Sterling Supply Chain Visibility

Overview Guide

Documentation Date: 9 June 2013

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Note

Before using this information and the product it supports, read the information in “Notices” on page 13.

This edition applies to the 25 September 2011 release of IBM Sterling Supply Chain Visibility and to all subsequent releases and modifications until otherwise indicated in new editions.

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Chapter 1. Overview of Sterling Supply Chain Visibility

Introduction to Supply Chain Visibility

IBM® Sterling Supply Chain Visibility is an as-a-service application that provides a comprehensive view into the supply chain order-to-cash and procure-to-pay processes.

This application service instantly displays and summarizes actionable supply chain information from all electronic trading partners and communities through a single dashboard. It presents a single web interface that enables users to manage and control the business processes, including documents such as purchase orders (PO), shipping acknowledgements, invoices, and other transactions that occur during these processes. Sterling Supply Chain Visibility also alerts users to events that disrupt information and material flow in the supply chain.

Sterling Supply Chain Visibility can be used by buyer organizations (inbound customers) as well as seller organizations (outbound customers). Buyer organizations can use this application for inbound visibility and to analyze and compare their suppliers' performance. Supplier organizations can use this application for outbound visibility and to analyze and compare their customer service levels. Both buyer and seller organizations can use the application to view and manage alerts that are raised when conditions applicable to them are met in the supply chain.

Sterling Supply Chain Visibility provides the following:

Integrated Platform

Offers an integrated platform across business-to-business (B2B) gateways and the Sterling Supply Chain Visibility Platform to enable various supply chain synchronization solutions. Sterling Supply Chain Visibility provides EDI mapping capabilities, and provides visibility into the purchasing and PO collaboration process at a relativity low customer cost.

Visibility

Provides a set of views to look up the status of an order, shipment, invoice, or payment. This application provides a one-place-visibility to all relevant details of that order, shipment, or invoice.

Inbound and Outbound Supply Monitoring

Alerts are generated when unplanned events occur. Customers can resolve these alerts to remove bottlenecks and streamline the supply chain process.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Reports

Generate KPIs and reports to analyze and compare supplier performance. Sellers can use these to evaluate their own performance with respect to various customers.

Dashboards

The dashboard provides a comprehensive view of alerts, invoices, shipments, KPI charts, and orders. The configurable dashboard can be used to analyze data and generate recommendations that drive strategy.

A Typical Supply Chain Process

A supply chain must be fully integrated to operate at maximum efficiency. In today's complex multiplatform enterprises, systems that can provide visibility and orchestrate work flows across disparate systems can be a significant force in driving business decisions.

A typical supply chain process is:
1. The buyer places an order and sends a purchase order (PO) to the supplier.
2. The supplier sends an acknowledgement to the buyer within a specified time period.
3. The supplier then sends a commitment, specifying when the shipment will be shipped, and the quantity and the items that will be shipped on that date.
4. The supplier sends an **Advance Ship Notice** (ASN) to the buyer.
5. The supplier sends the shipment.
6. The supplier creates an invoice and sends it to the buyer.

Supply Chain Visibility receives a copy of these transactions and others from carriers, transportation systems, and warehouse systems to provide a single source of visibility into the purchase order life cycle.

Advantages of Using Sterling Supply Chain Visibility

Businesses are becoming increasingly globalized, leading to distributed and complex supply networks. Mergers and acquisitions bring about divisional complexities, with each division operating in silos. Also, because of the emphasis on continuous improvement, there is constant pressure to cut supply chain costs that extends beyond the four walls of the enterprise.

The extended supply chain leads to increased vulnerability and variability. Some of the common challenges that businesses face today are:
- Difficulty in effectively communicating with partners.
- Manually intensive processes in collecting data.
- Increasing dependency on global supply network
- Lack of visibility between placing the order and receiving the shipment, leading to supply disruptions.
- Multiple suppliers at different levels of sophistication.
- No single source of truth - multiple disparate systems with point to point connections.
- Collaboration of activities across suppliers, private label manufacturers, freight forwarders, consolidators, carriers, customs, and so forth.

