Atkore Navigates EDI System Transition with Precision

Leading electrical solutions provider, Atkore Inc., transitions to IDEA Exchange's EDI Value-Added Network (VAN) platform, **supporting the industry, achieving savings, and amplifying efficiency and reliability in critical B2B communications.**

EDI: THE BACKBONE OF B2B COMMUNICATIONS

At the heart of B2B communications lies Electronic Data Interchange (EDI). It's the system that companies rely on to electronically exchange business documents, from orders to invoices. EDI streamlines operations, reduces human error, and ensures businesses can talk to one another.

The power of EDI lies in its widespread use and consistency. While its workings might be invisible in daily operations, its presence is indispensable. A glitch in the EDI system can disrupt supply chains and delay essential transactions.

NAVIGATING HIGH STAKES: ATKORE'S IMPERATIVE FOR A FLAWLESS EDI SYSTEM MIGRATION

When Atkore's IT Team considered switching their EDI VAN, they understood that the stakes are high. According to Cherry Conroy, IT Manager at Atkore, the migration of this pivotal system must be seamless and transparent. It must be 100% successful.

"EDI is a fundamental and mission-critical part of our system. Our customers communicate with us via EDI. This is how we electronically exchange data with our customers," said Conroy. **"It was imperative that the migration be successful and with no business downtime."**

After considerable deliberation, Atkore chose to transition to IDEA Exchange. For Atkore's IT team, the decision to migrate to the IDEA Exchange VAN included:

- Industry experience
- Expert support
- Cost savings
- Reliability

As Atkore proceeded with implementing IDEA Exchange, the company needed to manage scheduling and strategic decisions about the migration approach. More importantly, Conroy wanted to ensure zero disruptions to operations and customer relations.

ADDRESSING THE EDI MIGRATION CHALLENGE: ATKORE'S APPROACH

With its large network of trading partners, Atkore was focused on completing the migration to IDEA Exchange's VAN while mitigating any risk. Atkore's EDI team decided to do a phased migration, based on EDI IDs, each tied to specific divisions.

Cherry Conroy, Atkore's IT manager, stressed the importance of a robust project plan. **"A well-defined project plan gives you confidence during migration,"** Conroy added. **"It's important to evaluate your environment to determine whether to take a total migration or phased approach."**

MIGRATION BEST PRACTICES: CHARTING THE PATH

Though every company's EDI migration is tailored to its specific requirements, industry best practices provide a valuable roadmap. These guidelines, provided by EDI standards organizations IDEA and X12, can be a helpful tool in planning.

DISCOVERY
Get the full picture by listing all EDI transactions, trading partners, and associated VANs in the organization.
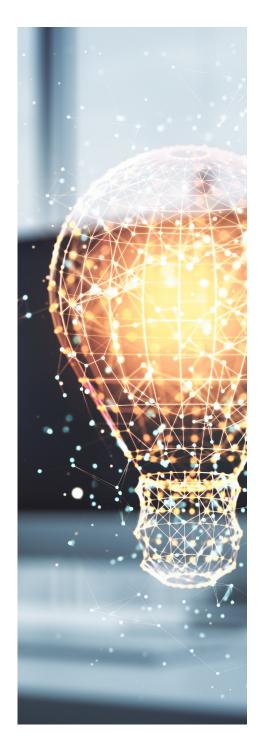
PLANNING & ANALYSIS
Document findings from the discovery phase and outline future steps. Then, make strategic choices on the migration process.

- **Total Migration Method:** Also known as flash migration, this transitions trading partners all at once. It's quick, efficient, and is often preferred due to the interconnected nature of VAN traffic.

- **Phased Migration Method:** This divides the migration into segments, often based on EDI IDs or divisions. It can allow for more control, however, it can also prolong migration.

EXECUTION
Successful implementation includes clear communication and timing with all parties. During the hypercare phase, IDEA monitors traffic to avoid issues with routing or missing documents. With excellent support, migration can be seamless with minor issues resolved quickly.

"It was a great decision to switch to IDEA Exchange. The overall migration was successful. We're running smoothly, and the IDEA VAN is very reliable."

—Cherry Conroy, IT Manager at Atkore

FROM HESITATION TO TRIUMPH: ATKORE'S EDI VAN JOURNEY WITH IDEA EXCHANGE

Transitioning a mission-critical function like an EDI VAN is a big step for any manufacturer or distributor, yet Atkore's team was confident that the potential benefits outweighed the concerns.

IDEA EXCHANGE'S BENEFITS FOR ATKORE

- **Improved Traceability:** Atkore now has enhanced capabilities to monitor transaction statuses, elevating their service level.

- **Searchable Archive:** This feature is beneficial for document management, especially for the company's power users.

- **Consistent Reliability:** As a Tier 1 VAN, IDEA Exchange has provided a dependable experience, ensuring seamless EDI operations. IDEA Exchange has 99% uptime.

- **Top-Notch Service:** Atkore's Conroy noted excellent support during and post-migration, reflecting IDEA's reputation for premium service.

- **Efficient Automation:** With IDEA Exchange's industry ownership and experience, Atkore has had seamless automation of the Quote-to-Cash process, realizing cost savings and continued efficiency.

"At Atkore, we're always improving our systems. With IDEA Exchange's reliability and ability to trace and check status on EDI transactions, it is helping us increase our service level."

—Cherry Conroy, IT Manager at Atkore

ADVANTAGES OF IDEA EXCHANGE

- **Proactive Operations:** Advanced tracking and search functions offer faster issue management, improving EDI efficiencies.

- **Swift Migration:** 95% of installations are finalized in just a few days.

- **Flexible Document Handling:** The capability to handle a variety of document types ensures uninterrupted transactions.

- **Enhanced Data Accuracy:** Leveraging IDEA's sophisticated product data enables faster and more accurate transactions.

- **Transparent Pricing:** Pay only by the kilo-character. No fees for partner onboarding, unlimited connections to major VANs, archiving, restoration, and beyond.

- **Redundancy:** IDEA Exchange's state-of-the-art technology and fully redundant data centers ensure business continuity, even in the face of potential disasters.

- **Robust Security:** IDEA's commitment to data protection is evident with protection measures such as firewalls and encryption.

Atkore's decision to transition its VAN provider, though approached with caution, has set the company on a path of enhanced efficiency and reliability. Atkore is now seeing the rewards of the IDEA Exchange EDI VAN platform.

IDEA EXCHANGE RETAINS 98% OF CUSTOMERS FOR GOOD REASON

IDEA has extensive experience in eBusiness. It's our mission to make it easy for manufacturers to expand product content, EDI automation, and become more competitive.

We can handle all your eBusiness needs, including product content syndication, EDI, and data services:

- 20+ Years of Experience
- EDI VAN & Managed Services
- Professional Services Team
- Industry-owned and Supported
- Best in Class Customer Service
- Distribution and Manufacturing Experience

IDEA is here for you. We can help you navigate the complex world of eBusiness for maximum results.

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