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EDI Modernization:
5 Strategies for Success

As businesses strive to deliver new digital services faster, one of the primary challenges becomes how to deal with slow, complex legacy Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) software used for communication and collaboration among trading partners.

These legacy EDI applications are often hosted on premises or moved to the cloud as-is, instead of being truly cloud-native modern solutions that can help businesses achieve their goals for speed, flexibility, reduced costs, and increased revenue.
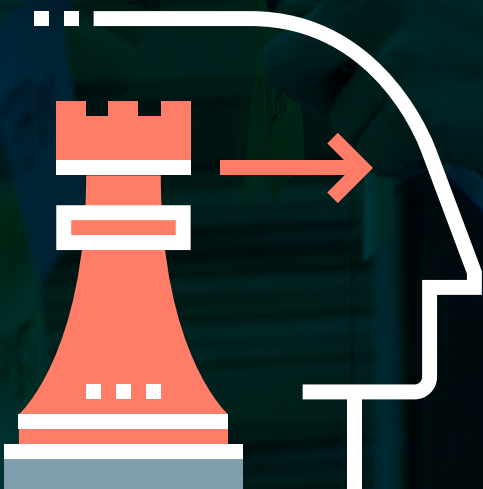
> **Legacy EDI just doesn't provide all the strategic and operational advantages businesses need today.** It's time to modernize.

The challenges of working with legacy EDI applications include complexity resulting from decades-old user interfaces, the inability to rapidly diagnose and resolve issues with shipping and purchase orders, slow partner onboarding times that stretch to weeks or even months, difficulty in rapidly connecting EDI to back-end ERP, and difficulty in integrating complementary B2B technologies.

Beyond these challenges, legacy EDI just doesn't provide all the strategic and operational advantages needed today. For example, business and IT leaders could glean powerful business insights from the data in EDI transactions, but legacy architectures make it difficult to access this data quickly and easily, leaving that value untapped. In contrast, modern EDI solutions can convert transactional business data into human readable formats to support faster decision-making and improved responsiveness to customer and market demands.

Before making the switch from legacy EDI to modern EDI, here are key strategies that businesses should consider. Employing these five strategies will help ensure a successful transition to a modern, collaborative B2B/EDI solution.

Five Strategies for EDI Modernization Success

1

GO CLOUD NATIVE — WITH DISTRIBUTED DEPLOYMENT

Although many businesses have some form of a "Cloud First" strategy to minimize maintenance of on-premises systems, simply migrating EDI to the cloud is not enough. It is important to have the flexibility to deploy or redeploy your EDI instance anywhere. For example, if you add a new geography that has in-country data requirements or has made a decision to change to a different cloud infrastructure vendor (i.e. AWS, Google Cloud, Azure), you need the flexibility to deploy to any cloud — or even switch back to an on-premises runtime model if necessary. Ensure you have the flexibility to deploy your EDI runtime anywhere with cloud-native, distributed deployment capabilities.

2

DEPLOY HUMAN READABLE EDI DASHBOARDS – END-TO-END BUSINESS VISIBILITY

Another challenge businesses have with legacy EDI is the difficulty resolving errors such as discrepancies between orders and actual shipments. It's especially difficult to resolve problems between order tracking and fulfillment across multiple EDI documents. Another complication: the person trying to resolve these issues must have a proficient understanding of EDI protocols and formatting.

Modern EDI provides the ability to have an EDI dashboard that translates EDI language into human readable format. This way, business users can diagnose issues themselves, freeing up the EDI team to focus on other projects and preventing security risks of users outside the core EDI team directly accessing mission critical EDI systems.

> **Modern EDI includes partner self-service onboarding portals to eliminate the 95 percent of time** delays due to waiting for next steps and shortening weeks and months down to days.

Furthermore, a modern EDI dashboard should be able to present information about a purchase order that spans many EDI transactions (ship notice, invoices, functional acknowledgement, etc.), so IT and business teams can understand business transactions from end to end.

AVOID THE EDI SILO –
ENSURE SEAMLESS FLOW TO YOUR ERP

EDI, by definition, focuses on the communication from your partners up to the EDI application or Value-Added Network (VAN) mailbox at the outer perimeter of your business processes. EDI ends there, so it's important that data continues to flow easily into and out of your backend Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) applications such as Oracle, SAP, NetSuite, IFS, JD Edwards, and many others. Look for an EDI modernization strategy that doesn't require you to use a separate internal application integration solution for passing that EDI data into your ERP applications and then another solution for workflow automation and data management.

