



Sterling Commerce increases your profit margins with B2B process automation

Sterling Collaboration Network

Executive Summary

Changing market conditions such as growing complexity and lack of visibility have increased the value of effective B2B process automation. Built on a secure infrastructure that can process multiple millions of transactions a day, Sterling Collaboration Network's service-oriented architecture gives the solution the agility to adapt to the ever-changing needs of multi-enterprise environments. Results include cost savings, process improvements and a competitive advantage for you. Sterling Collaboration Network is part of the Sterling Business Integration Suite, available only from Sterling Commerce.

In this Solution Overview, you will learn:

- How to lower supply chain costs
- How to onboard partners easily
- How to improve process visibility

Benefits of this solution:

- Faster reaction to market changes
- Increased data protection
- 'Any partner, any format' capability
- Streamlined B2B processes

Realize the benefits of B2B without the drain on IT resources

You know that automating the processes you share with customers, partners, and suppliers increases competitiveness and productivity. But the numbers may surprise you. According to an AMR Research¹ study, "The companies using more electronic connections with customers have:

- 13% shorter days sales outstanding (DSO)
- 37% shorter cash-to-cash cycle times
- 19% lower total supply chain costs (including manufacturing), which translates to 5% of revenue"

Many companies have responded to B2B initiatives mandated by channel masters in their industry—and are reaping the benefits—but it's not as easy to initiate collaborative relationships on your own. For some companies, high-priority ERP migration projects have tapped all available resources, and revealed that mapping out the connections among

disparate systems and standards is simply too big a project for them to take on. For others, the investment and expertise required to create a secure B2B environment, and then recruit and enable partners, is beyond their scope.

The Sterling Collaboration Network suite of services includes Sterling Information Broker, Community Services, Translation Services, Visibility Services, and Hosted Application Services.

Step up to the added benefit of a business process network

Sterling Collaboration Network is what Gartner calls a "business process network." Business process networks differ from traditional value-added networks (VANs) in that, while a VAN basically delivers information from one point to another, a business process network gives you visibility into that information in real time. Moreover, your view of that data can be linked within a business context, allowing you

Capabilities	Benefits
Sterling Information Broker	A single, secure and reliable connection to all your business partners
Exchange services	<p>Move all your information seamlessly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive protocol support including; async, OFTP, or through any Internet, protocol, including Connect:Direct, TCP/IP, FTP, FTP/PGP, SMTP, X.400, HTTPS, MQ, and the EDIINT protocols AS1 and AS2 • Support for multiple data types such as; such as XML, .CSV, iDoc, and many flat file formats in addition to EDI standards • Any-to-any data translation • 100 public and private networks around the world
Infrastructure services	<p>Proven reliability for over 30 years:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extensive Disaster Recovery Planning and Testing • Highly available network operations (99.95%+ uptime) • Data protection and integrity is ensured through strict security policies • Semiannual audits, physical security measures, firewalls, and encryption • 24/7 global multi-lingual customer support service centers
Community services	Extend B2B capabilities to your partners and customers regardless of their technical expertise or size
Sterling Web Forms	Partners simply access a Web site, log in, and enter data on forms to create invoices, purchase orders, Advance Ship Notices (ASN), and so on. When they submit a form, we convert it into the EDI format your systems require.
Sterling Fax Conversion	<p>Drive down manual processing costs, without requiring your customers to change their current buying behavior, by combining human and artificial intelligence into a single streamlined process to efficiently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convert fax transactions into EDI or XML • Detect and handle errors • Keep human intervention to a minimum
Sterling Managed AS2 Gateway	A secure intermediary between Internet-based and non-Internet-based partners, managing all the differences in communications, format, content, and security between EDIINT and non-EDIINT transactions, without the expense of having to build complex infrastructure and dedicated support staff.
Sterling Community Development	<p>The people, processes, and expertise to help you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build, manage, and extend your B2B community • Add and test new documents • Migrate your current operations to Sterling Collaboration Network • Survey your partners electronic capabilities
Sterling e-Invoicing	Automates both buyer and supplier electronic invoice processes in compliance with country specific tax regulations, reducing corporate risk and exposure, and improving operational efficiencies.

to monitor whole processes (such as order-to-cash) instead of just individual transactions.

Built on a secure and flexible service-oriented architecture (SOA), Sterling Collaboration Network can process up to 5 million transactions a day, giving you visibility into transaction content as the business data is processed through the network. The data itself can come from any system inside or outside your organization's walls and, with Sterling

Collaboration Network, you can support any data type, any format and/or any communication protocol. Specifically, this end-to-end process visibility helps you improve strategic decision-making with accurate, real-time data, even as you enhance your customers' experience through corporate-wide, real-time views into order status. The key metrics of Sterling Collaboration Network also allow you to analyze trading partner performance.

