



TIMELY UPDATES, NO MORE MANUAL DATA ENTRY

Logistics firm Centroid Group keeps the show on the road with ACOM's EZConnect

The Client

The Centroid Group is a leading provider of logistics management and consulting services, helping shippers and carriers design, deploy, and manage high performance logistics networks primarily for auto parts makers who require just-in-time delivery.

The Problem

The company's homegrown system uses XML and Webbased standards too advanced for many of its carriers. Centroid needs to communicate with many trading partners using the older ANSI X.12 EDI standards.

The Solution

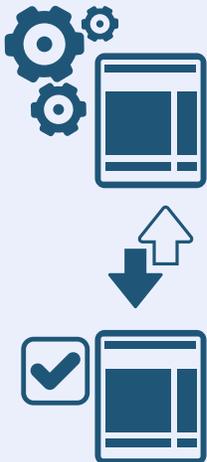
ACOM's EZConnect translator took only a couple of days to implement, and now flawlessly translates hundreds of documents a day between EDI and XML in a real-time, event-driven environment.

The Results

Centroid brought 15 large trading partners online, saving time by eliminating manual data entry. The company can now provide faster updates on the location of a client's freight. More trading partners are being added.

"The ACOM part of the implementation was quick and straightforward, just a couple of days."

"I'm a big proponent of ACOM. It's hard to get this kind of personal support from any other software vendor."



Jim Fiorini, co-founder of third-party logistics firm Centroid Group LLC, has some visionary ideas for the slow-changing transport industry. For example, he'd like to be designing systems to deal with the likely fails that can happen in transportation: miscommunication, bad weather and accidents.

But his company is often called in after everything else has gone wrong. That's when his team has to work their magic to get a client's freight to wherever it's supposed to be—ASAP.

"We can often be in the unenviable position of having to pull a rabbit out of a hat," says Fiorini. That means having tools he can trust to keep things moving.

When Fiorini had to find a way for his XML-based system to communicate with carriers still using traditional ANSI X.12 standards, he turned to ACOM.

Some Partners Not Up To Speed

Soon after Centroid was founded in 2000, Fiorini designed the automated system that supports company's third-party logistics (3PL) operations.

"I'd been around the logistics industry for many years. I'd worked with many software vendors, and I wasn't happy with anything out there," he says. "I felt I had a better idea of what I needed."

His team built a Web-based logistics management system (LMS) that communicates in XML so it isn't tied to any proprietary format.

But not all of Centroid's trading partners were up to speed with the latest technologies. The company needed a flexible translator that could convert XML messages into the older EDI format, especially X.12 transaction numbers 204, 210, 214, and 990.

Liked What He Saw in EZConnect

When a colleague referred Fiorini to ACOM, he liked what he saw in the EZConnect EDI/XML translation software.

"EZConnect has a flexible mapping architecture, a very intuitive user interface, and it's a .NET application, the same as our LMS, which is also .NET," he says. "We liked that we could structure our maps using C#, the code base we operate on. So if we need to write more complex translation logic, C# gives us more flexibility than a proprietary scripting language."

Installing and learning the EZConnect software was smooth. "The ACOM part of the implementation was quick and straightforward, just a couple of days," he says. "And it was very easy to navigate and learn."

The full implementation—writing all the specs, recoding the LMS, linking in the Web services—took a year. And ACOM was there to help, every step of the way.

Truly Dedicated Support

"My ACOM representative Glenn Pagel takes care of all my questions," says Fiorini. "That's very unique in the industry, to have that personal approach—rather than having to call a help line, or go to a knowledge base." He helped Fiorini write the program's initial set of maps, and tutored him until he was fluent in the EDI standards. "It's hard to get this kind of personal support from any other software vendor," Fiorini added.

Fiorini created what he calls a "detour" in the LMS system. Any XML files created for trading partners using x.12 EDI are automatically shunted to EZConnect, which picks up the file, transforms it from XML to EDI, and drops it into the carrier's folder.

Fiorini hasn't had any technical problems with the ACOM software or the rest of the EDI infrastructure.



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