



CLOUD FAX SERVICES

IT & BUSINESS BENEFITS OF CLOUD FAXING

Why Fax Performance Still Matters



**IT & BUSINESS
BENEFITS OF CLOUD
FAXING**



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INTRODUCTION: THE ROLE OF FAX IN THE MODERN BUSINESS WORLD

Most people see fax as an ancient relic of communication from previous decades – something that served its purpose, but has gone the way of the rotary phone and typewriter. Today's business leaders see it differently. Not only has fax not gone away, it has reestablished itself as one of the most secure and reliable ways to communicate. However, that doesn't mean all faxing operations are created equal. Like anything else, there's a right way and wrong way.

Companies Are Still Using Fax ... *Really?*

Who could have figured that with all the modern communication options available, businesses would still be using fax? While its usage isn't equal from company to company, it's hard to find an organization that doesn't use fax in some form or fashion. There are a number of factors that are driving fax's sustained influence on business, including:

- Rise of Fax over IP (FoIP)
- Uptick in unified communication initiatives
- Increase in governmental regulations (e.g., HIPAA)
- Production faxing
- Server upgrades and end of life (EOL)

Whatever the reasons for fax's longevity, companies are responding, not by ignoring it, but by searching for a more modernized faxing solution with their ERP applications – particularly in the realm of cloud-based solutions, as they have proven to be an effective solution for reducing costs, simplifying the IT landscape and unifying critical business processes. This increase in interest is highlighted in the results of the most recent Davidson Consulting report, which projects the five-year forecast (2013–2018) for the overall fax services market to be 15.9¹.

Why Fax Remains Necessary

You might be thinking, "Ok, businesses are still using fax ... so what?". The reason it matters is due to the amount of business value that can be either lost or added as a result of faxing. Huge competitive advantages can now be won by increasing the efficiency of document processes. Consider fax's influence on the following areas of business:

- **Supply chain efficiency** – bundling purchase orders (POs) with other documents; delivery to multiple recipients
- **Customer billing** – bundling invoices with other documents; subscription lists; mail delivery option for customers
- **Inbound order processing and vendor invoicing** – intelligent routing and prioritizing; reporting on process metrics
- **Customer service** – access to documents for dispute resolution; customer satisfaction

About This White Paper

Fax is here to stay, but businesses that rely on it shouldn't have to endure the headaches and added costs of traditional fax procedures and equipment. As a result, many have chosen to move their fax operations to the cloud. This white paper outlines the need for automation, how the automation technology works and the benefits of migrating to a best-in-class cloud fax solution.

¹ Fax Services Markets , 2013-2018 . November 2012 . Davidson Consulting.

WHY IS TRADITIONAL FAX SUCH A PAIN?

In the past, the available options for integrating fax with ERP applications forced enterprises to choose between cost, efficiency and functionality. For many, this meant having to sacrifice some potential benefits in order to get others. Let's explore why traditional fax is such a pain, and what it means for both the IT department and your business.

No Ideal Options for Fax

Fax machines burden organizations with manual processes including printing, faxing, managing paper and other consumables, and equipment maintenance. Fax servers typically require a major investment in software, hardware, fax boards and lines, maintenance, and training. Even the options for basic outsourced fax services have shortcomings, since many do not include key features such as ERP integration, tracking capability or real-time status notifications.



OPTION 1

Fax Machines

- Printing
- Faxing
- Wasting paper
- Consumables cost
- Maintenance of equipment

or

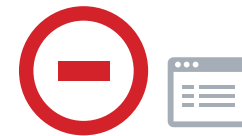


OPTION 2

Fax Server

- Hardware
- Software
- Fax-lines
- Maintenance
- Training

or



OPTION 3

Basic Fax Service

- No ERP integration
- No real-time status notification
- Different interface to learn

Where It Hurts

YOUR BUSINESS	YOUR IT DEPARTMENT
Lower employee productivity , as many tasks associated with traditional faxing are manual	Difficulty supporting customer issues ; less time to spend on more value-added activities
Limited traceability ; no guarantee faxed documents were received by the right person	Business continuity is not guaranteed in the event of downtime due to system failure
Higher operational costs to run multiple systems for each business process in addition to ERP system	Unpredictable pricing and high maintenance costs (e.g., multiple servers, telephony, Telecom, etc.)
Limited peace of mind that documents are protected and data is being securely stored	Complexity of working with different vendors and systems as a result of M&As
Risk of customer/supplier dissatisfaction due to issues caused by manually faxed documents	Functional limitations ; no scalability to support growth; limited support for virtualization

BENEFITS OF CLOUD FAXING

There are numerous advantages to using a cloud fax service. Below, we've compiled some of the most significant as they relate to some of today's biggest fax-related challenges.