Sterling Supply Chain Visibility provides users the following benefits:
- Alert-based workflow that reduces implementation time and effort.
- Complete view of the Purchase Order and Customer Purchase Order lifecycle.
- Provides visibility into the performance of the suppliers through the IBM Sterling Vendor Compliance for Supply Chain Visibility and Supplier Portal optional module.

Chapter 2. Feature Description

Administrator Specific Features in Sterling Supply Chain Visibility

Administrators can use the Sterling Supply Chain Visibility application service to perform numerous tasks.

When using Sterling Supply Chain Visibility, administrators can perform the following tasks:
- Application Onboarding
- Setting Up Custom Order Flows
- Configuring Business Calendar
- Activating and Configuring Alerts and Events
- Managing User Alert Subscriptions
- Viewing Interface Summary Information
- Viewing Interface Error Details
- Uploading Inventory
- Shipment Planning Milestones
- User Defined Field (UDF)-Based Shipment Search
- Configuring Sterling Vendor Compliance for Supply Chain Visibility and Supplier Portal
- Supplier Relations Officer Role
- Recording Manual Events
- Enhanced Vendor Compliance Chargeback Calculation
- Customer Canceled Order Alert
- Synchronization of Supplier Details Between Sterling Supply Chain Visibility and Sterling Supplier Portal

Application Onboarding

Before you start using Sterling Supply Chain Visibility, you must configure different EDI IDs. EDI IDs enable you to define the organization from which data for Sterling Supply Chain Visibility is received.

Also, Sterling Supply Chain Visibility enables administrators to create details of suppliers, buyers, and carriers from the respective screens.

Setting Up Custom Order Flows

When you need to define your own flow in which the order needs to be executed, you can create custom order flows in Sterling Supply Chain Visibility. In this application, you can define the sequence in which the order flow should be performed.

Configuring Business Calendar

Sterling Supply Chain Visibility enables administrators to configure a business calendar for the enterprise, and specify non-working days, such as holidays and special events.

The date-based alerts will be raised considering only the working days that have been defined in this business calendar.

Activating and Configuring Alerts and Events

An alert or event is a message directed to a user about a transaction that might need manual intervention or manual review. Alerts are raised when a particular pre-defined condition is met.

Sterling Supply Chain Visibility enables administrators to create, configure, and activate custom events or configure, and activate various factory-shipped events in the application. After the events are activated, they are raised and the corresponding message is displayed for users.

Managing User Alert Subscriptions

Sterling Supply Chain Visibility enables administrators to manage alert subscriptions for users. Administrators can assign alerts to a department and a user.

You can subscribe to a department or queue. Thus when a transaction is performed in the respective department or queue, the respective alert is raised and the corresponding message is displayed.

When you log into Sterling Supply Chain Visibility, you can view the alerts to which you are subscribed in the dashboard.

Viewing Interface Summary Information

Interface Summary Report provides a summary of information pertaining to the documents that were processed within a specific time period, ordered by the dates on which the documents were processed. The interface summary information is displayed as a table and as a chart.

This summary displays a list of documents that were processed within the specified time period, the dates on which the documents were processed, the number of documents that were processed successfully, the number of documents that failed processing, and the percentage of documents that failed processing.

Viewing Interface Error Details

The Error Summary report provides a list of all the errors that occurred for a document that was processed on a specific date.

This report provides the error codes, short descriptions, and explanations for each of the errors that occurred while the document was being processed. This report also provides the number of documents that failed processing because of the error.

Uploading Inventory

The Sterling Supply Chain Visibility Inventory Visibility feature enables you to upload and view an inventory picture. Sterling Supply Chain Visibility Administrators (Buyers) can upload inventory by sending their inventory information in an XML format through IBM Sterling B2B Collaboration Network to Sterling Supply Chain Visibility.

Suppliers to organizations that are buyers in Sterling Supply Chain Visibility can also upload their inventory either through IBM Sterling Supplier Portal or by sending an XML document to Sterling B2B Collaboration Network. Sterling Supply Chain Visibility provides buyers visibility into the uploaded inventory by enabling them to search for inventory details by item ID.

Shipment Planning Milestones

Sterling Supply Chain Visibility enables a user to create planned shipments and also create milestones for the planned shipments.

