

Elmer Candy Corporation

Sage X3

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Susan Penouilh

EDI Programmer Analyst, Elmer Candy Corporation



OBJECTIVE

- Automate time-consuming manual processes and reduce the need for custom programming by replacing a legacy EDI system with a robust and easy-to-use EDI solution, seamlessly integrated with Sage X3

SOLUTION

- Implement a trusted EDI solution for Sage X3 that streamlines administrative tasks and minimizes ongoing management of EDI

BENEFITS

More Connected. More Supported. More Prepared for What's Next.

- Seamless, automated exchange of all EDI documents between EDI solution and Sage X3
- Shifted skill requirements, enabling business users to interact with the EDI system without needing to become EDI experts

BACKGROUND

Moving to Sage X3 drove the requirement to upgrade a heavily customized, multi-vendor EDI system to a unified, end-to-end EDI solution.

Family-owned Elmer Candy Corporation has been crafting chocolates from the finest selection of ingredients since 1855. Based in the small town of Ponchatoula, Louisiana, Elmer is America's second-largest heart box manufacturer. Its seasonal chocolate products for Christmas, Valentine's Day and Easter have been favorites for generations of candy lovers. This year, Elmer is introducing a new product for Halloween called Pumpkin Spice Bites.

As a seasonal business serving small shops, as well as major retailers from a single facility, Elmer has diverse shipping requirements and challenges related to spikes in demand around the holidays. But a highly-complex, heavily-customized EDI integration with its legacy ERP system demanded both strong technical skills and significant manual effort to accomplish even everyday tasks such as printing shipping labels or updating trading partners' EDI mappings.

When Elmer made the decision to switch to Sage X3, it also needed to replace its legacy EDI system with an industry-leading commercial product. After evaluating the functionality, integration level, total cost and service/support record of available offerings, Elmer confidently chose TrueCommerce EDI. "A large portion of our EDI orders ship in the last quarter of the year," explains Susan Penouilh, EDI Programmer Analyst. "Sometimes we're shipping around the clock. We needed technology to help make that easier for us, and TrueCommerce EDI was clearly the right choice."

ACCELERATED DEPLOYMENT

When Elmer Candy moved its accounting, shipping and other key business functions from its legacy ERP system to Sage X3, Ms. Penouilh had just two months to shift all EDI traffic to the new solution, which included the migration of more than forty EDI trading partners.

To help meet this critical deadline, Ms. Penouilh benefitted from the expertise of the TrueCommerce implementation team. She also leveraged the TrueCommerce Integration Mapping Tool, which allows an advanced user to directly modify the mapping data that TrueCommerce EDI uses to import and export documents to and from the ERP system.

"I had to migrate all of our trading partners in a very short time, and the integration mapping tool made that possible," Ms. Penouilh observed. "Working with the tool alongside TrueCommerce support, we mapped all of the transactions for a customer in a two-hour session. On my own that would've taken me three days."

SIMPLIFIED EDI ARCHITECTURE SAVES MONEY

EDI requires multiple components, including document translation software, mapping tables and a transaction network (often called a value-added network or VAN). Elmer's legacy EDI system relied on multiple vendors for different components, including multiple VANs.

This added significant cost and complexity. VAN costs were exorbitant, and matching customers with VANs was a constant concern. Moreover, Ms. Penouilh had to write custom software to handle data mappings and other services.

Now a single vendor develops and supports all the components of Elmer's unified EDI solution. "The TrueCommerce VAN handles all connection types and the rates are very reasonable," says Ms. Penouilh. "The time and money we're saving overall with TrueCommerce EDI is substantial, but the value of the system is beyond that—it's priceless."

ONBOARDING NEW EDI TRADING PARTNERS IN A FRACTION OF THE TIME

To add a new EDI trading partner with Elmer's old EDI system, Ms. Penouilh had to create all the mapping tables manually, as well as write software to create sales orders from purchase orders, advance ship notices (ASNs) and other documents. She also had to manually design shipping labels. This typically took days of work over a period of weeks.

Now all the document translation takes place automatically. "I can add a new EDI customer, get everything tested and start receiving transactions in a couple of hours," asserts Ms. Penouilh.

In addition, TrueCommerce manages all EDI trading partner maps free of charge. "TrueCommerce has all of that covered so we are always EDI compliant with our customers and I don't even have to think about it," Ms. Penouilh chuckles. "I just get an email saying a map has been updated, and in one click existing transactions are modified."

GENERATING ASNS AND UCC-128 LABELS IS A BREEZE

Creating ASNs and UCC-128 shipping labels are a challenge for many suppliers. "I used to spend days designing and creating those labels, and then printing them in advance because the old EDI system was too hard for the shipping department to use," Ms. Penouilh recalls.

With TrueCommerce EDI, ASNs are generated from the deliveries in Sage X3. Elmer also uses the optional TrueCommerce EDI Labeling solution, which automatically generates UCC-128 labels in the customer's required format directly from the ASN, saving multiple steps.

The automation greatly simplifies meeting even complex customer requirements like pallet labels. It saves time, improves accuracy and ensures compliance with retailers' supplier guidelines, eliminating concerns about chargebacks. "Now the shipping department can generate a shipment, create the ASN and labels they need, and ship the product all without my involvement—it's wonderful," exclaims Ms. Penouilh.

MORE TIME FOR VALUE-ADDED WORK

Now that Ms. Penouilh doesn't need to perform and manage tasks that TrueCommerce EDI handles automatically,

she is able to devote her time to new responsibilities. "Our customer service person has TrueCommerce EDI on her computer, and the shipping department has it on theirs," clarifies Ms. Penouilh. "The software is user-friendly so non EDI experts can use it."

Others within the company now experience a decrease in manual work thanks to TrueCommerce EDI. For example, Elmer's old system only converted about 25% of trading partners' POs into orders in the ERP system. Customer service staff had to enter the rest by hand. Now the only orders that are manually rekeyed are those not received through EDI.

According to Ms. Penouilh, "Before implementing TrueCommerce EDI, I had to write software to turn PO data into an order in the ERP system. Unless we had quite a few orders from that customer it just wasn't worth it. Now everything that comes through EDI can be exported automatically into Sage X3."

KNOWLEDGEABLE SUPPORT YOU CAN COUNT ON

Ms. Penouilh is extremely happy with the support Elmer has received from its TrueCommerce implementation team: "All the support staff is very knowledgeable and knows exactly how to work through challenges. They've promptly addressed every requirement to make this new integration happen."

"The TrueCommerce support team has been so helpful," Ms. Penouilh continues. "They respond quickly, follow through, and provide the correct solution. It's amazing how dedicated they are to helping us achieve our goals."

ABOUT TRUECOMMERCE

TrueCommerce is the most complete way to integrate your business across the supply chain, integrating everything from EDI to inventory management, to fulfillment, to digital storefronts and marketplaces, to your business system and to whatever comes next. That's why thousands of companies across various industries rely on us.

THE TRUECOMMERCE TEAM IS HERE TO HELP!

If you have any questions regarding TrueCommerce, or how our solutions apply to your business, our passionate, customer focused team is here for you.

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