

Taking pressure off people at 2degrees



Success Story
2degrees

Industry
Telco



Simpler systems

Automation through Esker helped the team eliminate time-consuming manual workarounds, with minimal customisation needed.



Improved team efficiency and focus

Invoice automation reduced manual processing and freed up time, enabling the accounts payable team to focus on higher value work such as exception handling, reporting, and analysis.



Faster resolution time

Resolving invoice issues used to take up to two weeks. With Esker, staff can resolve most problems within a week — many in just a few hours.

How FUJIFILM Process Automation helped the top telco redeploy people to higher-value work, streamline AP processes, and level up reporting

What happens when a software upgrade makes things worse? For Kiwi mobile provider 2degrees, a new system required the accounts payable (AP) team to implement fiddly workarounds, making work more difficult and time-consuming.

2degrees was established in 2009 as an alternative to New Zealand's two leading mobile providers. Now the country's third-largest telco, it supplies around 1.6 million subscribers with mobile and broadband services.

To serve that many customers and maintain its reputation for fairness and low pricing, 2degrees

needs ultra-efficient operations behind the scenes. The problem: following a software upgrade, the business found itself struggling with accounts payable (AP) processes — invoicing required manual workarounds and external platforms. For a business handling thousands of invoices every day, it wasn't sustainable.

The solution came from FUJIFILM Process Automation. With Esker, 2degrees was able to bridge process gaps, cut arduous manual work, and boost visibility of its AP process.

How a software update led to AP issues

2degrees' challenges started with a software upgrade — a custom finance and accounting platform. It delivered the goods in terms of financial reporting and visibility but didn't work so well for AP processing.

As a result, the AP team had to build manual workarounds to handle invoices. Even to get a basic invoice approved and paid, employees had to manually type data into forms or use external optical character recognition (OCR) tools to scan and input information.

Accounts Payable Manager Tracey Murphy says the customised process was not working the way it was expected to work.

“There was still lots of manual work that needed to be done,” she says. “The entire business felt the strain of that manual process.”

Manual processes and missing insights

Processing was slow — invoices could linger in the system for two weeks, with frequent errors and delays. Because it was so complicated, the business had to increase the number of people on the AP team, which meant fewer staff members in other areas. Despite more employees, the team had no time to focus on analytics or reporting — and the existing platform didn't have built-in reporting tools.

Seeking solutions with FUJIFILM

After months of slow processing and frustrating errors for the AP team, the business made the decision to look for another solution. The goal wasn't to replace its existing software, but to find something that could cut the complexity of the invoice process and eliminate those time-consuming workarounds.

A short RFP process led the team to FUJIFILM, its process automation team and the Esker platform. The choice came down to out-of-the-box simplicity — Esker didn't need a lot of customisations to work — and FUJIFILM's vast experience with AP automation.

“FUJIFILM takes the time to learn what we're looking for — what's our result, what's our goal? We work from there and map out the solutions. The team is great,” says Tracey.

2degrees was proactive about the change process, working closely with FUJIFILM to make sure everything went to plan and everyone was on the same page.

“It was a huge change for us, going from that very manual system to all the bells and whistles and lights we have with Esker,” says Tracey. “But the transition wasn't bad. By the time we went live, everybody knew what they needed to do.”

From manual inputs to automated invoicing

The 2degrees AP team quickly saw the benefits of Esker. By automating the full AP process, it removes manual workarounds and eliminates double handling of data. This has freed up time for the team to focus on higher value activities such as reporting, analysis, and continuous improvement.

From zero to hero for reporting and analytics

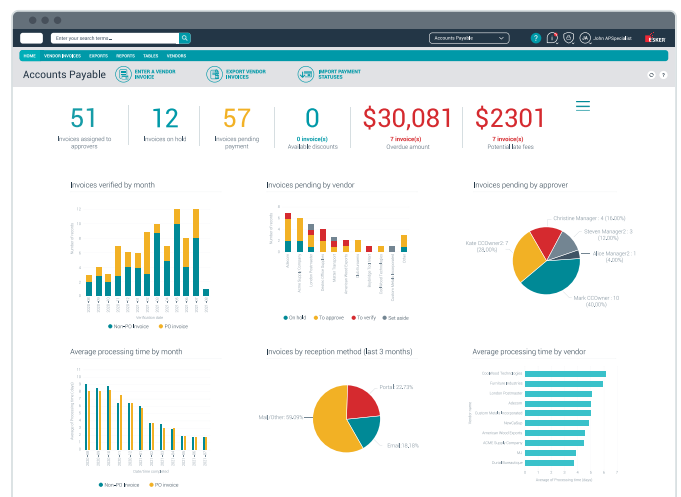
With Esker's reporting tools — and more time on their hands — the AP team can now monitor invoice claims, reconcile invoices against statements, keep track of transactions, and analyse spending and expense claims — all in real time.

“One of the main goals we had,” explains Tracey, “was to spend more time on the reconciliations and analysis. Now we can focus on reviews, statements, recons, analysis and reporting. It's super important.”

Expense claims in a few clicks

With Esker handling all AP processes, expense claims are simpler. 2degrees employees can drag-and-drop receipts on the web platform or mobile app, click to select expense types, and submit. From there, the platform sends it to the right person for approval, then the AP team can create an invoice for payment and complete the process.

“We click a button, and it creates an invoice in our AP module. We click another button, and it posts for payment,” explains Tracey.



Fewer errors, faster resolutions

Because the previous system was so complicated, finding a missing invoice or fixing a mistake meant unravelling multiple steps — and sometimes hitting a dead end. Resolving an invoice issue could take up to two weeks.

Now, all invoice information is stored and managed by Esker so most issues can be sorted in less than a week — with many resolved in just a few hours.

More capability, more options for the future

2degrees' legal team has just started using Esker for Contract Management, and the business is about to roll out Esker for Supplier Management. It's a testament to the success and simplicity of FUJIFILM's Esker implementation.

The AP team is also working on a shift to Peppol invoicing for international suppliers, supported by the Esker platform.

Out-of-the-box efficiency for 2degrees

2degrees has gone from a complex, time-consuming custom AP system to a smooth, simple, out-of-the-box solution with FUJIFILM and Esker. 18 months on, the differences are stark: a more focused AP team, less time on issues and errors, enhanced reporting and analytics capabilities, and far more time to focus on strategic work.

Here's how Tracey describes the change: "If we compare it to Esker and the automation we have now, it's complete night and day. Each click of the mouse is a more valuable journey than just moving invoices through a process."

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Tracey Murphy | Accounts Payable Manager | **2degrees**



Get in touch with the team today.

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