

PREMIUM BRANDS

Solution Overview

Industry

As a supplier to many EDI enabled retailers in North America, Premium Brands required a business solution to satisfy mandates from their retailer clients for electronic communication of business documents using the Internet and AS2 communications as the transport method. In addition, they needed a solution to comply to their retail clients needs for data synchronization quickly as mandates required compliance by December 2003.

Scenario

Premium Brands wanted a business solution to satisfy mandates from their retailer clients for data synchronization and for electronic communication of business documents over the Internet. Their existing EDI solution (TradeLink with an interface to their iRenaissance back-end system, worked very well but they needed a reliable, tightly integrated solution to communicate business documents over the Internet as most of their business comes from EDI enabled retailers. Premium Brands also had to comply with the data synchronization requests of their retail grocery customers.

Company Profile

Premium Brands is a leading producer of specialty branded consumer food products and conventional processed meats. It has been engaged in the food processing business since 1917, employs approximately 1,450 people and has manufacturing facilities in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Washington and Oregon.



Premium Brands a leading producer of specialty branded consumer food products and conventional processed meats with facilities in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Washington and Oregon had to find a solution to integrate its existing iRenaissance ERP system, SoftCare's TradeLink EDI Management System to comply with a mandates by their large retail clients to implement a solution to gather all of their internal item information and publish it to ECCNET and UCCNET and to send and receive EDI documents via the Internet using the AS2 protocol.

History

Premium Brands is a \$600 million per year operation with offices/divisions throughout Western Canada serving retailers throughout North America. In 1999, they were looking for ways to re-implement EDI to comply with retailer's demands for EDI communications. They wanted an EDI application that could integrate to their existing Accounting system and to their future implementation of Premium Brands' iRenaissance back-end system to reduce their internal business processing costs. This is why they turned to SoftCare.

Implementing TradeLink EDI Management System

Premium Brands originally chose SoftCare and its TradeLink EDI Management System because they liked their approach to combining, software, consulting and services to provide an all-encompassing solution to implementing EDI for them. Additionally, they liked SoftCare's approach to switching their EDI clients from a legacy based EDI Translator to an NT based system. The system that was designed and implemented by SoftCare and Premium Brands resulted in a fully integrated EDI business management solution, which handles the largest portion of their SoftCare orders received from retailers and significantly reduces processing costs.

Implementing an integrated solution for Data Synchronization

SoftCare implemented a consolidated catalogue solution for the Premium Brands group to centralize item information into Trade Catalogue and to connect from Premium Brands' divisions (Harvest Meats, Grimm's, Premium Brands/Fletcher's Canada and Direct Plus) to ECCNET for item catalogue data as required by many of their large grocery retail clients. As Premium Brands had multiple sources for item data, the decision was made to use Trade Catalogue's Excel interface to accumulate the item information and publish it to the Catalogue. To ensure that minimum costs were expended by Premium Brands, SoftCare used Premium Brands existing EDI interfaces to communicate to ECCNET. To further reduce implementation costs (and risk), SoftCare hosted the Catalogue at their site and dealt with ECCNET on the implementation freeing Premium Brands to focus on data capture. The next steps will be to implement data synchronization to UCCNET via XML and AS2 communications.

Implementing an integrated solution for communications via the Internet

Originally, Premium Brands communicated to their EDI enabled trading partners using an async dial up connection to an EDI VAN and used Cleo's 3780Plus® and SYNCcable+™ from Cleo Communications for a direct bi-synchronous connection to Wal*Mart. While Premium Brands was very happy with their EDI solution overall, they were growing increasingly concerned about the reliability of their EDI VAN connection. Problems with async communications using public telephone lines and antiquated communication protocols were causing issues of lost or delayed Purchase Orders, which affected their bottom line. In addition, in early 2003, they received

TRADELINK CORPORATE EDITION TRADE CATALOG

Benefits

Quick cost effective implementation of EDI over the Internet to Wal*Mart provided significant improvements in reliability of communications and a single consolidated view of communications using their EDI Translator's Audit system. Their implementation of data synchronization allowed them to comply quickly to the mandates of their retail clients and they received significant benefit by the consolidation of all item information in one consolidated product catalogue.

