

Sterling Commerce solution handles side-by-side EDI and XML



Kimberly-Clark

Kimberly-Clark Corporation

Location

Irving, Texas

Industry

Personal care and health care consumer products

Business challenge

Global data synchronization; integration of a legacy mainframe environment with UCCnet through a data catalog

Solution

Sterling Integrator®

Benefits

- Return on investment
- Cleaner data
- Better customer relationships and sales
- Improved XML support
- Streamlined interface

Customer background

Kimberly-Clark Corporation, a \$14 billion global consumer packaged goods company in the market with such eminent brands as Kleenex® tissue and Huggies® diapers, found itself performing a balancing act between its foundation in EDI and emerging technologies based on extensible markup language (XML). While EDI was the quickest way to get started with synchronizing data among many retail business partners, it could not solve all of Kimberly-Clark's B2B challenges nor handle all their data requirements.

Business challenge

Getting products to retail shelves quickly is of paramount importance to Kimberly-Clark. In order to maintain strong ties with its retailers and other customers, it was apparent to the e-business infrastructure team that they must secure a rapidly deployable and dependable solution to

handle EDI and XML side-by-side. The need was especially acute in the face of growing customer mandates regarding UCCnet XML standards and amid the steadily gaining influence of XML-based solutions.

"A lot of our business is still conducted through EDI, so a complete switchover to XML isn't practical or cost-effective," said Phil Nickolai, team leader, e-business infrastructure at Kimberly-Clark.

Although the company had already augmented its classic EDI network with Internet-based EDI (EDIINT), numerous challenges remained.

"We had an ongoing business need to do a more effective job of synchronizing data with our customers who have had experiences ordering in the wrong quantities, stacking patterns, and prices, all stemming from data laced with

“The right way of doing XML is to have a powerful application for translating—and to us that means Sterling Integrator.”

Phil Nickolai
Team Leader E-business Infrastructure,
Kimberly-Clark

obsolete information,” said Larry Roth, Consumer Supply Chain, Kimberly-Clark. Roth continued, “UCCnet opened up the door to industry standardized synchronization and eliminated most of these problems both now and in the long run.”

However, taking full advantage of UCCnet meant coordinating input/output in the correct formats, tables, and data elements along with the other technical rigors of orderly communication. Such an effort would demand more work and expertise than Kimberly-Clark was prepared to handle on its own. A high quality solution delivered quickly by a dependable technology partner was required.

Solution

Two major drivers pointed Kimberly-Clark to Sterling Commerce, according to Nickolai. One was his company’s long and successful relationship with Sterling Commerce in EDI. “Sterling Commerce has provided us with good products and we have leveraged a lot of our company communications on EDI,” Nickolai said. He continued, “For another, they have a tool in Sterling Integrator that fits cleanly into our existing environment. We decided to take advantage of the relationship and the software suite to implement something we knew would meet the business needs.”

Key benefits

With the application solution nailed, Kimberly-Clark embarked upon a six-week course of implementation. “From a project management standpoint, we were impressed,” Nickolai said. He added, “The project was delivered on time, and, quite frankly, when you’re going from ground zero to what we have now, six weeks was a very rapid deployment.”

Kimberly-Clark implemented Sterling Integrator on the Windows platform with an adapter to publish to UCCnet on short notice, according to Roth, with the potential for connections to more key data pools as needed.

“As we got deeper into synchronization issues with EDI, we found there were more data elements necessary that are only possible through XML. That’s one of the reasons we shifted directions slightly, and that required a connection through Sterling Integrator with an on-ramping adapter,” said Roth.

Kimberly-Clark is gratified with the results and sees significant value in being among the first major companies to implement data synchronization through UCCnet.

The e-business infrastructure team also is looking for Sterling Integrator to help move forward other collaborative processes.

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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