Two new milestones, Planned and Route Planned are added to the default order flow type to permit a user to view the shipment planning activities.

The Planned milestone will indicate when a vendor requests routing information through the Sterling Supplier Portal. The Route Planned milestone will indicate when the IBM Sterling Transportation Management System responds to the vendor with its load routing information.

The user will not be able to raise alerts against the Planned and Route Planned milestones.

User Defined Field (UDF) - Based Shipment Search

Sterling Supply Chain Visibility enables you to use the User Defined Fields (UDF) defined at the header level of an order for searching shipments containing corresponding orders.

A new Include In Shipment option is added to "User Defined Fields for Order" panel in the Manage Inbound User Defined Fields screen or the Manage Outbound User Defined Fields screen. If this option is selected, the UDF will also be displayed in the Shipment Search, Shipment List, or Shipment Detail screens based on their corresponding display on the order.

Additionally, a buyer user and a seller user can search for shipments based on the latest milestone that occurs between two milestones, and a delivery date range and time range.

A new **Having Latest Milestone Between <Milestone Name Drop-Down List> and <Milestone Name Drop-Down List>** option is added. You can choose this option to view the shipment for which the latest milestone is between two specific milestones.

You can also search for shipments based on their delivery dates by entering the appropriate date and time ranges in the Find Shipment screen.

Configuring Sterling Vendor Compliance for Supply Chain Visibility and Supplier Portal

Sterling Supply Chain Visibility provides the Sterling Vendor Compliance for Supply Chain Visibility and Supplier Portal optional module that allows buyer administrators to set up and enforce compliance rules with suppliers. For example, shipment date or shipment quantity can be configured with compliance rules with regard to late shipments or inaccurate quantities shipped. When tolerances of the compliance rules are exceeded, the condition is detected and both buyer and supplier are notified.

A buyer administrator can set up compliance tolerances, financial penalties for violation of compliance rules (called chargebacks), view or modify chargeback reason codes, control the export of chargeback details, and other criteria.

When a noncompliance event occurs, Sterling Supply Chain Visibility facilitates a process that brings a resolution within a predefined time frame, called the mediation period or dispute period. During this mediation period, buyers can modify or cancel chargebacks if a disparity is raised by suppliers, such that a mutual agreement is reached.

Buyers can view the monthly summary of chargebacks against all suppliers, a supplier group, or individual suppliers.

Note: The standard implementation for the Sterling Vendor Compliance for Supply Chain Visibility and Supplier Portal optional module requires you to subscribe to both Sterling Supply Chain Visibility and Sterling Supplier Portal. In addition, the Sterling Vendor Compliance for Supply Chain Visibility and Supplier Portal optional module must be subscribed to separately, as it is not part of the basic Sterling Supply Chain Visibility service.

Supplier Relations Officer Role

Sterling Supply Chain Visibility provides a new limited-user role called Supplier Relations Officer (SRO) for managing vendor compliance activities. The buyer administrator can delegate some administrative tasks, such as configurations of various parameters for chargebacks and custom events in the Sterling Vendor Compliance for Supply Chain Visibility and Supplier Portal optional module to the SRO.

The SRO is a limited-user role because all the functions of the administrator are not available to the SRO. However, all functions of the SRO are available to the buyer administrator. The SRO is able to create and manage events, configure the grace period, the mediation period, and the chargeback reason codes.

Recording Manual Events

A buyer administrator or an SRO can create a manual non-compliance event, which can be used to enter the requisite details and generate a chargeback.

This is similar to the non-compliance event created by an XML file that is generated by an external system except that, in this case, the non-compliance information is manually entered by the buyer administrator or an SRO. This is typically due to situations that can only be detected manually at the buyer's physical location, such as incorrect labelling.

You can record discrepancies against a particular event by providing pre-configured references, such as purchase order number, shipment number, invoice number, and so on. The reference you enter must match with the corresponding event configuration. For example, if the event is configured to generate chargeback at a flat fee per order, only a purchase order number will be accepted as a reference.

