



Ebook

The Power of S2P Automation in the Retail & Consumer Goods Industry



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Introduction

Who is this eBook for?

This eBook is for anyone who holds a leadership or decision-making position within the source-to-pay (S2P) process at a retail or consumer goods company, such as:

- CFOs
- Sales managers
- Financial executives
- Shared services centre managers

What will you get out of it?

You'll get insights into the impacts and benefits of automating the S2P cycle for companies in the retail and consumer goods industry and learn about real digital transformation success stories after implementing Esker's Source-to-Pay solution suite.

Many retailers face a growing realisation — become as efficient and agile as possible or fall behind in today's ever-evolving, tech-driven and increasingly competitive business landscape. As a result, the singular focus on front-end process improvements needs to extend to back-end operations as well, particularly for the S2P cycle. Luckily, there's a simple way to shift that focus from front end to back end: automation. Esker's AI-driven solutions offer visibility and operational efficiency while speeding up the entire process.

Automating S2P functions provides retailers with strategic value by letting finance staff shift their time and focus from manual processing tasks to higher-value work instead. End-to-end automation of S2P cycles creates a productive work environment and streamlines workflows, resulting in faster, more accurate invoice processing, significantly reduced costs and complete control over spend management — you know, all the things that lead to better productivity and efficiency in your organisation.

Some of the most beneficial aspects of S2P automation include:

- Extended control & visibility
- Strengthened supplier relationships
- Harmonised ERP environments
- Increased productivity
- More engaged employees
- Lower operational costs
- Better scalability & risk management
- Enhanced accuracy
- Risk reduction
- Improved supplier & contract management
- More efficient sourcing

S2P challenges often faced by retail & consumer goods companies

There's one thing almost all retail and consumer goods companies are currently battling: a rise in costs. S2P automation can assist with curbing the rise in transport and labour spending as well as the surging cost of reaching consumers. Providing increased visibility over business expenses, S2P automation can considerably improve efficiency, reduce costs and enhance relationships with suppliers.

Esker empowers retailers to overcome the most prevalent industry-specific challenges, such as:

The need to react quickly

Being able to quickly pay invoices – whether to benefit from early payment discounts or remain on good terms with essential suppliers – requires being responsive and having all necessary information on hand. A solution that puts invoices and a wide array of efficient payment management options at the team's fingertips takes the pressure off when processing supplier invoices.

Complex reconciliation

To avoid payment errors, fraud and disputes, Finance and Purchasing teams need to be able to verify that the right invoices are matched with the corresponding orders and receipts. Line-item level data recognition enables a precision view on any discrepancies.

Multi-tool management

To retain global visibility over all communications and sales channels within a business, having the right tools that manage and consolidate all the data and processes is essential.

Optimised purchasing processes

Since profitability is the centre point of all business operations it's imperative to maximise efficiency while maintaining oversight over expense management.

Visibility and traceability of internal exchanges

Ensuring the fluidity of internal exchanges, whether between head office and stores or between different departments, depends on access to up-to-date data and a complete history of exchanges and will aid in informed decision-making and smooth collaboration.



**That's
where
Esker
comes in**

How S2P automation works

An inside look at Esker's solution

Esker's Source-to-Pay solution suite integrates with any ERP system or business application, allowing businesses to automate every phase of the S2P cycle – from supplier sourcing to the creation of an accounting book entry. End-to-end automation addresses the challenges inherent in manual data processing and routing by delivering coordination and transparency to the S2P process.

Enabling faster, more accurate data capture, Esker's Source-to-Pay solution suite processes data faster and more accurately, and uses intelligent, AI-driven data capture, automated workflows and electronic archiving capabilities to process and transfer invoices electronically. This provides 100% visibility of exactly where an invoice is in the approval process. Approvers are notified automatically and, once approvals are obtained, the invoice information is generated in the ERP system and the payment processed as quickly as possible.

