



ABOUT HAYWARD DISTRIBUTING

Industry: Distribution

Solution: Accounts Receivable

Hayward Distributing Co. distributes outdoor power equipment and services to thousands of retailers in the Midwest and across the country. With over 30 brands of top-quality goods and over 70 years of experience, Hayward's mission is to provide prompt and accurate delivery to its valued retailers with full understanding that their reputation and livelihood depend on its performance.

BENEFITS AT A GLANCE



50% of its 3,500 customers already onboarded



Two-thirds of staff now able to work remotely



100% visibility over invoices



HAYWARD DISTRIBUTING CO.

GAINING NEW LEVELS OF VISIBILITY & EMPOWERING CUSTOMERS TO BE SELF-SUFFICIENT

Hayward Distributing Co. is a national outdoor power equipment distributor of over 50 brands of top-quality outdoor power equipment to thousands of retailers across the country. The company takes pride in its dedication to promoting improved business practices and wholesale excellence; however, with 3,500 customers and a completely manual accounts receivable (AR) department, collecting paper checks in a timely manner was becoming increasingly difficult. With an acquisition in its sights, Hayward also knew its current AR processes wouldn't be able to adequately handle increasing invoice volumes. It turned to Esker's cloud Accounts Receivable solution suite for the visibility, efficiency and scalability it needed to reach company goals.

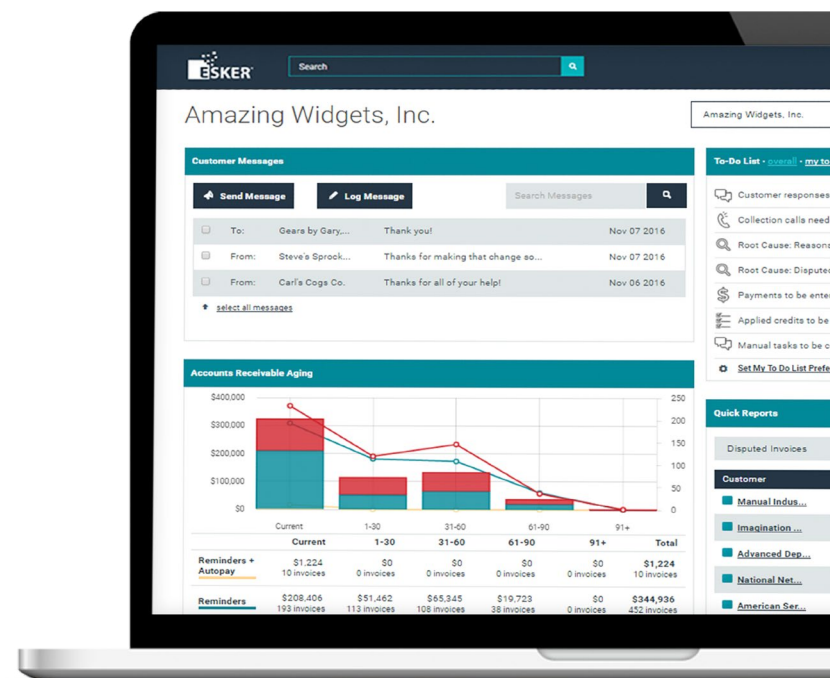
GREATER VISIBILITY INTO INVOICES

Like many paper-based AR departments, Hayward's previous process left both clerks and customers virtually blind to invoices, which led to a host of bottlenecks and inefficiencies. "The biggest reason we sought a solution was because we had zero visibility into invoices," said Jeff Budde, CFO at Hayward Distributing Co. "Customers were constantly calling my AR clerk requesting invoice copies and asking what that amount was for. They had no visibility into what their invoices looked like." With the full transparency gained via customized KPI dashboards and ad-hoc reporting, AR clerks have clearer insight as to which customers are past due, who needs to be called, and which invoices have been paid.

Hayward not only gained visibility internally, but also externally for its customers. Esker's online self-service portal allows customers to view and download their invoices from one centralized spot — eliminating the need for time-consuming phone calls to an AR clerk.

"The biggest benefit was the visibility into invoices, so customers knew exactly what they were paying. That's been excellent, and it's helped quite a bit with the reconciliation of receiving payments."

Jeff Budde | CFO





The remittance options with the paper checks caused a lot of issues, and it actually cost us a significant amount of money to have those keyed in. It's much more efficient and cost-effective to use Esker.

Jeff Budde | CFO

CUSTOMER SELF-SUFFICIENCY & IMPROVED COMMUNICATION

In this day and age, there's no denying that customers prefer self-service over picking up the phone to speak to an employee. Not only has the portal added a new level of convenience for customers, but enabling them to be more self-sufficient has helped Hayward's AR department as well. "No one likes having to call for something when they have self-service access online, so the portal certainly takes some frustrations out, especially for my AR clerk," said Budde. "When she's busy or at lunch, customers have to leave her voicemails and wait for her to get back to them. Now they can just jump on the website and all the information is right at their fingertips."

The portal has also allowed for faster, easier communication between Hayward and its customers with the solution's messaging capabilities. "When you send a message, you can tag the invoice that you have a question on, so that way people are looking at the same data and can both respond when it's convenient for them," said Budde.

HANDLING GROWTH & EXPANSION WITH EASE

One of Hayward's top priorities was to have a solution that could help it scale with ease and without the need for additional resources as the company continues to grow. Prior to automation, the daily process of opening, scanning and applying paper checks received in the mail took hours.

Now that the number of checks has significantly reduced, two-thirds of staff are able to work from home without compromising quality. Hayward has also listened closely to

the requests from customers and has plans in place to add credit card services by the end of the year in hopes of making payment even easier and increasing its number of on-time payments.

"We've been growing quite a bit and haven't had to hire additional back-office personnel. Esker allows us to scale really well."

Jeff Budde | CFO

OVERCOMING CUSTOMER ONBOARDING CHALLENGES

Even though mom-and-pop dealers that make up a sizeable portion of its customer base are notoriously resistant to change, about half of Hayward's customers have already moved over to Esker. By appealing to customers with benefits like self-service and auto-pay, the number of customers being onboarded into Esker continues to increase.

"We've been able to onboard customers by saying, 'With Esker, you don't have the reconciliation errors, it tells you exactly when things are due, and you can easily manage your account with us without having to call in.'"

Jeff Budde | CFO

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