Enhanced Vendor Compliance Chargeback Calculation

Sterling Supply Chain Visibility provides the SRO with the capability to add an optional administrator's fee to the chargeback amount and also specify a minimum chargeback amount. The specified minimum chargeback amount is compared against the sum of the generated chargeback amount and the optional administrator's fee, and the final chargeback amount is calculated.

For example, if the value of the sum of the generated chargeback amount and the optional administrator's fee is less than the value of the specified minimum chargeback amount, the minimum chargeback amount is considered as the final chargeback amount.

Note:

- When calculating the chargeback amount, the administrator's fee, if specified, is added to the generated chargeback amount and this sum is compared against the minimum chargeback amount to finalize the chargeback amount.
- The default value of the minimum chargeback amount and administrator's fee is zero.
- The minimum chargeback amount and the administrator's fee, if specified and applied to the generated chargeback amount, are not indicated in the final chargeback amount displayed in the "Chargeback Amount" panel of the Chargeback Detail screen.

Customer Canceled Order Alert

When a buyer cancels an order after it is sent, the cancellation might not be detected by the supplier. Sterling Supply Chain Visibility provides the supplier administrator with a manually-configured event to detect the order cancellation.

Using the configuration option provided, the supplier administrator can create a manually-configured event to raise an alert when a change order is received from the buyer for canceling the entire order. Additionally, the alert is not raised if the order is partially canceled.

Synchronization of Supplier Details Between Sterling Supply Chain Visibility and Sterling Supplier Portal

If you have subscribed to Sterling Supplier Portal in addition to Sterling Supply Chain Visibility, the EDI IDs displayed in the "Supplier's additional EDI IDs" panel in Sterling Supply Chain Visibility are updated when the corresponding supplier details are updated in Sterling Supplier Portal.

Based on the synchronization configuration of the supplier's community in Sterling Supplier Portal, the supplier details are published to Sterling Supply Chain Visibility. This ensures that the details of a specific supplier in Sterling Supplier Portal are synchronized with the details of the corresponding supplier in Sterling Supply Chain Visibility.

User Features in Sterling Supply Chain Visibility

Sterling Supply Chain Visibility provides numerous user features and solutions.

The solutions provided by Sterling Supply Chain Visibility for users are:

- Referencing the Dashboard
- Viewing POs, Shipments, Invoices, Loads, Payment Details, and Alerts for Buyers
- Viewing Customer POs, Shipments, Invoices, and Payment Details for Sellers
- Managing Alerts and Events

- Performing Supplier Performance and Customer Service Reviews
- Viewing Inventory
- Viewing and Modifying Chargeback Details

The user features provided by Sterling Supply Chain Visibility includes the following sections:

Referencing the Dashboard

Sterling Supply Chain Visibility enables both buyers and sellers to view relevant alerts and metric information in a dashboard-style screen. The dashboard is displayed immediately when a user logs into the application.

You can configure the dashboard to display the details that you need to see most often. You can drill down to view details of a particular alert or specific parts of a chart or transaction.

Viewing POs, Shipments, Invoices, Loads, Payment Details, and Alerts for Buyers

Sterling Supply Chain Visibility enables you to:

- Create purchase orders based on the documents received for processing.
- Search for various orders, shipments, and invoices.
- View information on the load and payment details.
- Add and remove orders from the watch list.
- View information on mismatch, if any, between the prices in the buyer's PO, and the corresponding supplier's commitment. If a price variation exists, a **Traffic Chevron** icon is displayed adjacent to the committed price.
- View information on mismatch, if any, between the UOM and the corresponding supplier's UOM in the PO, Invoice, and Shipment. If a UOM variation exists, a **Traffic Chevron** icon is displayed adjacent to the corresponding supplier's UOM in the PO, Invoice, and Shipment.
- Search for shipments that have met a particular milestone but have not met another specific milestone.

Viewing Customer POs, Shipments, Invoices, and Payment Details for Sellers

Sterling Supply Chain Visibility enables you to:

- Create customer purchase orders based on the documents received for processing from a supplier.
- Search for various orders, shipments, and invoices.
- View information on payment details.
- Add and remove customer orders from the watch list.
- View information on mismatch, if any, between the prices in the Customer PO, and the corresponding supplier's commitment. If a price variation exists, a **Traffic Chevron** icon is displayed adjacent to the committed price.
- View information on mismatch, if any, between the UOM and the corresponding supplier's UOM in the Customer PO, Invoice, and Shipment. If a UOM variation exists, a **Traffic Chevron** icon is displayed adjacent to the corresponding supplier's UOM in the PO, Invoice, and Shipment.

