

Sony

Sony's switch to SAP triggers an urgent search for a compatible faxing solution

Case Study

SONY®

CONFIGURATION

- **Servers:** Customised IBM AS/400s, and SAP platform
- **Clients:** Microsoft Windows based PC workstations, network of 1800 suppliers and 300 service-centres

"I never hear of any problems. No news is good news. Esker Fax just gets on with the job."

— Graeme Read, Manager I.S. Operations, Sony Australia Ltd

"Esker Fax is 100% reliable and we are very comfortable with the high level of accuracy."

— Nigel Essex, Manager of Planning & Control, Sony Australia Ltd

"As we automate the vast number of reports being manually faxed, we will dramatically improve the flow and management of information and free up staff to focus on their core responsibilities."

— Graeme Read, Manager I.S. Operations, Sony Australia Ltd

Sony Australia Ltd is the world leader in consumer electronics and the name behind the Walkman, the world's single best-selling consumer electronic device ever made. The company has operations in 70 countries and is number one for consumer electronics in the Australian market. It is a large, worldwide operation and uses fax messaging to communicate with a vast number of retailers and service centres. Always looking for smart technology to enhance internal and external communications, Sony sought a comprehensive automated faxing solution.

THE BUSINESS CHALLENGE

In 1999, Sony chose SAP as the platform to achieve Y2K compliance for their heavily customised AS/400 systems, and to provide the functionality they required into the future. Unfortunately, they discovered that the desktop faxing system that was in place had no SAP capability - so the hunt was on for a SAP compatible system.



Graeme Read, Manager I.S. Operations, explains the dilemma, "Plans were already in place to automate fax communication business wide, starting immediately with Finance. Remittance advices were still being manually printed and posted so we were under enormous internal pressure to come up with a fax solution quickly".

SPECIFIC ISSUES FACED

Graeme continues, "Our users are very PC literate, have the highest expectations and are stringent in their requirements. We didn't want to run multiple solutions and be stuck with all the maintenance and upgrades it would entail. We needed a 'one stop shop' solution.

Our criteria were:

- SAP compatibility
- Scalability to extend across all divisions to handle large volumes of fax
- A comprehensive tool to support and extend our faxing capabilities
- Superior product knowledge
- Solid skills set, support and responsiveness
- Ability to resolve any issues quickly to minimise down time"

FINDING AN EFFECTIVE BUSINESS SOLUTION

"Esker Fax from Esker Software offered the best match to our needs. We were already using another Esker product and were confident of the support offered by the Australian team."

ESKER FAX - THE TECHNOLOGY SOLUTION

Graeme explains, "Esker Fax sits on a dedicated fax server and links to the SAP environment. The SAP connector means we have the complete spectrum of Esker Fax capabilities and it performs brilliantly. It is easy to operate. From any converted SAP module,



"By using it to transmit remittance advices alone we save 30 hours of staff time every month."

— Nigel Essex, Manager of Planning & Control, Sony Australia Ltd

"Whatever issues we faced, we found the local Esker team supportive and keen to achieve a solution. Esker Fax runs so well we have never had to call on the Esker support staff."

— Nigel Essex, Manager of Planning & Control, Sony Australia Ltd

ABOUT ESKER SOFTWARE

Esker Software solutions connect people and information. Providing access to enterprise host systems and delivering business information from any enterprise source to any destination, Esker solutions include:

- *Esker DeliveryWare Platform*
- *Esker FaxTM, Esker VSI-FAX®, Esker VSI-FAX® for Notes and Esker Fax for Notes.*
- *Persona® by Esker, SmarTerm® by Esker and Tun@Plus by Esker.*

Esker is traded on Euronext, the French Stock Exchange (Euroclear: 3581). With offices in North America, Europe, and Asia/Pacific, Esker has shipped over 80,000 document solutions and has a host-access installed base of more than two-million licensed users.

users can create a message, attach files from any Windows application (as required using SAP Office), select the fax device, enter the number and send.

For our high volume remittance advice runs, the numbers are set up to run automatically. Documents get through quickly, the success rate is very high and we are able to identify what has not transmitted and why (e.g. incorrect fax number). If we need to, we even monitor the status of a document with Esker Fax's dynamic status update function."

DELIVERING ON ROI

First to implement Esker Fax and a driving force behind the project was Nigel Essex, Manager of Planning & Control, which includes the Finance Division, "We pay our 1,800 suppliers by EFT (electronic funds transfer) and used to print and mail the remittance advices, which was very time consuming. Esker Fax now automatically transmits the advices, speeding up the entire process, especially for our monthly high volume runs. It also takes care of transmissions to our 300 service Australia-wide."



Graeme confirms, "Cost containment is very important at Sony. If we can support staff with smart technology they get the job done faster. Esker Fax enables our Finance Division to be more productive. We also save costs in terms of reduced fax machines, lines and calls."

MULTIPLYING THE BENEFITS THROUGHOUT THE ORGANIZATION

Graeme continues, "Other departments are already clamouring for Esker Fax. Document management and workflow are key areas Esker Fax will help us with in Sales and Marketing, Customer Service and reporting procedures to Sony's Tokyo head office.

With Esker Fax we will be able to quickly deliver back-order reports to our 1,800 dealers (retailers) and transmit time critical information to our 300 service centres, improving service and efficiency."

WORKING WITH ESKER

Graeme concludes, "Implementation went smoothly and the Esker technical team displayed an impressive working knowledge of their product. They assisted us in the initial testing to ensure the system was running perfectly before it went live for the Finance Division, where we obviously can't afford to make mistakes."



For more information, visit Esker's Web Sites:

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- Australia ■ www.esker.com.au
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