



Flexible cloud solutions to optimize your B2B process automation

IBM Sterling B2B 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 cloud infrastructure that can process multiple millions of transactions a day, IBM® Sterling B2B 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.

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 getting B2B integration is important and that automating the processes you share with customers, partners, and suppliers increases competitiveness and productivity. But the numbers may surprise you. According to a Gartner¹ study, "...bottom-line and top-line revenue increases and cost savings attributed to increased automation, lower costs and improved process execution (visibility and control). This improves business partner relationships and attracts new business..."

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 B2B Collaboration Network suite of services includes IBM® Sterling Information Broker®, Community Services, Transformation Services, Visibility Services, and Software-as-a-Service.

Step up to the added benefit of a business process network

Sterling B2B 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 to monitor whole processes (such as order-to-cash) instead of just individual transactions.

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 IBM® Sterling 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 • 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
IBM® Sterling Supplier Portal	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.
IBM® Sterling Fax Conversion Services	<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, e-mail and postal mail into EDI or XML • Convert EDI transactions to fax • Detect and handle errors • Keep human intervention to a minimum
IBM® 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.
IBM® Sterling Community Development Services	<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 B2B Collaboration Network • Survey your partners electronic capabilities

Built on a secure and flexible serviceoriented architecture (SOA), Sterling B2B 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 B2B 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 B2B Collaboration Network also allow you to analyze trading partner performance.

In short, Sterling B2B Collaboration Network helps you overcome the barriers of incompatible systems and standards

Capabilities	Benefits
Transformation 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
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
Software-as-a-Service	High value applications without the support and infrastructure costs
IBM® Sterling Supply Chain Visibility	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.
IBM® 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.
IBM® 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 • IBM® Sterling Data Synchronization Manager Plus <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Includes your One Sync data pool subscription, streamlining the contract process, future renewals, and support under a single trusted partner.

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 B2B 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 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 Sterling Supplier Portal, Sterling Fax Conversion, and Sterling Managed AS2 Gateway, and Sterling Service Bureau for SWIFT 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

Process visibility for real-time B2B integration data management provides status of business documents such as purchase orders, invoices and advanced ship notices as well as aggregated views of total document activity by business unit. Additionally, alerting services leverage your pre-defined business rules to provide proactive alerts and conditional processes to reduce errors and automate exception handling.

Mobile data management extends usage of visibility services to Apple iPhone or Apple iPod touch providing anywhere, anytime access to your B2B environment.

Trade easily with any partner in any format with Transformation Services

IBM® Sterling Transformation 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.

Greater control over shared operations with Software-as-a-Service

Sterling B2B Collaboration Network SaaS hosted applications create new ways for companies to orchestrate work and collectively gain advantage in global markets. 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. Sterling Supply Chain Visibility removes 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. Sterling e-Invoicing automates both payer and supplier invoice processes in compliance with country specific tax regulations, reducing corporate risks and exposure while improving operational efficiencies. 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 IBM® Company, helps organizations worldwide increase business agility in their dynamic business network through innovative solutions for selling and fulfillment and for seamless and secure integration with customers, partners and suppliers. More information can be found at www.sterlingcommerce.com.

Sterling Commerce
An IBM Company

For all Sterling Commerce offices worldwide, visit www.sterlingcommerce.com

©2008 – 2011, Sterling Commerce, Inc.
All rights reserved. Sterling Commerce and the Sterling Commerce logo are trademarks of Sterling Commerce, Inc. or its affiliated companies. All products referenced are the service marks, trademarks, or registered marks of their respective owners. Printed in U.S.A.
SC0373 05/11