URSA CUSTOMER STORY

EXPERIENCING GREATER EFFICIENCY IN THE P2P & O2C CYCLES WITH AI-POWERED AUTOMATION SOLUTIONS

URSA and Esker's partnership dates back to over a decade ago, before digital transformation became a buzzword. Moved by the need to align people, process and technology, URSA set out to automate its account payable (AP) and accounts receivable (AR) processes. In 2007, Esker's on-premises automation solution was implemented at URSA's Madrid headquarters and successfully rolled out to many other countries.

"Back then we did not talk about digital transformation, but rather process automation," said Gregor Miklavčič, European IT Manager, also in charge of business processes. "We needed a solution that would integrate our AP and AR processes in one platform and exchange data with our SAP system."

Fast forward 10 years and in 2017 URSA was looking to gain even more process efficiency, deciding to move to a Software as a Service (SaaS) automation solution. Esker's Accounts Receivable cloud solution was first implemented in France and was then rolled out to other European countries. In 2018, Esker's Accounts Payable cloud solution was implemented at URSA's Shared Services Center (SSC) in Poland; and most recently, the company automated its order management process with Esker.

Thanks to digital transformation, URSA has successfully streamlined the way inbound and outbound invoices and customer orders are processed. Manual data entry has been eliminated, errors and processing time reduced, and staff have been able to focus on higher value tasks. The company has gained greater visibility over the AP process at its SSC, and local customer service teams over AR and order management processes.

Esker's cloud platform provides multiple services and business packages to automate complex business processes and orchestrate actions across multiple departments.

> "Esker offers a unique solution that manages both invoices and orders, resulting in efficiency in the procure-to-pay and order-to-cash cycles. Esker's platform grows with us, adapting to our needs and providing us with a very competitive total cost of ownership."

Gregor Miklavčič | European IT Manager

Growing international reach
Over the years, URSA has expanded the use of Esker's solutions to 13 countries across Europe, including Spain, France, Slovenia, Croatia, Germany, Belgium, Italy, England, Poland, Hungary, Serbia, Austria and Romania. And it hasn't stopped there as more countries are expected to implement Esker's solutions in the coming few years.

THE STORY OF A DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Centralizing AP management at an SSC
URSA's Poland-based SSC for financial services implemented Esker's Accounts Payable solution to simplify and standardize global supplier management. A pilot program was first launched in France, Belgium and Germany before expanding the solution to the rest of Europe.

The SSC AP team manages close to 65,000 annual invoices and credits notes via a single portal. Invoices arrive via email in PDF format from URSA's different subsidiaries. Data is accurately extracted using AI technology, verified and managed at the SSC, and then validated by each subsidiary and integrated into SAP. Invoices and credit notes are automatically archived and made available in Esker (along with other invoice-related documents) for as long as necessary.

By moving to a cloud-based AP solution, URSA processes supplier invoices 30% faster, has eliminated infrastructure and maintenance costs, and benefits from numerous solution features including:

- Convenient document archiving

- Increased visibility and full audit trail

- On-the-go invoice approvals with Esker's mobile application, Esker Anywhere™

- Convenient online supplier portal to follow up on payment status

- Intelligent dashboards with KPIs and reports (e.g., invoices processed monthly, invoices pending, team performance monitoring, team workload, etc.)

Ensuring regulatory compliant e-invoicing
Over 20,000 annual customer invoices are processed via Esker's cloud platform in Italy, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, France and Poland and managed locally by the country customer service teams. Esker helps URSA deliver e-invoices in compliance with all the unique specifications of European countries.

URSA's invoices are automatically sent in PDF format via email, except in Italy where the law states otherwise. Esker complies with Italy's e-invoicing requirement and manages URSA's Italian invoices (both incoming and outgoing) by communicating with the government's SDI platform. Esker also provides e-invoice archiving in compliance with the Italian fiscal regulations. Another example where Esker's solution helps URSA maintain regulation compliance is in Hungary. URSA sends its invoices with the corresponding proof of delivery and the PDF is signed by Sovos, incorporated into Esker's solution.

