INTRODUCTION

Today’s healthcare organizations face a host of pressing demands, from cutting costs and improving quality to meeting new and ever-evolving regulatory requirements. This has led many industry leaders to focus on a familiar point of frustration: paper. Simplifying the processes by which patient information and healthcare data is organized, shared and protected through multiple systems and communications is critical to success.

This eBook lays out the business case for adopting a paperless document exchange solution to not only send, receive and archive healthcare information quickly, securely and accurately, but to successfully navigate the most pertinent challenges in modern-day healthcare.
INDUSTRY OUTLOOK: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Healthcare may be an innovative industry but communications have largely remained antiquated and paper-based. Below are three of the most paramount issues organizations should focus on as they represent the greatest risks to (and drivers of) success in business process improvement.

1. **HIGH COSTS**

   With U.S. healthcare costs making up nearly 1/5 of the country's GDP and health reform nearly fully enacted, a huge emphasis is now being placed on reducing administrative expenses. The cost of maintaining paper-based processes is especially hard to control in healthcare due to the amount of personnel needed to handle, access and file sensitive documentation.

2. **DATA SECURITY**

   Legislation such as HIPAA and the HITECH Act has induced swift action in protecting personal health information (PHI). However, the "security at all costs" mindset has also created unnecessary hesitance to adopt modern technology like the cloud. Only recently has this trend shown any signs of shifting, with the use of cloud computing among healthcare organizations jumping from just 9% in 2012 to 30% in 2013.¹

3. **FAX & IT OPERATIONS**

   The perception that "fax is dead" has led to significant resources being aimed at taking fax out of healthcare and enabling systems to communicate electronically. Still, these initiatives pose their own challenges involving high costs, security and interoperability. What’s more, fax isn’t going away. A National Physicians’ survey found that fax is still the main form of communication for 63% of providers.²


² 2012 National Physicians Survey: The Health of the Practice, April 2012, the little blue book (TLBB). In partnership with Sharecare.
A 2013 GARTNER REPORT³ STATES:

FEW ORGANIZATIONS HAVE SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENTED THE COMPLEX WEB OF TECHNOLOGY AND PROCESS TO CREATE A HEALTHCARE PROVIDER THAT IS AWARE, OPERATES IN REAL TIME AND OPTIMIZES.

THE SOLUTION:
PAPERLESS DOCUMENT EXCHANGE

Document processing automation offers healthcare organizations a comprehensive tool for eliminating the paper from their manual processes. At the same time, information is made more secure and accessible as it is passed on from company to company, system to system.

Healthcare is different from other industries in that it A) Is highly regulated and litigated, and B) Has a communication structure that contains a multitude of moving parts, including:

- **Different entities and parties**: hospitals, clinics, pharmacies, insurers, laboratories, etc.
- **Various medical documents**: prescriptions, lab reports, admission documents, referrals, radiology reports, etc.
- **Multiple applications**: EMR systems, laboratory information systems, radiology information systems, etc.

Paperless document exchange is ideal because of its ability to truly simplify this complex communication exchange. Best-in-class solutions can interface with virtually any healthcare system to help reduce manual costs, speed up processing, consolidate IT infrastructure, safeguard data and improve regulatory compliance by capturing, classifying and processing healthcare data automatically.
With thousands of healthcare end-users, dozens of healthcare application partners and nearly a decade of experience in the healthcare industry, Esker offers a unique value to organizations looking to optimize their clinical and business processes with document automation.

**INTELLIGENT RULES-BASED AUTOMATION**

- Capture, reformat, combine, match and deliver any type of healthcare document electronically from any EMR, RIS or LIS system.
- Control the ability to comply with healthcare regulations using encrypted and certified notifications.
- Reduce costly errors, accelerate processing speeds and free up valuable time for employees.
- Transform, index and securely archive regulated content automatically and electronically for improved data management and analytics.