STOP ONBOARDING YOUR PARTNERS – IMPLEMENT SELF-SERVICE ONBOARDING

Onboarding partners, vendors, and distributors can be one of the most time-consuming and cost-consuming aspects of EDI. When partners are asked to onboard, they often are too busy with their existing roles to respond in a timely manner to questions about Internet Protocol (IP) address issues and other EDI setup issues. Manually diagnosing and addressing partner onboarding input errors over

email and phone calls can take weeks if not months for an individual partner to onboard. Multiply this delay by 10, 100, or more partners and EDI will forever be holding the business back.

Modern EDI includes partner self-service onboarding portals to eliminate the 95 percent of time delays due to waiting for next steps and shortening these weeks and months down to days. Offload the partner setup burden from your team and let the partners onboarding themselves much faster with oversight and visibility for you to track and ensure rapid setup.

FUTURE PROOF YOUR B2B/EDI –
PREPARE FOR WHAT'S NEXT

Despite the many claims a decade ago of "EDI is going away," EDI remains a strong component of modern structured collaboration between trading partners. Instead of replacing EDI, consider complementing it with new methodologies that can contribute new capabilities to your B2B services overall. For example, although APIs require partners to write code to consume the APIs, a growing number of companies are using API Management in conjunction with EDI to offer richer and more responsive B2B capabilities. Start thinking about what your B2B future might look like and ensure your integration platform that includes EDI also supports future requirements such as workflow automation, data management, and more.

Connect Your Partners Today with Boomi EDI

Fortunately, a modern solution for rapidly setting up and managing trading partner networks is available. Boomi's pioneering, cloud-native integration platform greatly streamlines how organizations run their EDI systems. Its revolutionary low-code, cloud-native development and management environment offer one-click distributed deployment and zero-effort upgrades. After creating any one integration component, such as connections, maps, and processes, you can easily reuse these design elements for all future integrations to further speed your time to connect.

Boomi EDI and the associated Boomi solutions feature:

SUPPORT FOR KEY B2B/EDI STANDARDS
Built-in support for a wide variety of traditional and modern EDI standards including XML, X12, EDIFACT, HL7, RosettaNet, Tradacoms, custom standards, and more.

INDUSTRY STANDARDS CONNECTIVITY
Support for the full range of trading partner communications — AS2 (Drummond certified), FTP/Secure FTP, MLLP for HL7, and Web Services using SOAP or HTML. Boomi supports connectivity to the VAN of your choice and Exchanges such as Ariba and Amazon.

A CLOUD-NATIVE PLATFORM WITH AUTOMATED UPGRADES
Boomi's single instance, multi-tenant platform provides all the benefits of the cloud, including flexibility, agility, design patterns, scalability, high availability, built-in redundancy, and automatic upgrades. All customers automatically benefit from the latest features and functionality.

DISTRIBUTED AND MULTICLOUD ARCHITECTURE
The Boomi Atom is a lightweight runtime engine that allows integrations to be deployed wherever needed: in Boomi's Atom Cloud, in a public or private cloud, or on premises. Multiple Atoms can be clustered together to provide a highly scalable, distributed processing runtime. With Boomi, you can seamlessly connect your entire digital enterprise across on-premises and multicloud environments all the way to IoT and edge devices, while supporting exponentially growing data volumes and ensuring low latency and high performance.

B2B/EDI WITH PRE-BUILT CONNECTIVITY TO BACK-END ERP
Receiving data from a trading partner via EDI isn't of much use if it can't instantly be sent to your back-end ERP applications like SAP, Oracle, or NetSuite. With B2B/EDI embedded into the Boomi AtomSphere Platform, data flows seamlessly from trading partners to and from your back-end ERP applications. The Boomi platform includes pre-built connectors to integrate with thousands of popular applications and data sources.

FUTURE-ENABLED EDI TO SUPPORT YOUR B2B JOURNEY
When you need to create a workflow to extend, customize, or automate your EDI, the Boomi platform provides you with all the tools you need through Boomi Flow, Boomi's low-code solution for workflow automation. Similarly, the platform includes Boomi API Management for building and managing APIs as part of your B2B operations.

The comprehensive Boomi AtomSphere Platform pares you from onboarding additional third-party products, burdening your IT team with steep learning curves, or imposing complex, collaborative IT projects on your EDI team. You get industry leading EDI, API management, integration, and workflow features in a single, comprehensive integration platform as a service (iPaaS.)

EDI DASHBOARD: AN END-TO-END UNIFIED VIEW OF TRANSACTIONS
The Boomi EDI Dashboard solution presents EDI data in a human-readable format, so business users can diagnose issues themselves, freeing up the EDI team to focus on other projects. The EDI Dashboard also eliminates the need for users outside the core EDI team to have direct access to mission-critical EDI systems, which could pose a security and operational risk.

