

ACCENT HOME PRODUCTS

Solution Overview

Industry

As a supplier to most of the EDI enabled retailers in North America, Accent Home Products 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.

Scenario

Accent Home Products wanted a business solution to satisfy mandates from their retailer clients for electronic communication of business documents over the Internet. Their existing EDI solution (TradeLink with an interface to their FACTS accounting system), worked very well but they needed a reliable, tightly integrated solution to communicate business documents over the Internet as a full 95% of their business comes from EDI enabled retailers. Additionally Accent Home Products needed a way to reduce their present cost and increase the reliability of their existing EDI Van connection.

Company Profile

Accent Home Products a Montreal based supplier of home furnishings delivers quality products with fashion forward designs to the North American retail marketplace.

Benefits

Quick cost effective implementation of EDI over the Internet to a large retailer client, significant improvements in reliability of communications and a single consolidated view of communications using their EDI Translator's Audit system.

Software Used

TradeLink EDI Management System, FACTS Accounting software and Cleo's LexiCom Communications Software



softcare

Accent Home Products, a premier supplier of home furniture to the North American retail marketplace had to find a solution to integrate its existing FACTS Accounting System and SoftCare's TradeLink EDI Management System to send and receive EDI documents via the Internet using the AS2 protocol to satisfy a mandate by Wal-Mart. In addition, Accent required a way to reduce communications problems using their existing EDI VAN connection.

Accent Home Products designs and manufactures home furnishings for the North American retail marketplace. In 1995, they were looking for ways to comply with retailer's demands for EDI communications of business documents. They wanted an EDI application that could integrate to their existing FACTS Accounting system and reduce their internal business processing costs. This is why they turned to SoftCare.

Implementing TradeLink EDI Management System

Accent Home Products 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. In addition, SoftCare had worked with their existing integrator to integrate TradeLink with their FACTS Accounting Software to fully integrate EDI Order Cycle documents. The system that was designed and implemented resulted in a fully integrated EDI business management solution, which handles 90% of their orders received from retailers and significantly reduces processing costs. Bob Christensen, Director of IT at Accent says, "TradeLink's ability to quickly and easily meet the demands of our retail clients, plus SoftCare's attention to detail and expertise in EDI implementations made them the ideal partner to implement an EDI System for Accent Home Products".

Implementing an integrated solution for communications via the Internet

Originally, Accent communicated to their EDI enabled trading partners using a bi-synchronous connection to an EDI VAN and directly to Wal-Mart using 3780Plus® and SYNCcable+™ from Cleo Communications. While Accent was very happy with their EDI solution overall, they were growing increasingly concerned about the reliability of their EDI VAN connection. Problems with bi-synchronous 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, Accent received notification from Wal-Mart that they were dropping support for bi-synchronous communications in favor of communications via AS2. Accent 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 its SCO UNIX machine. 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 FACTS to TradeLink via the FACTS/TradeLink EDI Interface. Once received, TradeLink generates EDI complaint Mailbags. Using its communication process, TradeLink sends EDI Mailbags (through Whitney's 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 AS2connection to Wal-Mart client. Using the pre-configured host defined in LexiCom for Wal-Mart, it was a simple process for the Solutions group to quickly and efficiently implement Wal-Mart and get Accent trading EDI documents via the Internet to Wal-Mart.

Implementing an AS2 connection to Accent Home Products' 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 Accent and their EDI VAN to re-configure their EDI communications to use AS2 to the EDI VAN. In addition, SoftCare re-negotiated with Accent's EDI VAN with a result of Accent 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. Bob Christensen, Director of IT of Accent Home Products says "the implementation of a tightly integrated EDI solution that leverages the Internet to communicate business documents has resulted in direct positive benefits to our bottom line".

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About SoftCare

Founded in 1989 and headquartered in British Columbia, 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 scaleable 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