**FLEXIBLE INTEGRATION & DEPLOYMENT OPTIONS**

- Interface with any healthcare application to maintain process interoperability and business continuity.
- Choose from traditional, hosted, subscription on-premises or on-demand (SaaS) deployment options.
- Automate any paper-based business process as needed using one shared and collaborative platform.
- Utilize different levels of automation as you go, from basic “Quit Paper” functionality to an end-user document validation interface with workflow, OCR and other tools.

**INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE & CLOUD EXPERTISE**

- Esker is a pioneer in cloud services for fax and document processing, and is a top 3 provider of enterprise fax software solutions.
- Esker has 3,000+ SaaS customers and 200,000+ SaaS users worldwide.
- Esker relies on CDW as our North American data center provider, a leading provider of integrated IT solutions in the U.S. and Canada.
- Esker has over 20 years of experience developing fax software, with nearly a decade of that experience in the healthcare industry.
ACCORDING TO A STUDY BY MARKETSANDMARKETS:

THE GLOBAL HEALTHCARE CLOUD COMPUTING MARKET IS EXPECTED TO GROW TO NEARLY $5.4 BILLION BY 2017.\(^4\)

How Esker’s Platform Works

Esker’s patented business rules engine is a proven and secure technology that automates document-intensive processes, bringing a new level of simplicity and optimization to business operations.

Analysis, Validation & Formatting

Relying on OCR and Esker Dynamic Data Capture (DDC) technology, data from incoming documents is extracted, analyzed and automatically indexed, routed, and archived through a workflow process where patient information is securely stored. End-users are able to validate the extracted content, and can even add information that is not displayed (e.g., EMR number).

Data Capture

Esker can receive data from any source (e.g., fax, scan, print, etc.) at the point of entry and in any type of format (e.g., TIFF, XML, PDF, HL7, etc.). This step allows for splitting, rotating, and improving or converting healthcare documents for them to be properly analyzed and processed.

Business Rules Engine

Universal Application Connectors

Document Delivery

Esker provides a wide and flexible set of delivery mechanisms so that healthcare documents to be sent to the right destination on time. These delivery capabilities include: print, PDF, fax, mail services, email, Web, XML, SMS, electronic archive, as well passing a data file to another application.
Fax is as prevalent in today’s healthcare environment as it has always been — but that doesn’t mean it’s not evolving. Esker allows organizations to go beyond simple fax communications using a modernized tools for maximum efficiency, security and visibility.

**ENHANCING EMR CAPABILITIES**
While EMR systems do streamline workflow, the cost and complexity of managing delivery and receipt of documents is still very paper-intensive. Moving fax requirements to the cloud with Esker enables inbound processes to be streamlined while improving security.

**OPTIMIZING DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT**
Esker compliments doc management systems by providing a tool capable of receiving and routing data into a doc management system without any paper. The document can be indexed and archived within Esker and linked to your healthcare application.

**IMPROVING E-PRESCRIBING**
Although 48 percent of U.S. physicians use e-prescribing (e-Rx) systems, Esker recognizes that not every prescription is an e-Rx. Our unique set of tools allow pharmacies to electronically process prescriptions via fax with no hardware or software requirements.

**RELIANCE ON DOCUMENT SCANNER & MFPs**
Organizations that use multifunctional printers (MFPs) still rely on paper, which can lead to high costs and security issues. Esker allows faxes to be received electronically and provides tools to capture and validate data, pushing an electronic file for creation of a medical record within the EMR.

**SIMPLIFYING PATIENT DATA/CONTENT MANAGEMENT**
Patient administration systems, lab systems, pharmacy applications, EMR and portals are all interconnected and sharing data. Fax is the common denominator among communication channels, and Esker offers an easy-to-use and simplify this complex maze of data management.

**UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS & VIRTUALIZATION**
Esker enables healthcare organizations to virtualize faxing with a 100% FoIP solution for more unified fax communications. Esker supports going virtual in two ways: 1) Installing our on-premises fax software in conjunction with the software-based equivalent to a fax card, and 2) Eliminating servers, virtual or not, and associated infrastructure by pushing fax to the cloud.

