



HILLCREST SUCCESS STORY

REDUCING INVOICE REQUESTS BY 75% & WORKLOADS BY 30%

BACKGROUND

Hillcrest Food Service is a family-owned wholesale food distributor that has served chefs and restaurants in Northeast Ohio for more than 40 years. Recently, the company found itself in need of a collections management system that could help it expedite its accounts receivable (AR) process and keep pace with a growing customer base.

Hillcrest knew its ideal solution would be an intuitive collections management system requiring little or no training to operate. Moe Abraham, Hillcrest's Vice President of Finance, took on the task of identifying a solution that would allow the company to maintain its position in the highly competitive restaurant supply industry. His specific criteria included:

- Functionality to enable restaurant owners to pay invoices promptly
- Tools that could help reduce the frequency of mistakes disrupting Hillcrest's post-sales processes
- Robust automation capabilities that would do away with manually processing mountains of invoice-related paperwork in order to free up personnel to address more urgent customer needs



WITH SUPPORT FROM OUR PARTNERS AT ESKER, WE'VE IMPLEMENTED PROCESS EFFICIENCIES THAT HAVE ALLOWED US TO KEEP UP WITH THE TIMES AND STAY COMPETITIVE.

MOE ABRAHAM | VICE PRESIDENT OF FINANCE

SOLUTION

In 10 months, Abraham investigated seven different vendors. His quest eventually brought him to Esker's cloud-based Collections Management solution.




Abraham was immediately struck by the solution's clean interface and straightforward functionality. He also found Esker's ability to manage multiple accounts compelling. Many of Hillcrest's customers operate more than one

ABOUT HILLCREST

Industry: Foodservice Equipment & Supplies
ERP: AS400
Solution: Collections Management

Family-owned and operated, Cleveland-based Hillcrest Foods currently serves chefs, restaurants and restaurant chains in Northeast Ohio. With a line of 6,000 stocked items that are 95% name-brand and/or locally sourced, Hillcrest customers know to expect timely delivery of only the highest quality food products.

BENEFITS AT A GLANCE

-  **97-99%** Collection Effectiveness Index (CEI)
-  **50%** reduction in sending out statements by traditional mail
-  **30%** workload reduction per full-time employee



restaurant. Rival solutions would require these customers to maintain separate accounts and login credentials for each location. Esker, however, offered master logins and dashboards.

In the final analysis, Abraham felt that Esker's support of various payment plan options — a feature he was surprised to learn was missing in competing solutions — made the best business case for Esker's Collections Management offering. With ACH access to customer accounts, Esker could promise greatly accelerated customer payment processing.

Abraham recognized that this efficiency had transformative potential for Hillcrest's business. Rather than waiting for checks made out for tens of thousands of dollars to arrive by mail then clear the bank, Hillcrest could receive payment within 24 hours of issuing an invoice. Meanwhile, the system's electronic archives would provide both Hillcrest's AR employees and its customers with 24/7 access to invoices as well as real-time updates to those documents.



ESKER'S AUTOMATED COLLECTION TOOLS HAVE BEEN A GREAT BENEFIT TO OUR ACCOUNTING STAFF. NOW, THEY'RE FOCUSING MORE ON CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT RATHER THAN MANUAL ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS.

MOE ABRAHAM | VICE PRESIDENT OF FINANCE

BENEFITS

In the four years that Hillcrest Foods has employed the automation tools available through Esker's Collections Management solution, the company has:

REDUCED INVOICE REQUESTS BY 75%, allowing staff to focus on more value-added tasks

HALVED THE NUMBER OF INVOICES SENT BY TRADITIONAL MAIL, significantly accelerating Hillcrest's O2C cycle

REDUCED WORKLOAD PER FTE BY 30%, leading to improvements in customer service and customer satisfaction

VIRTUALLY ELIMINATED incorrect payments and remittances

MEASURABLY REDUCED DSO, which now averages between 15.7 and 17.4 days

STREAMLINED CUSTOMER COMMUNICATIONS, with all invoice-related correspondence now stored in one centralized digital repository



"ESKER'S ABILITY TO HELP US DEFINE AND SET UP MULTIPLE PAYMENT OPTIONS, INCLUDING PAYMENT PLANS, FOR OUR CUSTOMERS IS A FUNCTIONALITY THAT REALLY SET THE SOLUTION APART."

MOE ABRAHAM | VICE PRESIDENT OF FINANCE

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