UNIFIED FUNCTIONALITY

Rather than relying on point-to-point solutions to manage your processes, cloud faxing allows businesses to consolidate systems with a unified set of automation capabilities that connects fax with everything else needed for the various processes that run on documents.

PRICING PREDICTABILITY

In addition to the reduced infrastructure costs, cloud faxing adds something even better to the process — predictability. The pay-per-use pricing model allows businesses to have complete control and peace of mind regarding their fax expenses.

GREATER RELIABILITY

With cloud faxing, data is transferred using SSL (the same encryption used for banking transactions). Plus, server platforms use internal redundancies to keep information safe from possible hardware failure, while data centers and servers are monitored 24/7 to provide business continuity without interruption.

ACCELERATED PROCESSING SPEED

Critical business documents can be faxed and processed the same day they are generated by the ERP/desktop system. Without the manual touch points disrupting workflow, the time spent sending and receiving faxes can be greatly reduced.

RULES-BASED WORKFLOW

Because cloud fax solutions are built around intelligent rules-based technology, users can do things like: custom-route and prioritize incoming faxes, automatically bundle POs/invoices with other documents, report on metrics with full visibility, allow other departments access to your documents, etc.

DATA CENTER CONSOLIDATION

The push to maximize value at every opportunity has led many companies to move non-core applications to the cloud. This is especially beneficial for data center consolidation projects, as companies simply don't want to pay the astronomical costs of getting a hosting firm to host multiple fax servers and T1 lines.

REDUCED INFRASTRUCTURE COSTS

Cloud faxing eliminates the typical expenses associated with running a traditional faxing operation. That means no fax boards or modems, no PBX upgrades, no dedicated telephone lines, and no hardware or telephony costs to worry about.



FAXING OPTIONS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Today, businesses running ERP/desktop applications no longer have to choose between fax machines, fax servers or basic outsourced fax services. Better, more comprehensive options are now widely available that offer the benefits of automatic cloud faxing and fax status management – all integrated within existing business applications.

Fax Automation in the Cloud

With a cloud automation service, no fax server software or hardware is required on-premises because the infrastructure is exclusively hosted by the on-demand provider. Your company can connect directly to the service and integrate faxing with your ERP applications securely and efficiently, leveraging standard communication protocols. Real-time fax communication status is communicated back to the ERP server, and the service provides a web interface for monitoring fax delivery and reporting on fax traffic. In addition to outbound faxing from ERP applications, the service can also handle inbound faxes.

Outbound Cloud Fax Services

- **SMTP-to-fax.** Sending fax via email (i.e., SMTP-to-fax) is the most commonly used method for both fax servers and cloud fax solutions. SMTP to fax works by allowing end users to open up any email program and attach their document or multiple attachments by browsing the desktop or network drives. Should they wish to include a cover page, they can fill out the subject and the message body of the email. The email address is simply the recipient's fax number, followed by a special syntax, which allows it to get sent to the provider where it's converted into a fax immediately and send out.
- **Print-to-fax.** Print-to-fax functionality works like this: When the user is ready to fax, he/she simply selects the on-demand printer offered by the solution provider and clicks "Print". As a result, your documents are automatically uploaded to the cloud fax account. From there, the solution provider will walk the user through a selection of delivery options such as adding a fax cover page, splitting the document, and selecting when you want the fax to begin transmitting.
- **Send from your account.** Thanks to cloud faxing, end users also have the option to log in to the cloud fax account with a unique username and password so they can send a fax or multiple faxes directly from the home page. Note: From this same interface, they can also send out postal mail, email and SMS text messages.
- **Web services.** Organizations can also benefit via cloud faxing by leveraging web services, which enables the use of enterprise or web applications to fax or mail documents via a secure Internet connection to the on-demand data center. As a multi-support development function that works with any interface or programming tool, web services enables users to access servers to submit, track and report on fax and postal mail online. And, whether it's implemented to be application-specific or user-specific, it's completely transparent and available 24/7.

