



ORDER MANAGEMENT

**SUNTORY**  
BEVERAGE & FOOD SPAIN

# DRIVING INNOVATION IN THE CUSTOMER SERVICE DEPARTMENT WITH AI

Esker automates Suntory Beverage & Food Spain's  
Order Management process, improving its supply chain.

## AT A GLANCE

# Suntory Beverage & Food Spain



Beverages company



1000+ employees



€328.4M  
annual revenue



SAP ERP

## CHALLENGES

### Distribution complexities & manual processes limit visibility

Suntory Beverage & Food Spain manufactures and distributes popular soft drink brands, including Schweppes, Trina, La Casera and Sunny Delight, as well as third-party brands like Pepsi for the hospitality industry. Production facilities are located in Spain (Toledo and Sevilla), a concentrates plant in Valencia and R&D centres in Barcelona, France and the United Kingdom. The company's "Growing for Good" vision drives its sustainability strategy: the more the company grows, the greater the positive impact it can have on consumers, nature, the environment and its employees.

In December 2018, Suntory launched a new project to automate the Customer Service (CS) department and streamline the manually intensive order management process. The company turned to Esker to reduce manual handling and associated errors as well as increase process visibility. Suntory was also looking to align its digital transformation with its environmental policy.

Managing the sheer volume and complexity of the distribution channels was the most demanding challenge to overcome. Suntory CS managers needed a solution to help them quickly and accurately process up to 100,000 orders during peak season months.

Additionally, automating order management was a necessary step to take to provide visibility into the different distribution channels and build an efficient supply chain adapted to the needs of both Suntory's distribution model and the hospitality and retail sectors.

## OBJECTIVES



Reduce complexity of peak season order management



Better control exceptions management for variety of documents & logistics channels



Provide operational visibility over multiple sales channels



Decrease the number of customer-initiated deductions



Together with Esker,  
our customer service  
became a European benchmark  
within the company.

### Isabel Carrascosa

Logistics Manager and Head of  
the Esker Implementation Project,  
Suntory Beverage & Food Spain



**We have stopped manually entering our orders and we've seen a huge improvement in both quality and efficiency. It's been life changing.**

**María Jose Ortiz**

**Food Channel Manager, Customer Service,  
Suntory Beverage & Food Spain**

## SOLUTION

**Automation aligns multichannel processes & visibility**

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Suntory Beverage & Food Spain serves both large supermarkets and small retailers, through distributors, the hospitality channel and online purchases. With so many different channels and document types such as delivery notes, orders from distributors, telesales, subscriptions and orders from Portugal, the company sought a solution that would be capable of handling all the different processes.

Suntory's CS team commonly handles two different case types. The first case involves retailers ordering products that need to be handled differently, such as cold and room temperature storage, and which therefore need different logistics. Esker's Order Management solution automatically splits orders containing these different categories, so that they can be assigned to the corresponding teams.

The second common exception case involves orders on which the unit of measurement (UoM) on the line items differ: sometimes it's quantities, sometimes pallets, sometimes boxes. Each of the different UoMs need to be processed according to the appropriate picking mode for the warehouses. These exceptions bring with them a whole array of different documents (formats, quantities, methods, equipment, channels, etc.) that the solution handles with ease.



**Esker has helped us improve cooperation among teams and results have exceeded our expectations. Teamwork is key to everything.**

**Isabel Carrascosa**

**Logistics Manager and Head of  
the Esker Implementation Project,  
Suntory Beverage & Food Spain**

# RESULTS

## Increasing accuracy & smoothing workflows

Esker's Order Management solution accelerated the entire order processing stage, reducing the average processing time from 2.5 minutes to 1 minute. This one step saved the CS team 3,400 hours in one year. 55.3% of documents require no changes, and nearly 600 customers have been automated already, meaning their orders are passed directly into the SAP ERP.

The solution has also made the customer service workflows more efficient by reallocating tasks to available CSRs during surge times or when the team is short on staff, thereby ensuring operational continuity. "In the event that one or more team members is absent, Esker ensures business continuity with no noticeable impact on overall performance," said Maria Jesus Fernandez, from the CS department.

Since the solution is cloud-based, remote work is now an option for the team, thereby adding flexibility to the organisational structure of the CS department. The noted reduction in processing errors as well as the increased visibility of the entire order cycle for management has all levels at Suntory satisfied with the solution choice.

### PANDEMIC-RELATED CHALLENGES

Esker's cloud platform allows users to work remotely and maintain business continuity. This was particularly essential during the COVID-19 pandemic when the entire CS team had to transition to remote work in a matter of days. Employee collaboration could continue uninterrupted, and the order management process remained transparent for both customers and the entire supply chain.

#### HIGHLIGHTS



**29 dashboard indicators** show deliveries & trend curves for the 3,500 monthly orders received



**Average processing time** reduced by 60% with AI



**55.3% of documents** require no changes



**600 customers automated** with orders passed directly to ERP



**Reduced processing errors & increased visibility**



Based on the excellent results and efficiency our teams have gained from Esker's Order Management solution, we plan to extend automation to our customer deductions.

**Isabel Carrascosa**

Logistics Manager & Head of the Esker Implementation Project, Suntory Beverage & Food Spain



# Do you want to bring the power of AI to the Customer Service department like Suntime Beverage & Food Spain?

GET IN TOUCH WITH ESKER

## ABOUT ESKER

Esker is a global cloud platform built to unlock strategic value for finance 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 Procure-to-Pay (P2P) and Order-to-Cash (O2C) processes.

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