- Search for shipments that have met a particular milestone but have not met another specific milestone.

Managing Alerts and Events

Sterling Supply Chain Visibility generates alerts and events when certain conditions are met.

For example,

- If a supplier rejects an order placed by a buyer, the PO Rejected by Supplier alert is raised for the buyer.
- If a supplier does not send the functional acknowledgement for a PO within the time period configured for a buyer by the supplier, the Customer PO Functional Acknowledgement Not Sent alert is raised for the supplier.

Buyer and seller users can search for alerts, view alert details, assign alerts to themselves, and resolve these alerts. This helps to remove bottlenecks and simplify the supply chain process. Users can also search for alerts that satisfy a certain filter criteria and export the list of alerts searched into CSV format. Buyer and seller administrators can also define new or custom events to obtain additional functionalities that are not available in the factory-shipped events.

Performing Supplier Performance and Customer Service Reviews

Buyers need to define, analyze, and monitor supplier effectiveness. Identifying high-performance suppliers, proactively managing supplier performance to ensure that required standards are met, and factoring supplier performance into sourcing and procurement decisions can lead to lower total costs, improved business performance, and stronger supplier relationships. Sterling Supply Chain Visibility enables buyers to view Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and reports for a specific supplier or group of suppliers, evaluate their performance, and select the best supplier for business needs.

Similarly, suppliers also need to monitor their performance to identify areas of improvement and determine changes in operations to make a positive business impact. Sterling Supply Chain Visibility enables suppliers to generate KPIs and reports for analyzing and comparing their performance against each buyer. The KPIs provide the business intelligence to help strategic decision-making.

Viewing Inventory

The Sterling Supply Chain Visibility inventory visibility feature enables you to view an inventory picture. This information can be your supplier's inventory or inventory that you, as a buyer, currently have in stock. Sterling Supply Chain Visibility enables you to search for inventory details by item ID.

Viewing and Modifying Chargeback Details

A buyer user can search and view chargeback details for a supplier. Buyers can also modify or cancel chargebacks if a disparity is raised by suppliers, such that a mutual agreement is reached before the chargeback is finalized.

Buyers can view the monthly summary of chargebacks against all suppliers, a supplier group, or individual suppliers.

Chapter 3. Service Level Offering Policy

Service levels are defined based on two categories: Service Level Objectives and Service Level Agreements.

Definitions

For a service level to be included, it must meet the criteria of measurable, trackable, monitorable, and defendable, as determined by the B2B Services PLM and Cloud Services Operations group.

Service Level Objectives (SLO)

Service levels that are defined as part of the overall support plan of IBM B2B Services that govern the processes, support levels, and service levels that IBM strives to achieve with their client.

Threshold Metrics

The specific measures, by service level, that define the levels of performance by which IBM will hold itself accountable based on the definitions of Service Level Objectives and Service Level Agreements.

Metric Formula

The specific calculation equation created to effectively measure the threshold metric.

Service Level Objectives Categories and Metric

This section provides the definitions of the Service Levels for Up Time.

Table 1. Service Level Objectives Categories and Metric

Metric	Metric Category	Definition	Threshold Metric	Metric Formula
Production Availability	Up Time	Up Time is the period of time during which the production system processing for the service is available for all users of the service for which they have appropriate permissions. Up Time does not include the period of time when the Service is not available as a result of: planned system downtime, force Majeure, problems with Customer or third party applications, equipment or data, customer or third party acts or omissions, failure to adhere to required system configurations and supported platforms, service interruptions, or disruptions caused by other services performed on behalf of the client based on an SOW	Up Time = % of Attainment of Goal	Minutes Service is Available During Month/Minutes in Month less Up Time exclusions

SLO Requirement for Uptime

Table 2. SLO Requirement for Uptime

Metric Category	SLO Threshold Metric
Up Time	Avg. 99.9% per month

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