

Breaking an EDI Myth: **Choosing the Right Solution for Your Business Needs**



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Myth: you must use the same EDI solution as your biggest customer

"Your top customer uses our platform. If you want to connect with them, you must use us too."

If you've received a call or email like this, you're not alone. We continue to hear variations of this from EDI vendors. The implication: choose us or risk losing business.

This simply isn't how EDI connectivity works.

Reality: How EDI compatibility really works


The reality is trading partners care about receiving clean, accurate data, in the right format at the right time. They don't care which specific vendor processes that data behind the scenes.

Your clients will accept EDI connections if your EDI vendor meets technical requirements for:

- Document formats (X12, EDIFACT, etc.)
- Security standards
- Data accuracy and timing

Think of it like email - Gmail users can send messages to Outlook users without any issues. EDI works similarly, just with more structured data formats.

What actually matters when choosing EDI

A hand holding a black pen is pointing at a diagram on a whiteboard. The diagram consists of several interconnected circles and lines, with some circles highlighted in yellow and red. The background is slightly blurred, showing a person's face in the distance.

Rather than focusing on which vendor your customers use, consider what works best for your operations:

How will it affect timeliness and effort on a daily basis?

If you aren't fully integrated with your existing ERP, WMS, or other business system, you may be offered a "quick solution" in the form of a website where you can view your EDI documents, manually copy them into your existing systems or manually create EDI communications out to your customers. This may add to the workload of your daily operations.

Integration with existing systems

To avoid operational overhead, consider if your existing business systems, your ERP, WMS, or accounting software, allow for integration of EDI data and can eliminate the messy websites and extra effort. Smooth data flow between systems often matters more than the EDI brand name.

Reliability and support

What is the uptime? How quickly does the vendor respond if issues arise? Your customers care more about consistent performance than vendor logos.

Total cost over time

Implementation, training, ongoing support, and any infrastructure requirements. The cheapest upfront option isn't always the most economical. For example, going with a web portal solution may be pitched as the fastest and least expensive to implement, but comes with the expense of operational overhead. If you expect only minimal use of the EDI platform, a web portal may make sense. And we can offer that as well.

Scalability

Will it handle growth in trading partners or transaction volume without major changes? If you expect business to grow, or more partners are asking for EDI, you may need to migrate existing EDI from the web portal to a fully integrated platform. It may be better to do it right the first time.

Getting Objective Guidance

It is valuable to get guidance from experts that have worked with multiple EDI systems. The goal is finding what works best for your specific needs and constraints.

Making the Decision

When evaluating EDI options:



- Evaluate your trading partners requirements, identify the types of documents (purchase orders, invoices, healthcare claims, planning schedules, etc.), identify the estimated number of each document that will be processed annually. This will help you determine the best path forward.
- Discover and document your technical requirements – must your data be kept onsite for compliance reasons, must it be encrypted, does your ERP have APIs available?
- Include total cost of ownership, not just licensing fees
- Talk to existing users about real-world experience

Don't let sales pressure drive the timeline. Yes, speed can be important, but making the wrong choice creates bigger problems down the road.

Moving Forward

You can choose what EDI solution to use. If you're working through an evaluation, we would be glad to share our knowledge gained from 25 years of EDI experience. We will help you make a confident decision. And then we can design, implement, integrate, and support your EDI system.

About EverStar

We provide IT consulting, implementation, and ongoing support. We have over 25 years of experience with EDI, serving companies from Fortune 50 to mid-sized firms. We have expertise in EDI, ERP, Splunk, and more.



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