



Harnessing AI-Powered Automation to Delegate AP Workload & Achieve Process Transparency

After automating accounts payable (AP), Hall's Culligan Water has been able to improve the lives of staff and achieve the flexibility and efficiency needed to never miss a beat. [Here's their story.](#)



At a glance

Hall's Culligan Water



Water treatment



1,000 employees



Established in 1950



Sage Line 100/MMS



43 subsidiaries



Challenges

Taking manual AP processes out of the equation

As a leader in water treatment since 1950, Hall's Culligan Water has the skills and the experience to handle just about any water-related challenge that may come up. But when it came to the complex and inefficient processes bogging down its Accounts Payable (AP) department, the company knew it needed to turn to experts outside the water treatment industry to help overcome its invoicing challenges — experts in AI-driven automation.

Before adopting Esker, the team utilised a previous automation solution, which proved cumbersome. This prior solution necessitated the use of three separate software solutions, which ultimately lead to new operational challenges. User-friendliness was lacking, the team couldn't create reports, OCR performance was poor, operations were sluggish, and AP staff could only access the solution when connected to the company's own network.

These deficiencies fell short of Hall's Culligan Water's standards, prompting the need for replacement. In addition, the solution relied on Java, which had reached its end-of-life cycle. This combination of factors highlighted the inadequacy of the old system and underscored the imperative for a more efficient and modern solution like Esker.

Objectives



Improve the processing speed for AP staff with easy-to-maintain approval workflows.



Increase visibility to achieve full transparency over invoices and AP processes.



Implement an automated AP solution that seamlessly integrates with existing ERP system.



Be able to delegate tasks when users are out of the office to maintain efficiency and continuity.

Solution

Helping staff divide & conquer AP workload with ease

Transitioning to Esker proved remarkably easy and intuitive compared to Hall's Culligan Water's prior AP solution. The team found it effortless to adapt workflows and relished in the flexibility of accessing the platform from anywhere. Its seamless integration with Sage ERP provided real-time updates, which was complemented by customisable dashboards tailored to the company's unique needs. The unlimited user capability was a significant improvement, as opposed to its previous restriction of 20 concurrent users. Now, all 154 end users can simultaneously use the solution, leading to a noticeable boost in overall productivity.

Escher Accounts Payable drastically reduced support calls that previously inundated the team with ERP integration issues and platform errors — calls that also used up significant time AP staff could be using for more valuable and strategic activities. Its advanced AI recognition minimised errors and expedited invoice processing. Notably, the delegation/out-of-office features emerged as pivotal and have enabled the team to easily distribute the AP workload during absences to better sustain operational efficiency. Escher's implementation empowered the team to seamlessly manage tasks, a feat unattainable with their previous system.

■ ■ ■ **“Before Escher, we did not have the flexibility to set up approval workflows, which meant some invoices needed to be keyed in manually. Now, all AP invoices are in one place, helping make the AP process more transparent and, ultimately, more efficient.”**

Kathy Coker

Shared Services Manager, Hall's Culligan Water



Results

Capitalising on full AP visibility & seamless invoice processing

Since implementing Esker, employee morale within Hall's Culligan Water has seen a significant boost, with both approvers and management offering nothing but praise for its efficiency. Approvers even express a sense of ease in their tasks, highlighting that they feel as though they're not merely fulfilling duties but navigating a more streamlined, simplified process. The team has even achieved an impressive 93% AP automation rate with Esker.

"Gaining visibility into the entire AP process was one of the main objectives of our selection team when we were looking for a solution," said Shared Services Manager Kathy Coker. "Esker has helped us meet that goal and even exceed it, because now, every approver is able to access and view invoice statuses, historical invoices, payment updates, and even GL reports in just a few clicks."

Now that task delegation is a breeze, any AP specialist can take on another's workload without skipping a beat, making life easier for all team members and ensuring operational continuity.

Overall, the transition to Esker has positively and drastically impacted workflow efficiency and user satisfaction within the organisation as a whole. Looking ahead, the team plans to implement Esker Expense Management in Q2 of 2024, indicating a continued commitment to streamlining operations and optimising efficiency with Esker's extensive suite of AI-powered solutions.

Highlights



Achieved a 93% automation rate after implementing Esker.



Improved employee morale by simplifying and streamlining AP workflows and eliminating manual data entry.



Gained visibility into every step of the AP process thanks to customised dashboards and advanced reporting capabilities.



"We've heard nothing but great things about Esker from end users in the field. They rave about how much easier their day-to-day is now because the solution makes it seamless. We've been able to eliminate most manual data entry, which has been huge for both morale and accuracy."

Jana VanDorien

Shared Services Lead, Hall's Culligan Water



Want to automate accounts payable like Hall's Culligan Water?

Our team is at your service.

About Esker

Esker is a global cloud platform built to unlock strategic value for Finance, Procurement and Customer Service professionals, and strengthen collaboration between companies by automating the cash conversion cycle. Founded in 1985, Esker operates in North America, Latin America, Europe and Asia Pacific with global headquarters in Lyon, France, and U.S. headquarters in Madison, Wisconsin. Our customers use our cloud solutions to increase the efficiency, productivity and visibility of their source-to-pay (S2P) and order-to-cash (O2C) processes.



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