

Customer Inquiry Management  
Order Management



# Redefining Customer Service as a Proactive, Value-Enhancing Operation

FUCHS Lubricants turned the page on mundane and manual Customer Service processes, leveraging Esker's AI-driven solutions to enhance its global visibility, decision-making and business outcomes.

***Here is their story.***



## At a glance

# FUCHS Lubricants



**Chemical industry**



**SAP® (ERP)**



**Established in 1931**



**5,700 employees worldwide**



**57 companies in 45 countries**



# Challenges

## No time for high-value activities

If you were to ask Chris Raleigh, Business Process Expert (O2C) Americas at FUCHS Lubricants Co, how things were going within the Customer Solutions team on any given day back in 2017, there's good chance he wouldn't be able to tell you. "Our previous process was so clouded by mundane, administrative tasks that getting answers to things like, 'How far behind are we?' was virtually impossible," he said. "There was no real harmony to what we were doing – it was unacceptable."

One of the main sources of inefficiency was FUCHS' shared inbox. With 75% of requests arriving electronically to a single email address, this meant supervisors spent most of their day parsing out, delineating and distributing the work. "That's all they did," said Raleigh. "It was so involved that there was no time for supervising or developing the team. It could take 2-3 days to process a single order, documentation request, proof of delivery, quote or order status."

Order processing represented a specific pain point for Raleigh's team. Not only was there no way to separate the 200-250 orders coming in each day from the shared inbox, the associated manual tasks were taking their toll. "It was apparent we were spending too much time chasing documents, entering data and generating confirmations," said Raleigh. "They had no time to do anything else of higher value. And from a business perspective looking at the order lifecycle, the longer it takes to process an order, the harder it becomes to deliver that order on time."

## Objectives



**Reduce the amount of time** spent assigning customer inquiries via email



**Improve order entry efficiency**



**Increase visibility and collaboration** across the Customer Solutions department



**Eliminate tedious manual tasks** to drive more value throughout the business

# Solution

## Empowering team members with AI-driven efficiency & analytics

In researching Customer Service solutions, FUCHS found several companies that offered capabilities close to what they were looking for. However, Esker stood out among the crowd, according to Raleigh. “We knew Esker would be easy to teach to our team. The other solutions were not nearly as intuitive or user-friendly – it was a game-changer,” he said.

### Phase 1: Esker Order Management

The first phase of FUCHS’ automation initiative began in 2018 when the company implemented Esker Order Management – an AI-driven solution that allows users to automate, validate and archive all orders as they arrive through one cloud-based interface. For FUCHS, this meant not only eliminating 100% of the paper previously being used, it meant the team was freed from the “fruitless” tasks they were previously confined to.

Among the many solution features, a team favorite has been the priority order recognition tool. “In a pool of 200-250 orders coming in daily, Esker can actually detect the sentiment in each order, identify which ones are priority, and bring them to the surface for our team,” said Raleigh. “That leads to a much happier customer base because those who are in immediate need get taken care of first.”

### Phase 2: Esker Customer Inquiry Management

In 2021, FUCHS moved forward to the second phase of its Customer Service automation initiative by implementing Esker Customer Inquiry Management (CIM) – an AI-powered digital assistant for shared inboxes. With Esker CIM, FUCHS can now classify, route and answer all other customer requests quickly and accurately, further freeing up team members to focus on more fulfilling and value-enhancing activities.

“This solution combination has allowed us to pursue a more strategic approach to how we go about our work,” said Raleigh. “We now have that extra time we were always trying to find. Once we check all the necessary boxes, we can then spend the rest of our day being more proactive and less reactive.”



“To me, Esker’s AI engine is magic. It automatically classifies all our inquiries into the proper categories that we pre-customized when we set up the solution.”

**Chris Raleigh**

Business Process Expert (O2C) Americas, FUCHS Lubricants

# Results

## Speed, precision & transparency in every area of Customer Service

When initiating this automation project, Raleigh had a clear vision on how he wanted the Customer Service role to evolve. "We didn't go into this wanting to just eliminate the mundane tasks and pay for it with headcount reduction," he said. "It was all about bringing value-adds back to the business. We want to show our current and prospective employees that, with Esker, we are a company for the future and when we improve and create new efficiencies, we do so together."

Among the many areas of improvement, one of the most significant was the newfound visibility provided by the Esker dashboard, which has enabled the team to:

- Get instant visibility into the status of open orders and inquiries on any given day
- Set up custom KPIs to measure daily/weekly/monthly adherence to customer commitments
- Practice "level loading" so that order and inquiry workloads can be evenly distributed among the team
- Track resolution time and average response times among team members

"Esker has made our initial vision a reality," concluded Raleigh. "It's been everything that we thought it could be. We now have a strong foundation and clear view of what that 'North Star' of Customer Service excellence looks like."

■ ■ ■ **"In Esker, we see the exact breakup of work we have in front of us. And from there, we can reposition individuals to create a better balance for our team."**

**Chris Raleigh**

Business Process Expert (O2C) Americas, FUCHS Lubricants

## Highlights



**Reduced order entry time by 25%**



**Improved order entry turnaround time** from 24-48 hours down to 6 hours



**Automatically classifying 84% of all incoming customer inquiries**



**Eliminated 100% of paper** thanks to electronic archiving



**Improved employee satisfaction** by balancing workloads, freeing up time for more fulfilling and impactful work, and reducing the amount of customer status requests



# Want to transform your Customer Service processes like FUCHS Lubricants?

**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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