Inbound Cloud Fax Services

With inbound cloud faxing, companies can choose to receive their faxes inbound to one or multiple email addresses as either a PDF or a TIFF attachment. Brand new toll-free fax numbers are available to be pulled down at any time, and local numbers can be ordered. Should the existing fax number wish to be kept, the following options can be considered:

- **The solution provider can port the fax number over to its telco provider.** If this option is available, faxes will continue to be received into the existing fax number through the cloud fax service; if you choose to leave the service, you can port your numbers back over to your own telco provider.
- **Utilizing remote call forwarding.** This enables existing fax numbers to be pointed to a number(s) offered by the solution provider. This way, website and marketing materials don't have to be updated, yet you still get to retain fax numbers while keeping them electronic via the cloud fax service provider.
- **Routing inbound fax to a folder.** If this is an interest or requirement, most best-in-class cloud fax service providers will entertain this conversation after the live presentation.

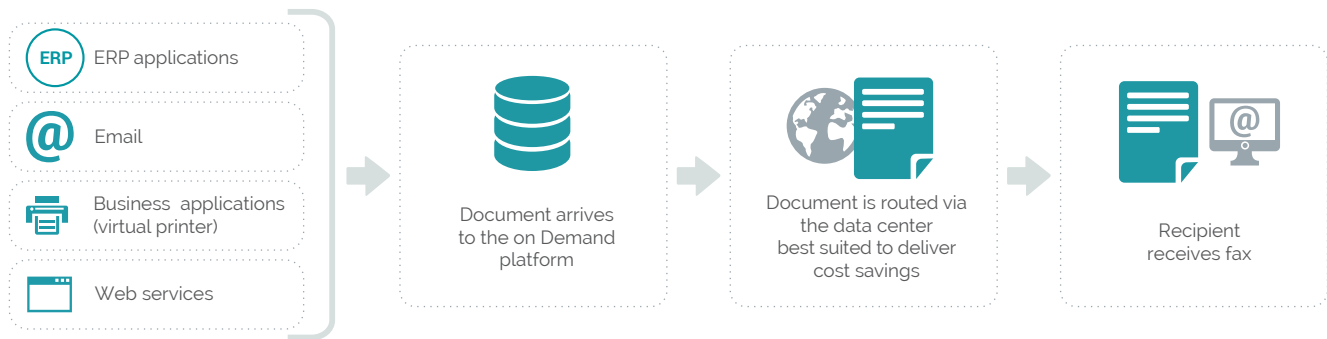
HOW CLOUD FAXING WORKS

Addressing the inefficiency, hidden costs and functional limitations of traditional faxing operations has never been easier. A cloud fax service enables automatic faxing as a fully cloud-based service, giving users the ability to send and receive faxes from any desktop or ERP application 24/7 year-round and without additional hardware or software investments.