Software Used

TradeLink Corporate Edition
OpenEC Trade Catalog,
OpenEC XMapper and
Cleo's LexiCom

About SoftCare

Founded in 1989, SoftCare EC Inc. develops e-business software. Our OpenEC® product suite allows companies to conduct business-to-business e-commerce. Our e-business software is open and scalable allowing for integration with existing and future technologies, lowering operating costs and streamlining the business process while delivering benefits to all electronic trading relationships

For more information about SoftCare, TradeLink EDI Management System and the SoftCare Solutions Group visit www.softcare.com, contact us at 1 – 888 – SOFTCARE or email us at sales@softcare.com

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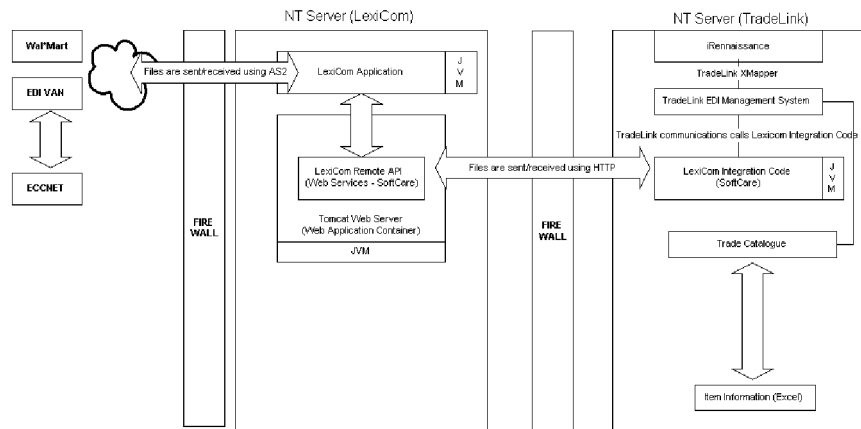
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notification from Wal*Mart that they were dropping support for bi-synchronous communications in favor of communications via AS2. Premium Brands went to SoftCare to find a solution to their communications dilemma. SoftCare proposed an upgrade to their existing TradeLink EDI Management software to its tightly integrated TradeLink solution which supported direct AS2 EDI communications to Wal*Mart and to their EDI VAN using Cleo LexiCom™.

Implementing a tightly integrated EDI Translator AS2 Communications link

The first step was to upgrade their existing TradeLink, which was resident on an NT machine. As this machine was resident inside their Firewall, it was determined that LexiCom would be installed on an NT Server outside of Premium Brands' firewall. The decision was made to ensure greater security of application data by putting it behind two firewalls. Communications between TradeLink and LexiCom are handled using web services. SoftCare developed a series of Remote API's to communicate with LexiCom. As an example, on outbound communications, business documents are moved from iRenaissance to TradeLink via TradeLink's Xmapper. Once received, TradeLink generates EDI complaint Mailbags. Using its communication process, TradeLink sends EDI Mailbags (through Premium Brands' Firewall) to LexiCom. LexiCom sends the EDI Mailbags to the appropriate trading partner. Upon receipt of the Message Delivery Notification from the trading partner, LexiCom updates TradeLink of the status of the communication session. TradeLink's communications process then updates its internal audit system with the results of the communications session.



Implementing direct AS2 communications to Wal*Mart

Once all the pieces to the solution were installed, the SoftCare Solutions group concentrated on quickly implementing a direct AS2 connection to Wal*Mart. Using the pre-configured host defined in LexiCom for that retailer, it was a simple process for the Solutions group to quickly and efficiently implement Wal*Mart and get Premium Brands trading EDI documents via the Internet with Wal*Mart.

Implementing an AS2 connection to Premium Brands' EDI VAN

Once their direct connection to Wal*Mart was implemented, the next step was to try to improve communications with their EDI VAN for retail clients who hadn't implemented direct connections. SoftCare worked with Premium Brands and their EDI VAN to re-configure their EDI communications to use AS2 to the EDI VAN. In addition, SoftCare re-negotiated with Premium Brands' EDI VAN with a result of them realizing a significant reduction in their EDI VAN charges. As an added bonus, the implementation of AS2 communications to their EDI VAN has significantly reduced communications failures to the EDI VAN.