Capabilities	Benefits
Translation services	Communications flexibility regardless of format
Mapping services	Data maps developed, maintained, supported, and tested to your specifications and enables your data to be converted from one format to another. Mapping Services includes the process of gathering the data requirements from the client and building a Mapping Requirements Specification (MRS) from the requirements.
In-network translation	Run time translation for the following formats: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDI to EDI • Flat file to EDI • EDI to XML • XML to XML • EDI to flat file • Flat file to flat file • XML to EDI
Visibility services	Real-time insight into your B2B operations
Supply Chain Visibility On Demand	Instantly displays and summarizes actionable supply chain information from all electronic trading partners and communities through a single dashboard. Aligned with the order-to-cash and purchase-to-pay business processes.
Document tracking	Provides real-time status of EDI interchanges with ability to restore data free of charge.
Document visibility	Provides business users with real time status of business documents, such as purchase orders, invoices, and advance ship notices.
Report visibility	Enables aggregated views of total document activity by business unit useful for internal and external usage analysis.
Event driven alerts	Non-retrieval alerts – e-mail or fax for when critical data isn't picked up by the trading partners Delivery alerts – fax for mailbox data arrival
Hosted application services	High value applications without the support and infrastructure costs
Sterling Data Synchronization Manager	Communicate valid product data to retail customers via the Global Data Synchronization Network (GDSN): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet data synchronization mandates on time and inexpensively • Reduce the number of resources necessary to support changing standards and technology associated with the GDSN and XML • Reduce errors in promotions, orders, and invoices
Sterling Data Synchronization Manager Plus	Includes your One Sync data pool subscription, streamlining the contract process, future renewals, and support under a single trusted partner.

In short, Sterling Collaboration Network helps you overcome the barriers of incompatible systems and standards to operate in harmony with your partner community and gain the advantages of doing business anywhere.

Exchange documents safely and securely with Sterling Information Broker

Sterling Information Broker®, the core component of Sterling Collaboration Network is a highly reliable and secure value added network that enables you to exchange documents securely with customers and business partners, regardless of size, location or communications preferences, through a single connection. Simply connect to us, and Sterling Information Broker does the rest. Even if your partners operate

on another B2B network, Sterling Information Broker will deliver your data safely, to the right place, in the right format, right on time.

Build and manage trading partner relationships with Community Services

Community Services can help you build and orchestrate trading relationships so that your B2B programs continue to run smoothly, regardless of diversity within the community and regardless of change. It is a managed way to add and divest partners over time and to implement new business rules and processes. Done right, community management relieves you of a major administrative burden, saves you money and protects your B2B relationships through best practices. The proven tools and processes of our Community

“Companies that have moved to process collaboration with suppliers and customers report that they have been able to speed up their planning and execution cycles and can reshape and react to demand much faster than before. By exchanging richer information more quickly with trading partners, enterprises are able to make more accurate plans and better mid-course corrections while improving cash-to-cash cycles. They are also able to improve customer service performance and increase revenue.”

Aberdeen Group
B2B Collaboration Business Value Research Series, 2006

Development team provide you with dedicated resources to help you build, manage and expand your B2B community. Services include partner recruitment and onboarding, conversion assistance, document testing and community surveys. Additional Community Services products such as Web Forms, Fax Conversion, and Managed AS2 Gateway allow you to save more money by automating costly manual processes for smaller partners and customers without requiring technological expertise from them.

Optimize your B2B performance with Visibility Services

For many years, there has been a gap between business-unit owners and the IT-centric EDI and XML transactions that contain their real-time business intelligence. Visibility services remove that gap by drawing data from B2B transactions and delivering it the way you want it: in business language and at the process level. Decision makers can now monitor complete business processes such as "order-to-cash" or "procure-to-pay" in real time, from a single dashboard. Additionally, alerting services leverage your pre-defined business rules to provide proactive alerts and conditional processes to reduce errors and automate exception handling.

Trade easily with any partner in any format with Translation Services

Sterling Commerce Translation Services can eliminate barriers associated with multiple data formats and constantly changing industry standards, enabling you to send and receive data in whichever format you or your partners require.

Our any-to-any translation and transformation services expand your capabilities from traditional formats to include flat file and application file formats. Because we handle the mapping and translation, your IT resources are free to work on core business priorities. In addition, our intelligent routing services enable you to base document delivery solely on file content, context and recipient roles.

New control over shared operations with Hosted Application Services

Sterling Collaboration Network hosted applications create new ways for companies to orchestrate work and collectively gain advantage in global markets. Sterling Data Synchronization Manager enables manufacturers to communicate valid product data to retail customers via the Global Data Synchronization Network (GDSN). Simply submit item data through an Excel spreadsheet, flat file, or Web interface and we do the rest, following through until your customers accept your items.

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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