View purchase orders in order-to-cash processes across multiple EDI transactions (ship notice, invoices, functional acknowledgement, etc.) for a quick one-stop view into a business view of your EDI transactions. The next time someone asks, "Where is my order?", get the answer instantly or show them how to easily view this information themselves in the Boomi EDI Dashboard.

EDI PARTNER SELF-SERVICE ONBOARDING SOLUTION
Reduce onboarding times from weeks to hours by eliminating the traditional delays associated with email-based onboarding collaboration with your partners. The Boomi EDI Partner Self-Service Onboarding solution includes an easy-to-use self-service portal for all your partners. Support partners as needed by collaborating with them in the onboarding process. Boomi makes onboarding and collaborating fast and easy.

Case Studies –
EDI Modernization

Here are the stories of three Boomi customers who adopted the Boomi AtomSphere Platform as part of their EDI modernization strategies and realized their goals for improved visibility, faster onboarding, improved connectivity with ERP systems and other key business applications that had been siloed before, migration to the cloud for scalability and efficiency, and future-proofing their EDI and B2B networks.

AMMEX
Achieved a 4X growth in the number of orders processed

KENCO
Cut customer onboarding times in half and dramatically scaled to handle holiday surges.

EDDIE STOBARD
Deployed greater speed, efficiency and agility to its supply chain and partner network.

AMMEX

Ammex, a supplier of disposable gloves, has been helping its wide range of distributors and retailers sell its protective gear for more than 30 years. With the COVID-19 pandemic, its products are now more important than ever. The company had been growing at 10 percent annually, but realized that improved connectivity and automation could spur even more dramatic growth while improving customer experiences.

BUSINESS GOALS

Ammex wanted to improve the experience of its wholesale customers by modernizing its technology platforms to:

- Provide more ecommerce options for placing orders
- Support 24/7 self-service access to order status and order history
- Give its customer services team access to accurate, up-to-date customer records across multiple systems

These goals would benefit Ammex customers as well as Ammex itself.

TECHNOLOGY CHALLENGES

Over two years, Ammex had overhauled much of its IT infrastructure. It replaced its Microsoft Dynamics customer relationship management (CRM) platform with Salesforce Sales Cloud. It also launched an internal ecommerce platform to facilitate order entry by customers and its customer service team. But connectivity and visibility challenges remained.

Point-to-point integration between Sales Cloud and Ammex's Microsoft Dynamics GP (Great Plains) enterprise resource planning (ERP) system required manually synchronizing data for every order, regardless of the order entry channel. Because data could be changed in the CRM or ERP, reconciling records was error prone and tedious. Meanwhile, customers didn't have visibility into order status.

HOW BOOMI HELPED

Ammex evaluated Boomi, Mulesoft, Talend, eOne Solutions SmartConnect, and TIBCO Scribe. Ultimately, it selected Boomi, convinced that the Boomi team best understood Ammex's integration challenges.

Boomi now orchestrates the entire customer experience by integrating Sales Cloud, Dynamics GP, and several external ecommerce, supply chain, and currency exchange applications. When a customer is added to Sales Cloud, Boomi facilitates account creation in the ERP and ecommerce application within minutes.

When an ecommerce order is placed, Boomi instantly passes the order into the ERP system, checks availability, and sends the order to the warehouse. Boomi then passes the tracking number from the warehouse to the ecommerce and ERP application, giving both Ammex customers and internal teams 100 percent visibility into order status. Boomi also integrates with the company's Banks Lockbox service to process payments for orders.

RESULTS

In its first year with Boomi, Ammex achieved a 4X growth in the number of orders processed, something the company believes it couldn't have accomplished without Boomi.

Ammex also sped up the time to process each order by automating repetitive tasks and identifying which customers are best suited to leverage ecommerce for self-service, which is available 24/7 for both customers and the Ammex customer services team. Through Boomi-powered integration, all customers have accurate price lists, account addresses from the ERP system, and up-to-date credit information. Self-service has allowed the customer services team to reallocate at least three full-time employees to higher productivity roles.

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> **Boomi has enabled Ammex to scale self-service and deliveries 10X** by transforming our manual business process with a consistent and reliable automation solution.
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> Chad Ghosn, CTO, Ammex
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KENCO LOGISTICS

With the Boomi AtomSphere Platform and Boomi EDI/ B2B, Kenco Logistics, a leading third-party logistics company, cut customer onboarding times in half and dramatically scaled to handle holiday surges.

BUSINESS GOALS

Third-party logistics (3PL) company Kenco Logistics knew it couldn't rest on its laurels. The 70-year-old firm had become expert at handling logistics for companies in North America.