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5 State Variation in E-Prescribing Trends in the United States, November 2014. The Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology
PharmaCorr, a subsidiary of Correctional Medical Services, has been providing pharmacy services, clinical pharmacy analysis and educational programs to correctional facilities for over a decade.

With 35 data entry workstations, PharmaCorr receives prescription orders from correctional facilities via fax. Up to the point of dispensing, the process was completely manual and paper-based, which lead to a number of challenges.

Determinations for each order include: what facility and when it was received, whether it is a refill request or new order, and any restrictions or requirements according to the particular state or facility. Pharmacy board requirements mandate retention of new orders for five years.

Using Esker’s intelligent on-premises automation solution, PharmaCorr is now able to: identify the order type and cost center for routing to the appropriate technician or pharmacist; easily retrieve data off of an original document; reassign positions previously devoted to filing; view the number of orders and refills waiting to be processed; and avoid costly errors such as multiple shipments.

READ FULL CASE STUDY >
WE WEREN’T WILLING TO MAKE A LOT OF CHANGES ON OUR SIDE ... WE WANTED A SOLUTION THAT MIRRORED THE WAY WE WERE DOING THINGS. **ESKER HAS HIT A HOME RUN** AS FAR AS THAT GOES.

MANAGER OF SYSTEMS INTEGRATION • PHARMACORR
As Iowa’s largest radiology group, with over 70 years of experience, Radiology Consultants of Iowa (RCI) provides insight and expertise to physicians and patients across Eastern Iowa.

To provide better service to its partners, RCI sought to improve its radiology information system by offering automated fax reports to its ordering physicians. The key was doing so without overhauling the existing infrastructure or major investments in new overhead.

Leveraging Esker’s FlyDoc offering, RCI gained three key capabilities: to fax-enable its RIS application for automated desktop distribution, to utilize desktop faxing to deal with unusual workflow processes with local clinics, and, working with eInformatics™, to automatically send SMTP to fax with TLS encryption.

RCI’s entire automation initiative was done using Esker’s secure, cloud-based offerings, which allowed the company to alleviate concerns over HIPAA compliance, avoid costly hardware/software investments, and be more responsive as the healthcare business continuously changes.

READ FULL CASE STUDY >
THE FACT THAT NONE OF US HAVE TO EVEN THINK ABOUT UPGRADES OR MAINTENANCE TO INFRASTRUCTURE FREES US UP TO DO THINGS THAT ARE MORE IMPORTANT.

CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER • RADIOLOGY CONSULTANTS OF IOWA (RCI)
Reducing costs, improving services and protecting PHI has never been more important for organizations in the healthcare industry.

One-dimensional electronic systems help to a degree, but many still rely on independent software solutions and outdated hardware to manage the delivery and receipt of critical document-based communications. The impact to operational costs — both soft and hard — can be extreme.

Paperless document exchange solutions offer a comprehensive alternative. By combining functional and interfacing capabilities, ease of management, reliability, security, and cost effectiveness, **document-based processes can be fully automated** to enhance operational efficiency, adhere to regulations and provide world-class care to patients.
Esker is an industry leader in document process automation solutions, helping organizations of all sizes Quit Paper™ and improve how their business information is processed and exchanged via a suite of on-demand and on-premises automation solutions.

Founded in 1985 with 80,000+ customers and millions of licensed users worldwide, Esker operates on a worldwide scale with global headquarters in Lyon, France, and U.S. headquarters in Madison, Wisconsin.

Learn more online at www.esker.com.

ABOUT ESKER

LEARN MORE ABOUT US

Whiteboard Video:
Quit Paper with Esker: Document Automation Made Easy

White Paper:
Beyond EMR: How Cloud Services Are Securing, Streamlining and Simplifying Healthcare Information Processing

White Paper
Improving Patient Care and Compliance by Automating Inbound Healthcare Documents

Plus, be sure to check out the Esker Blog, your connection to everything newsworthy in the world of automation.

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