



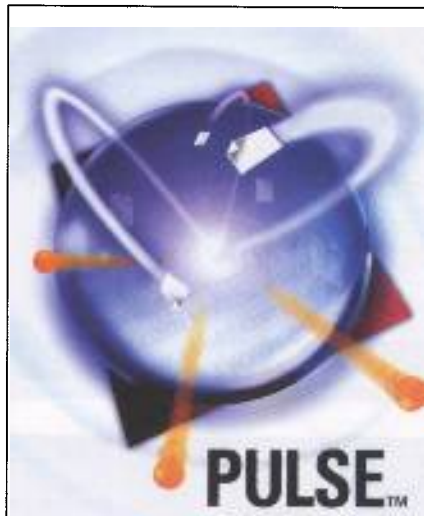
# CUTTING THE COST OF SNAIL-MAIL

**D**espite recent revolutions in enterprise information management, many manufacturing organisations - perhaps most - still deliver invoices, purchase orders, notifications, reports, and other critical documents by the slowest, costliest means - physical mail and manual fax. But high-cost hardcopy document delivery isn't necessarily the status quo. In just the last few years, document delivery has undergone dramatic change - change that can benefit manufacturers now.

Home electronics giant Sony chose to take advantage of that change by implementing Pulse, Esker Software's multi-channel document delivery solution.

To achieve Y2K compliance in 1999, Sony chose a SAP platform for their heavily customised AS/400 systems. It was the best choice for the functionality they required, both at the time and into the future. However, in making this choice, they discovered that the desktop faxing system they were using was completely inadequate; as well as being costly, unreliable and inefficient, it had no SAP capability. Sony needed a compatible, fully integrated solution.

"Plans were already in place to automate fax communication, business-wide, starting immediately with finance," says Graeme Read, manager of information systems operations at Sony. "Remittance advices were still being manually printed and posted so we were under enormous internal pressure to come up with a fax solution quickly." With every document that was being sent



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manually, Sony was losing money.

The challenge was compounded because staff at Sony are highly technologically literate with high expectations of their information systems (IS). This meant IS operations had to answer to a user-group with the most stringent requirements. "We didn't want to run multiple solutions and be stuck with all the associated maintenance and upgrades. We needed a 'one-stop shop' solution," comments Read. For Sony, Esker's Pulse solution fitted the bill.

Sony had very specific criteria in their choice of an all-in-one document

delivery solution. To answer the shortfall with Sony's old system, SAP connectivity was essential. The system had to be scalable to extend across all divisions of the organisation. With their dispersed service-centre network and high-volume requirements, the new solution had to be able to cope with a rigorous workload. In short, it had to be a comprehensive tool to support existing requirements and extend the full range of document delivery capabilities into the future.

Nigel Essex, planning and control manager at Sony, was the first to implement Pulse. "We pay our 1800 suppliers by electronic funds transfer and used to mail the remittance advices, which was very time consuming. Pulse now automatically transmits the advices, speeding up the entire process, especially for our monthly high volume runs," he says. The automation of this process alone has saved Sony over 30 hours of staff time per month. "Cost containment is very important at Sony. Pulse enables our finance division to be more productive, we also save costs in terms of reduced fax machines, lines, calls, paper and postage," Read confirms.

"Most manufacturers are just not aware how much money they are losing by continuing to deliver their financial supply chain documents via manual fax and post," says Bashrat Din, managing director for Esker, EMEA. "By implementing a multi-channel document delivery solution, organisations can achieve significant savings in time and labour, often seeing a return on investment in three to six months." ←