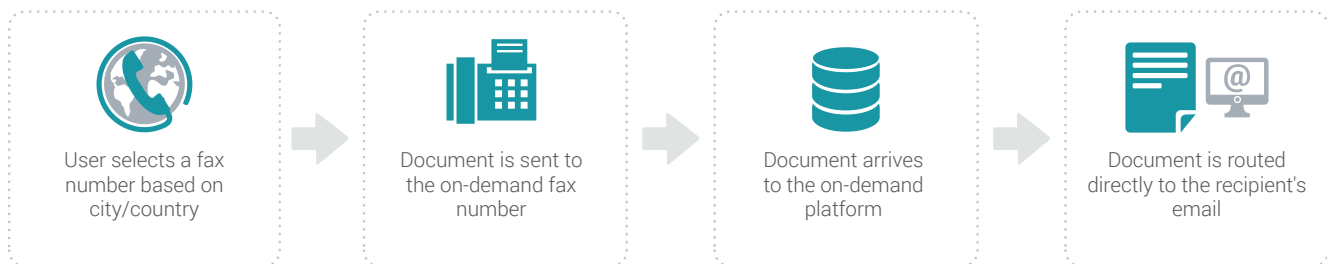
Efficiency in Every Phase of Faxing

Here's how it works: Documents are transmitted from your business applications to an on-demand production facility; they are then received by a multitenant server platform through an authenticated, encrypted and secured connection; once the fax is delivered, a fax status is fed into your business application, and is updated in real-time and made visible to all users. Every fax that's processed is tracked with a unique identifier, delivering traceability with real-time status updates visible from directly within the ERP/desktop application.

Sending fax from multiple transports



Receiving faxes via email



Integration with Existing Systems

Most best-in-class cloud fax vendors offer solutions that integrate with a wide range of ERP/desktop applications, allowing users to fax quickly, easily and cost-effectively throughout their entire organization while maximizing their existing investments.

Faxes are sent and received directly in the application; subsequently, there is no new interface to learn or training required. What's more, the technology is flexible enough to work with virtually any business infrastructure, and its workflow functions operate independently so businesses can easily connect multiple applications to different subsidiaries or company departments.

CLOUD FAX CHECKLIST

The advantages of replacing a traditional fax server with a cloud fax service are clear, but making the move is not always a cut-and-dried decision. Even in today's hyper-connected business world, myths and misconceptions still dominate much of the conversation, which lead companies to second guess whether or not cloud fax is actually worth the investment.

Is Moving to a Cloud Fax Service Right for You?

Complete the checklist below and see how many of these scenarios apply to your company.

Fax volumes

- Fax volumes within your organization are expected to continue growing annually.
- Fax volumes are down, yet you're still maintaining an internal infrastructure.
- Supporting your fluctuating fax volumes is a recurring challenge.

Expenses

- Replacing obsolete or unsupported fax boards, hardware or software requires large capital expenditures.
- The cost of managing fax servers is getting harder to maintain.
- Upfront spending funds are limited for implementing a new solution.

Support & security

- The current fax server solution doesn't integrate with your organization's new ERP/desktop system or updated the version.
- Moving to a virtual fax server environment is in your plans, but the fax protocol is not supported by VoIP technology.
- Some, most or all of your faxes are confidential and require the utmost security (e.g., HIPAA, insurance, etc.).

Business continuity

- Should an incident happen, your organization does not have an adequate recovery plan in place.

Visibility & reporting

- It is difficult or impossible to view or search for fax statuses (e.g., when/if it was sent, when/if it was received, etc.).
- The faxes your organization deals with are not business-critical but could still benefit from better reporting.

Resource management

- The staff and services of IT are already stretched too thin to manage another fax server.
- Eliminating the need for physical filing cabinets and/or third-party archiving services is on your wish list.
- Data center management is not one of your organization's core competencies.

Long-term strategy

- Adopting lean initiatives is one of your priorities to increase efficiency organization-wide.
- The organization has plans to go beyond fax to automate other business processes.
- There is a need and desire to push non-core applications to the cloud.

ESKER'S ON-DEMAND INFRASTRUCTURE

Esker's on-demand production facilities are designed for secure, dependable and traceable data processing. Esker's network allows for easy scalability and flexibility to help businesses overcome the costs and hassles of dealing with high-volume document delivery. Data centers located in North America, Europe and Asia-Pacific are monitored 24/7 to deliver continuous service.

Service Benefits

Esker brings together physical and virtual infrastructure offering the highest levels of security, flexibility and performance to help organizations protect their confidential information. Every document is kept safe with service benefits such as:

- Data delivered by secured transmission protocol (SSL)
- Backup and monitoring between Esker's worldwide network of data centers (in the U.S., France and Australia) provides 24/7/365 availability and security
- Scalable architecture based on Esker's proprietary fax server software backed by years of experience in the fax industry
- High availability cluster technology offers internal redundancies to counter any possible hardware failure
- System of dynamic line allocation and routing results in zero contractual delays
- Intelligent and robust management of failed transmission – multiple retries in the event of busy signals
- Significant time and cost savings as faxes are sent from the Esker data center closest to the fax destination
- SSAE 16 and ISAE 3402 Type 1 and Type 2 compliance
- HIPAA/HITECH compliance



