Unboxing a Better Customer Experience by Streamlining Order Processing

NCI Packaging automates tasks for improved efficiency, error reduction, and enhanced visibility with Esker's AI-powered touchless processing

At a glance

NCI Packaging

Packaging company

500+ employees

Headquarters: Preston, Victoria

Established: 1954

SAP® ERP

Challenges
Order processing efficiency boxed in by manual data entry

NCI Packaging is a privately-owned packaging company, with operations in Australia, New Zealand, Fiji and Papua New Guinea, servicing many leading manufacturers and brands. NCI has evolved from a specialist manufacturer of cans to become a key product partner to many of Australia's leading paint, food, and aerosol brands such as Dulux and Heinz.

The previous order management system relied heavily on manual processes, where the Customer Service (CS) team had to manually input all orders into SAP. This approach was not only time-consuming and labour-intensive but also, vulnerable to errors.

According to Carolyn Aitchison, Customer Service Representative at NCI Packaging, "there is an overwhelming number of product codes in our system, and they are remarkably complex." When customers make changes to their artwork, it results in an extensive amount of work behind the scenes, including the task of updating codes in SAP. This becomes especially cumbersome when handling large orders. An error in data entry can trigger a ripple effect: The responsibility for correcting the error typically falls on the SAP team, who will review the transaction history and propose a solution for rectifying and updating the records.

NCI Packaging realised that automating the order management process was crucial to reducing manual interventions, minimising errors, and enhancing process transparency.

Objectives

Reduce errors by eliminating manual data entry

Process orders faster & more accurately

Attain complete order visibility from start to finish

Find a solution that can seamlessly integrate with SAP ERP

Solution
The perfect package: Streamlined order processing & practical functionalities

Seeking to decrease manual handling and the accompanying errors, the company implemented Esker Order Management to gain better insights into its processes.

With Esker Order Management, NCI packaging found the solution it had been looking for: seamless integration with the current SAP environment and a streamlined customer order entry process. The intended result would be the optimisation of all subsequent steps, including order entry, order tracking, communication, and more. Using AI and RPA technologies, Esker Order Management effectively addresses the most repetitive, low-value aspects of order processing all through one secure, centralised, cloud-based platform. The solution's accumulated features enable NCI's Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) to effortlessly handle and oversee orders received in any file format (EDI, email, PDF, etc.) with 100% accuracy, transparency, and operational efficiency.

According to Irene Harkou, Customer Service Team Leader at NCI Packaging, a standout feature of Esker Order Management is its ability to boost visibility through customisable dashboards and analytics: "Using dashboards makes it incredibly convenient to have everything right in front of us, providing a clear and quick overview of our status and allowing us to easily spot pending orders." The solution also sends alerts to prevent order duplication. What's more, navigating through orders becomes effortless with Esker. "Whenever you need to locate a specific purchase order, simply enter the order details into the search field, and it will promptly display the entire history, complete with any accompanying comments. In the event of a rejection, you'll also find an explanation for the rejection," Ms. Harkou added.

"The *Set aside* functionality is an absolute game-changer. Instead of losing sight of orders that can't be processed right away, we now have the ability to temporarily set them aside and return to them at a later time," commented Ms. Aitchison. The solution proves valuable in handling change requests as well: When customers submit revised purchase orders, the team can attach those within Esker and SAP, significantly reducing administrative overhead.

NCI Packaging describes the experience of working with Esker as exceptional. Working on the project remotely involved transparent communication, unwavering dedication from everyone to complete the task, and thorough clarifications from the Esker team. "The quality of the calls was excellent, and we successfully got everything up and running. It was a remarkably smooth experience," said Daniel Kennedy, Business Analyst at NCI Packaging.

"Undoubtedly, the CSR team's day-to-day life has improved! What used to be hours of order processing has been reduced to mere minutes. As a result, our team now allocates the 'extra' time more effectively by engaging with our customers and promptly addressing any inquiries."

