processes were automated, Agua Mineral San Benedetto decided to focus on the procure-to-pay cycle, specifically, on automating vendor invoices. Confronted with multiple steps in the invoicing process (invoice data capture, verification and approval, including the particularity of ensuring that the invoice be verified with data from multiple systems or databases), Agua Mineral San Benedetto required a solution to facilitate and speed up the vendor invoice process.

Esker 's Accounts Payable automation solution addressed this complexity with its proprietary image recognition technology and three-way match verification (against the sales order and delivery note), leading to an automatic validation workflow and data capture into Agua Mineral San Benedetto's management software. Esker scans original copies of received paper invoices into the system and electronically archives them for easy retrieval.

Accounts payable automation benefits:

- **Time saved during invoice data capture and archiving** thanks to the automatic document transfer in MS Dynamics and Esker.

- **Time saved in the physical search for invoices** as each invoice is now associated with an accounting record in the ERP

- **Physical space gained** in terms of storage areas, filing cabinets, offices, etc.

- **Fewer human errors** due to automated data capture, which also saved time and money

- **Less investment in hardware and consumables** as documents are sent and received by fax — printing and copying are no longer necessary

- **Increased supply chain efficiency** thanks to improved vendor relations and service, with faster and more accurate information on outstanding invoices

Agua Mineral San Benedetto continues to look for ways to optimise its document processes; for example, the management of delivery notes could easily be automated and signed before they are attached to customer invoices as proof of order delivery. By extending automation to all business document processes, Agua Mineral San Benedetto's is close to reaching its goal of becoming the company of reference in the food and beverage industry for a paper-free environment, as well as one of the first companies in the world to have achieved 100% paperless operations — all with the help of Esker technology.

About Agua Mineral San Benedetto

Agua Mineral San Benedetto was created in June 1995 with the support of its parent company, Acqua Minerale San Benedetto SPA, the leading Italian manufacturer and distributor of bottled water and non-alcoholic beverages for over 25 years. Agua Mineral San Benedetto, S.A.U. uses its own technology to develop bottles in PET, high-quality material specifically used in the manufacturing of water and other beverage bottles. In addition to reducing its paper consumption through the use of Esker, Agua Mineral San Benedetto also invests in environmental research, development and innovation, and has perfected the lightweight "eco-design" bottles.

www.sanbenedetto.es