A Secure Global Network

Along with level 1 operational support, Esker's on-demand emergency team is available at all times – supporting data security and service continuity. Data is transferred using SSL, identical to the encryption used for banking transactions. Esker server platforms use high availability cluster technology that provides internal redundancies to counter any possible hardware failure. The platforms in North America and Europe are capable of backing up one another for minimal production interruption. And, Esker uses a system of dynamic line allocation to ensure there are no delays in the delivery of your faxes based on your service contract.



CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORIES

Recognized as the fourth largest fax software vendor in the world with over 3 billion faxed pages sent each year, countless organizations have benefited from Esker Cloud Fax Services. Below is a sampling of results from some of the most compelling customer success stories.



Saved **\$100,000** in infrastructure costs



Accelerated fax order processing time **by 76%**



Realized **\$42,000** savings compared to old fax server solution



Carton Service - Packaging Insights

Reduced average PO processing time by **six minutes**



Saved at least **\$700** per month in paper costs



Reduced time spent faxing collection letters **by 87%**

CENTURY FURNITURE®

Removed **four** fax machines and **three** multifunction devices



Eliminated **two** printers and **15** file cabinets



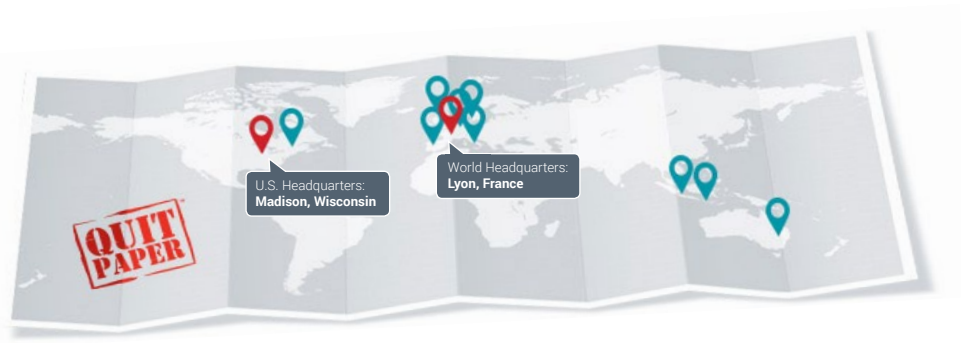
Sped up PO-bundling time from as much as **four hours** to **seconds**

ABOUT ESKER

Esker is a worldwide leader in cloud-based document process automation software. Organizations of all sizes use its shared platform of solutions, offered on-demand or on-premises, to automate accounts payable, order processing, accounts receivable, purchasing and more. Esker's solutions are compatible with all geographic, regulatory and technology business environments.

Global Expertise

Founded in 1985, Esker's solutions are used by over 11,000 customers globally, from small to mid-sized businesses to large corporate entities. Esker operates in North America, Latin America, Europe and Asia Pacific with global headquarters in Lyon, France, and U.S. headquarters in Madison, Wisconsin.



Cloud Computing

Esker is one of the first software vendors capable of offering a 100% cloud computing automation solution to its customers. Last year, Esker's cloud-based service, Esker on Demand, reached a key milestone with over 1 billion pages processed since its launch over 10 years ago. Esker on Demand was awarded a 2014 Cloud Computing Product of the Year Award and a 2014 Cloud Computing Excellence Award by *Cloud Computing* magazine.

Data Security & Integrity

Esker has earned SSAE 16 Type 1 and Type 2 compliance for its on-demand automation solutions (following an audit conducted by A-lign™ Security and Compliance Services). This means Esker's processes, procedures and controls have been formally reviewed and are documented in accordance with the SSAE 16 guidelines.

Additional Resources



eBook:

**7 Reasons to Choose Esker
for Cloud Fax Services**

INSTANT DOWNLOAD



White Paper:

**The Cloud Fax Advantage:
Boosting Efficiency and Lowering Costs
with Automated Fax Operations**

INSTANT DOWNLOAD



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