Carolyn Aitchison
Customer Service Representative, NCI Packaging

Results

Slashing order processing time & doubling daily capacities

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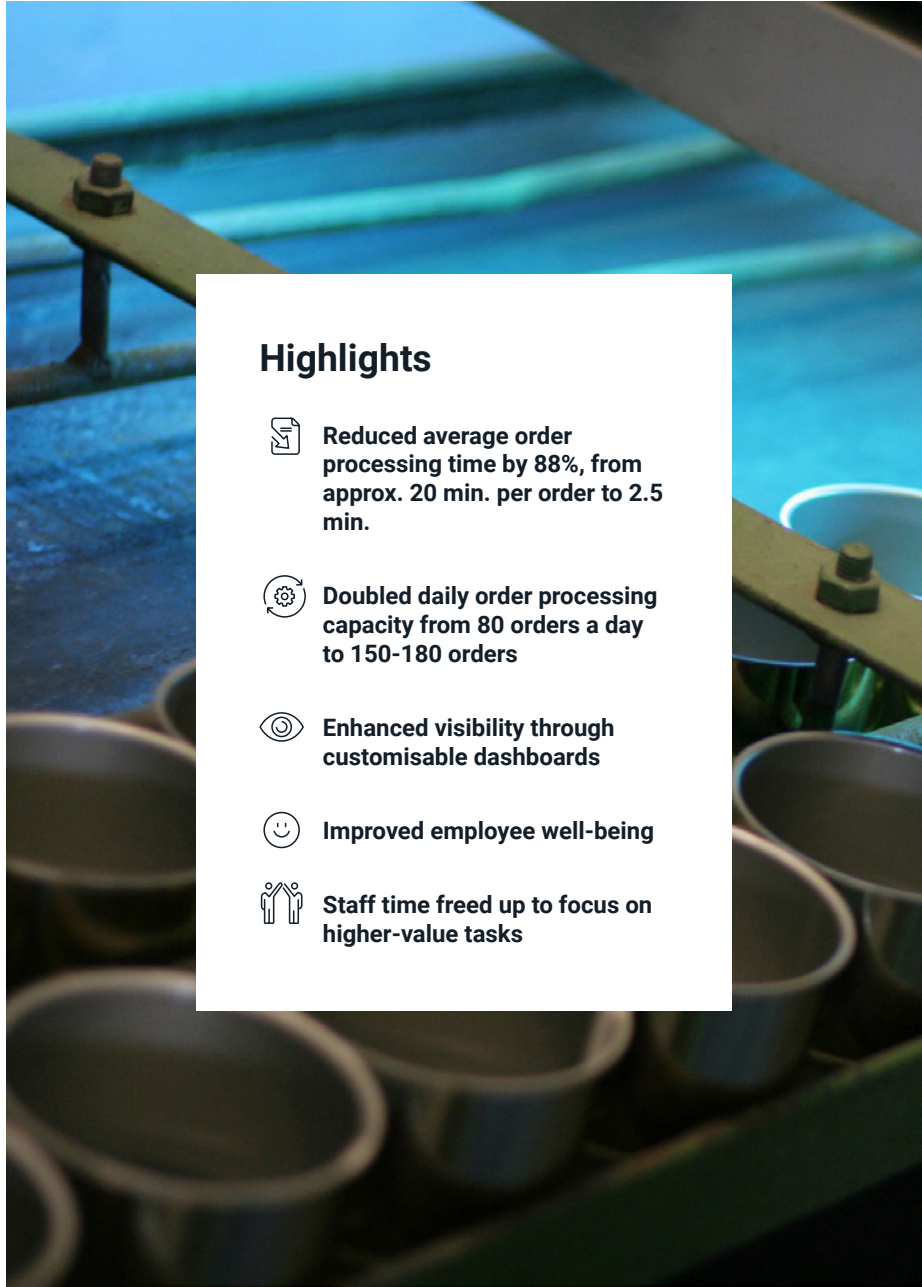
Highlights

- 📄 **Reduced average order processing time by 88%, from approx. 20 min. per order to 2.5 min.**

- ⚙️ **Doubled daily order processing capacity from 80 orders a day to 150-180 orders**

- 👁 **Enhanced visibility through customisable dashboards**

- ☺ **Improved employee well-being**

- 👥 **Staff time freed up to focus on higher-value tasks**

Since implementing Esker Order Management, NCI Packaging has reaped numerous benefits that span well beyond the Customer Service department and the order management workflow. Esker has allowed the CS team to engage with other departments, detect problems ahead of time, and ensure the accuracy of orders.

With the adoption of Esker Order Management, the team has seen a significant boost in efficiency, with full visibility into order statuses from beginning to end. Esker streamlined the processing of orders, resulting in a remarkable reduction in errors and freeing up the CS team to engage in more interesting and strategic tasks. The team is now incredibly motivated, largely due to the solution's user-friendly features and the transparency of the dashboards. "Regarding employee retention, I've noticed that I haven't had to create as many CSR users over the past couple of years because the users love Esker" commented Mr. Kennedy. "Esker is highly intuitive and is straightforward for someone to quickly grasp and learn," he continued.

The team, which was previously limited to handling just 80 orders per day, can now efficiently process between 150 and 180 orders per day with Esker. "After dedicating 18 years to customer service, I can't express how grateful I am to have escaped the monotony of basic data entry, all thanks to Esker,» Ms. Aitchison remarked. Previously, the average order processing time stood at twenty minutes. However, with the introduction of automation, the team has managed to reduce this time significantly, down to just two and a half minutes.

Esker has also contributed to enhancing NCI's customer relationships. Orders are now processed more quickly, resulting in customers receiving their order confirmations much sooner.

> **"I found Esker incredibly intuitive, and it seamlessly integrates with our SAP system."**
>
> **Irene Harkou**
> Customer Service Team Leader, NCI Packaging

Want to automate your order management process like NCI Packaging?

Get in touch with Esker

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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