

Sterling Integrator delivers an expanded e-commerce initiative with customer-driven benefits



ELKAY®

Elkay Manufacturing

Location

Oak Brook, IL

Industry

Manufacturing

Business challenge

Implement an EDI solution

Solution

Gentran:Server®

Benefits

- Improve customer service
- Increase cash flow
- Save money

Customer background

Elkay is a supplier of high value residential kitchen, bath, cabinetry and wood products, commercial plumbing products and related services that meet the needs of a variety of market segments. This family-owned business employs more than 4,200 people in 18 facilities nationwide and is dedicated to customer-based thinking, quality and style.

From the company's simple beginnings on Chicago's north side to its current headquarters in Oak Brook, Illinois, Elkay has always remained focused on two key objectives—designing products and adapting business practices to serve the changing needs of customers.

The latter objective was exactly why Elkay turned to Sterling Commerce in the early 1990s and remains a loyal customer nearly 15 years later.

Business challenge

Elkay's original implementation was customer-driven. "Our goal was to satisfy a major customer who wanted to send purchase orders electronically," explained Anthony Barone, an Elkay senior analyst. "Since then we have expanded our e-commerce initiative to include many more customer-driven benefits for our 43 trading partners."

Solution

Sterling Commerce implemented Gentran:Server, one of the industry's most widely used and trusted EDI solutions.

“When we upgraded our server one weekend, the technical support was incredible. They were available to us all weekend, and the process went smoothly.”

Anthony Barone
Senior Analyst,
Elkay Manufacturing

Key benefits

Gentran:Server helped Elkay do the following:

- Improve customer service by responding instantly and accurately to customer inquiries
- Increase cash flow by reducing invoice and payment cycle times
- Save money by eliminating the errors and expense of manual document processing
- Gain a competitive edge (many large businesses will only do business with companies that are EDI-enabled)

Available for iSeries, UNIX and Windows, Gentran:Server offers a rich set of EDI features, including graphical mapping, auditing and tracking, process control and event-driven message management.

One particular feature that Elkay finds useful is file transfer protocol (FTP).

“We have a separate Web site for our customers and sales representatives to view and track orders,” Barone said. “That means our customers and sales reps have access 24/7 to get instant answers to their questions.”

Barone also cited on demand support as another benefit. “Now I can instantaneously determine error messages

in the server’s autolog,” he said. “This is a great time-saving tool because I don’t have to wait for someone to call me back for the answer.”

Elkay recently added another feature—the Daily Processing Summary Report. “We download the report every day to ensure we don’t miss any orders,” Barone said. “It’s an automated process that is very helpful and customer-service oriented because we never have to contact a trading partner to say we lost something.”

In addition to delivering a competitive advantage, Barone said that Sterling Commerce also delivers phenomenal customer support. “When we upgraded our server one weekend, the technical support was incredible. They were available to us all weekend, and the process went smoothly.”

Barone also said that customer service representatives are extremely knowledgeable about their products and services. “When we e-mail or telephone them, they’re able to answer 99 percent of our questions on the first call. If they don’t know the answer to a question right away, they get back to us within a very short period of time with the exact answer we need to resolve the issue.”

About Sterling Commerce

Sterling Commerce, an AT&T Inc. (NYSE:T) company, helps companies optimize and transform their Business Collaboration Network to accelerate revenues and reduce costs. Sterling Commerce provides more than 18,000 customers worldwide with applications and integration solutions to connect, communicate and collaborate inside and outside their enterprise. More information can be found at www.sterlingcommerce.com.

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SC0382 06/10