But Kenco wanted to be even more agile and flexible, capable of pivoting in new directions when opportunities arose. It also wanted to onboard customers more quickly and efficiently to recognize revenue more quickly. And it wanted to shift expenses from CapEx to OpEx, moving from on-premises IT procurement to flexible, scalable cloud services.

EDI CHALLENGES

Kenco's legacy EDI system didn't scale, leading to high software and hardware costs during holiday rushes.

Another problem: Kenco realized that the first step in accelerating onboarding and migrating to cloud services would be modernizing its integration capabilities. Integration had been time-consuming and error-prone. Setting up a new customer with the company's legacy EDI software usually took 40 to 60 staff hours over several weeks. And if the company was going to migrate applications to AWS, it would need to build many new integrations.

HOW BOOMI HELPED

To realize its strategic vision, Kenco selected the Boomi AtomSphere Platform for EDI.

Kenco replaced its legacy integration software and on-premises EDI system with the Boomi AtomSphere Platform. This gave the company a single, low-code development platform for EDI through Boomi B2B/EDI Management and for all forms of integration with Boomi Integration.

Using the Boomi AtomSphere Platform, Kenco:

- Built new EDI connections for customers
- Integrated custom application data with Amazon Simple Storage Service (Amazon S3)
- Created a faster way to onboard customers

RESULTS

Thanks to Boomi, Kenco achieved its strategic goals. The company was able to:

- Cut customer onboarding work in half, enabling faster revenue recognition.
- Consolidate EDI and integration tools in a single, low-code development platform. Boomi reduced training times and maintenance costs.
- Scale services quickly and affordably when needed. Now Kenco can handle holiday surges without procuring new hardware and software.
- Gain better insights into system usage and customer trends for forecasting.
- Quickly build an integration with its shipping partner UPS

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> **Boomi is a Swiss Army knife.** It does a bunch of different things very well, including integration, EDI, and working with AWS.
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>
> Don Johnson
> Manager of System Architects, Kenco Logistics

EDDIE STOBART

When it comes to logistics, speed is king. So leading UK logistics provider Eddie Stobart teamed with Boomi to bring far greater speed, efficiency and agility to its supply chain and partner network.

BUSINESS GOALS

Eddie Stobart is a 24/7/365, end-to-end supply chain operation. Offering around-the-clock support is a vital part of its business. But the company's expanding and increasingly complex EDI network was a barrier to delivering fast, high-quality service.

The company needed to:

- Support customer preferences and constraints for integrating and communicating with its systems
- Provide cost-effective, always-on availability
- Minimize time lost to scheduled and unscheduled system maintenance

EDI CHALLENGES

In logistics, margins are notoriously thin, and information is the lifeblood of business.

Eddie Stobart had been working with several traditional EDI providers, but downtime, long project timelines and a lack of innovation prevented the organization from quickly onboarding customers and building on the relationships Eddie Stobart had worked so hard to establish.

HOW BOOMI HELPED

Boomi allowed Eddie Stobart to move faster and further improve how it helped customers, putting more distance between the company and its competitors. Following a proof of concept project, Eddie Stobart deployed the Boomi AtomSphere Platform using a range of Boomi capabilities, including Boomi B2B/EDI management, integration, and API management.

The Boomi platform now underpins many business-critical processes, improving workflows for customer orders, logistics management, enterprise operations, warehouse management and port transport systems.

RESULTS

The Boomi platform has dramatically increased the company's speed and agility in responding to business needs that support company growth. With Boomi, Eddie Stobart has:

- Slashed integration time in half
- Increased its rate of customer acquisition
- Cut costs by eliminating fees tied to data volumes
- Improved its ability to integrate directly with customer manufacturing applications

From artificial intelligence to the internet of things, Eddie Stobart is considering a host of advanced technologies that Boomi supports through its low-code, cloud-native integrations.

Powered by Boomi EDI and the Boomi AtomSphere Platform, Eddie Stobart has created agile IT processes, reducing integration time by 50 percent.

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We've only scratched the surface of what Boomi can do. We see our relationship with Boomi deepening as we fully explore the range of possibilities the platform offers.

John Court, CIO, Eddie Stobart

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Summary

EDI is a technology that has proven the test of time and is a key part of a comprehensive and modern B2B strategy. Digital businesses looking to dramatically improve their digital transformation and add more self-service capabilities to improve how they interact with their partners can deploy Boomi's modern, cloud-native EDI.

Gain all the advantages of EDI, while eliminating the excessive costs, complications, and delays of legacy solutions. Check out Boomi B2B/EDI Management, part of the Boomi AtomSphere iPaaS solution, today.

To learn more, visit **www.boomi.com/b2b-management**

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