The stages of S2P automation



Dashboards with customisable KPIs

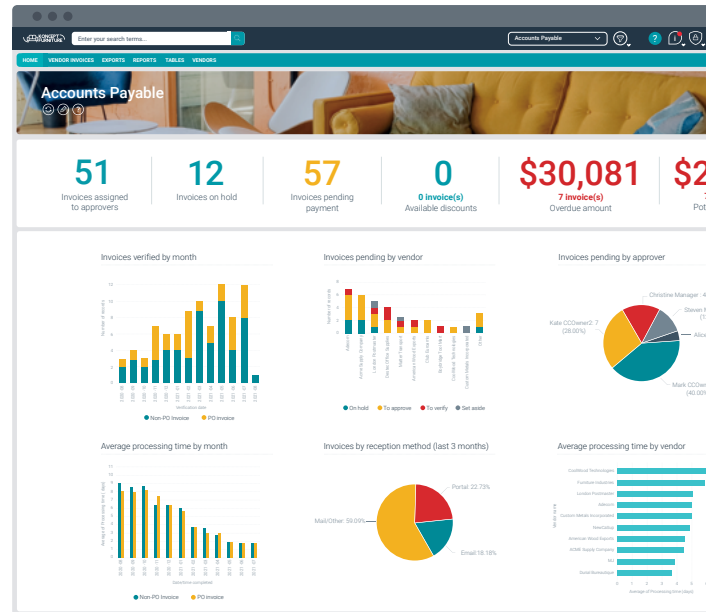
Esker's dashboards provide users with easy-to-read information needed to perform daily tasks, monitor performance and spot potential opportunities or problems as soon as they arise, all from a single point of view. Customise the metrics displayed for each user and/or profile with an easy-to-use interface. Users can remove, edit or add other indicators to dashboards and automatic reports can be scheduled. From the online portal, custom reports can be run to see: the number of invoices and requisitions awaiting processing and how much cash they account for, invoices and purchase requisitions by status, number of invoices processed by FTEs, etc.

Convenient supplier portal

Making life easier for your suppliers means enhancing both your sales opportunities as well as your company's reputation. Esker's portal simplifies the relationships between your company and your suppliers with a collaborative workspace that promotes rapid dispute resolution and a reduction of invoice status follow-ups by providing easy access to invoicing information.

Mobile reach

Available 24/7 on both iOS and Android, the Esker Anywhere™ mobile application adds another dimension of convenience for reviewing and validating invoices, expenses and purchase requisitions on the go. Additionally, approvers can monitor S2P performance indicators and other important process metrics right from the mobile app.



Benefits of automation

By equipping retailers with an S2P solution, Esker enables easy spend management, improves supplier collaboration and delivers financial agility so that focus can be placed on business transformation instead.

Creating a transparent supplier ecosystem

- **Enable supply chain transparency**, process compliance and business protection by verifying the accuracy of supplier information and ensuring that financial and compliance regulations are met.
- **Simplify supplier onboarding** and reduce the dependency on certain suppliers, allowing retailers to remain agile and change suppliers quickly.
- **Encourage supplier participation with an easy-to-use supplier portal**, reducing supplier management and onboarding time and costs.
- **Provide self-service access to payment information** via an online portal, allowing suppliers to track the status of submitted invoices and easily collaborate with built-in chat tools.
- **Capture invoices in any format** including paper, XML, PDF and EDI, enabling retailers to accept invoices from all suppliers.
- **Manage multiple locations and meet global compliance** requirements for companies operating in multiple languages, currencies and sites.





SONY

“Thanks to Esker’s automation solution, we have been able to save 40 days of productivity per month.”

Tan Ai Ling | Deputy Director of Regional Accounting | Sony Electronics Asia Pacific Pte Ltd



LUXASIA

“We have been able to standardise our payment cycles across eight countries and with none of the backlogs we encountered prior to using Esker.”

Zulaifah Abdul Ghani | Country finance lead, Malaysia & Indonesia | Luxasia



All Passion. All Pets™

“Esker’s AI-based recognition has significantly reduced manual work. We can now focus on improving other factors within our department.”

Wynona Ho | Accounts Payable Manager | Pet Lovers Centre

Improving margins to compensate for rising costs

- **Streamline payments and cashflow** by accelerating process efficiency so that suppliers are paid on time and take advantage of early payment discounts.
- **Gain visibility into spending practices** across brands and regions and achieve significant cost savings.
- **Increase auto-matching** and boost straight-through invoice processing rates.
- **Decrease invoice processing time** and enable KPI monitoring to ensure financial performance and maintain valuable supplier relationships.
- **Leverage ERP investments** with seamless solution integration with multiple ERP systems, a common scenario for large retail and consumer goods businesses.
- **Forecast operational and financial metrics** (processing time, productivity, approver performance, etc.) with dashboards and analytics.
- **Increase productivity**, as finance teams only have to process exceptions and can prioritise by key criteria, such as value, early payment discounts, etc.