URSA reaps major benefits from its new and improved cloud AR process, including:

- Legally compliant e-invoicing and archiving across multiple countries

- Faster invoice delivery as URSA is no longer dependent on postal services

- Increased invoice status visibility thanks to dashboards and metrics

- Reduced consumables such as paper and ink, saving both money and materials

Optimizing order processing for local customer service teams
Following successful AP and AR projects, URSA confidently extended the use of Esker's platform to include order management

automation. It became clear to URSA that they needed to optimize their customer service processes, increase efficiency, reduce repetitive and tedious tasks such as manual data entry, and free up CSRs to spend more time on customer care and improving the sales process.

Before rolling out Esker's Order Management solution across Europe, URSA launched a pilot program in two culturally different countries to help ensure solution implementation success. "It is important to consider different perceptions of the same work interface, its use, functionalities and the reports produced, to make sure that everyone speaks only one language: Esker," explained Miklavčič.

URSA defined its objective to have 80% of customer orders go through Esker's platform. The pilot program in Italy and Austria has already produced very good results, with 10,000 annual orders processed via Esker in Italy and 4,200 in Austria. Additionally, order processing time has been cut in half. In 2021, Esker's solution will be rolled out to four more countries: Slovenia, France, Romania and Hungary.

"Esker's Order Management solution is very user-friendly. It provides us with more visibility and control and allows us to track the status of open orders and identify duplicates. We can quickly post orders and verify products references against the ERP master data. Overall, it's a very good solution," said Chiara Ferrari, Customer Service Manager at URSA Italy and Aleksandra Kodric, Customer Service Manager at URSA ADRIA (Austria, Slovenia, Hungary and Romania).
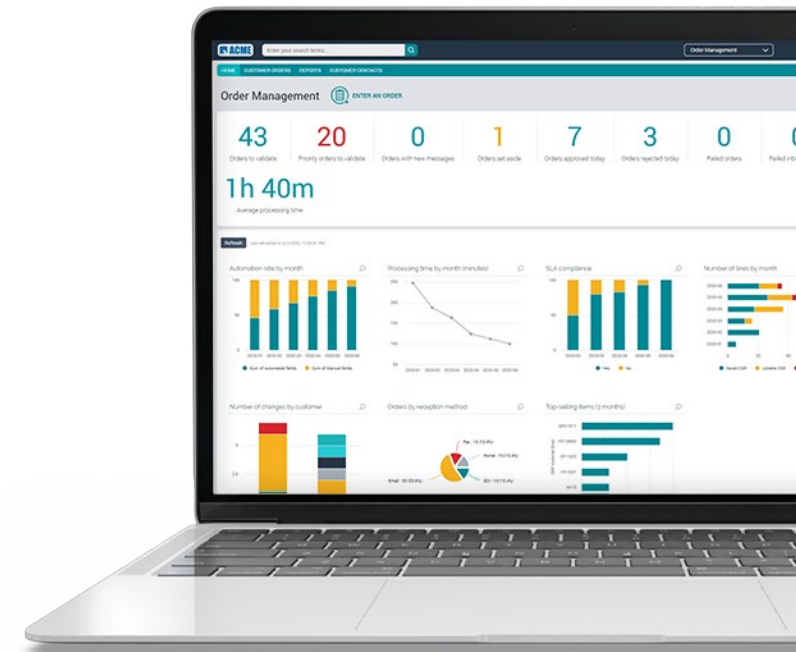
THE SECRET TO SUCCESS

The key to Miklavčič's success is in fact not a secret at all. "Use technology to improve your team's life and you will see how the magic happens. You also have to convince top management that the solution will bring hard, tangible benefits to your company. And end-users must be convinced that they can't live without the benefits!"

URSA is a multinational company with each local team perceiving the solution in a different way. Ensuring smooth solution adoption and implementation in over 10 countries was a big challenge, one that URSA's top management had to accept. "The project has been a great success, thanks to the unconditional support of Esker's team of international experts," said Miklavčič.

When asked if he had any recommendations for other companies looking to embark on a digital transformation project of a similar scope, he strongly stressed the need to reduce process complexities and the importance of selecting the right technology partner to accompany you on the journey. "There were definite moments when we were a bit nervous, but we made it happen and with great benefits to our end-users and management: happiness for the former and great TCO for the latter."

> **"Our TCO was positive for three reasons: Esker's solution flexibility, which adapts to our multicultural teams and needs, Esker's AI-powered technology and Esker's support at every step along the way."**
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> Gregor Miklavčič | European IT Manager