“We selected Esker because they offered one of the only solutions on the market capable of reconciling vendor invoices and purchase requisitions, while completely integrating with SAP®. We were also impressed with the cost, implementation time, solution ergonomics and ease-of-use for our stores and accounting teams alike.”

Ann Favier | Vice President and CFO |Jardiland



“Having all information in one place and easily accessible is key and makes our job easier. Esker dashboards allow us to see the full lifecycle of an invoice, from reception until payment is made, and that visibility is invaluable.”

Terry Lim | Team Manager, Invoice Processing | Scholastic



“We can view invoices entered into Esker and see what’s been approved and what’s still pending. The visibility it has brought to AP has made approvals easier and payments faster.”

Paul Sohn | Director of Business Applications | Pelican



“Going paperless and having all documents and collaboration in one place has really helped us work more efficiently on a day-to-day basis ... The value gained from using Esker’s S2P solution is just priceless.”

Ng Whye Keong | Group Director | Pet Lovers Centre

Reducing maverick spend & increasing employee well-being

- Facilitate process integrity and rapid user adoption
- Control purchasing from only approved vendors and preferred catalogue product listings, gaining full control and visibility over what's being purchased
- Offer a user-centric journey and give employees the flexibility to use their preferred device from any location
- Create an internal e-commerce-like web store by broadcasting hosted catalogues or allowing access to supplier punchout catalogues



L U X A S I A

"Esker has made everyone's life easier thanks to mobile access"

Zulaifah Abdul Ghani | Country finance lead, Malaysia & Indonesia | Luxasia



All Purpose. All Pets™

"The interface is very user-friendly and easy for new employees to use right off the bat, which has helped us save time in new hire trainings."

Wynona Ho | Accounts Payable Manager | Pet Lovers Centre

Success story



When Luxasia, a luxury retailer and distributor, began centralising their Accounting department and automating their purchase requisitions and supplier invoices, they chose to implement an automated S2P solution. But the proof is in the pudding, and their impressive results speak for themselves:

Previous manual processes included:

- Creation and printing of purchase requisitions
- PO entry into the SAP® ERP
- Processing of internal expense reports

This resulted in escalating workloads and operational costs, a slow and cumbersome invoicing process and dissatisfied employees and customers.

Luxasia's key requirements and goals were to:

- Increase utilisation of early payment discounts
- Reduce operational costs
- Improve document visibility and approval
- Facilitate job functions beyond the AP department
- Automate additional processes with the existing vendor

Results

- 80% reduction in paper use
- Increase in employee productivity, with a 40% increase in processing capability
- Invoice processing up to 50% faster
- Approval workflow four times faster due to approver notifications
- Increased utilisation of early payment discounts through supplier portal
- Enhanced visibility due to customisable dashboards
- Facilitated e-invoice submission via portal

Conclusion

Fluid and swift supply chains and good vendor relationships enable successful business operations for retailers. Streamlining the back-end processes will increase efficiency and maximise profitability.

Prominent global retailers have implemented Esker's S2P automation to deliver considerable efficiencies and achieve faster invoice processing times, reduced costs, improved vendor relationships and reductions in overhead and labour costs.

Automating S2P processes provides better visibility and control over total spend, enabling Finance teams to focus on reporting, operations analysis and other higher-value tasks.

You're in good company

Leading businesses in the retail and consumer goods industry trust Esker's AI-powered Source-to-Pay solution to power efficiencies throughout their processes.



Hi, we're Esker

Esker is the global authority in AI-powered business solutions for the Office of the CFO. Leveraging the latest in automation technologies, Esker's Source-to-Pay and Order-to-Cash solutions optimise working capital and cashflow, enhance decision-making, and drive better collaboration and human-to-human relationships with customers, suppliers and employees.



39

years of experience with 20+ years focused on cloud solutions



1,000+

employees serving 850k+ users & 2,500+ customers worldwide



15

global locations with headquarters in Lyon, France, & Madison, WI



€178.6

million in revenue in 2023, with 90+% of sales via SaaS activities



Business success is best when shared

At Esker, we believe the only way to create real, meaningful change is through positive-sum growth. This means achieving business success that doesn't come at the expense of any individual, department or company – everyone wins! That's why our AI-driven technology is designed to empower every stakeholder while promoting long-term value creation.



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