Modernizing EDI:

Interfor Accelerates Customer Onboarding for Lumber Invoicing

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Vice President of IT
Interfor

Goals	Solution	Results
Onboard trading partners quickly and seamlessly, including lumber purchasing customers, banks, and transportation partners	Quickly onboard and manage EDI partners using out-of-the-box mappings from Informatica Cloud B2B Gateway to simplify EDI handling with comprehensive monitoring and tracking	Dramatically accelerates time to market for new connections and makes it easier for customers and partners to do business with Interfor
Eliminate custom coding for new EDI connections while phasing out four legacy, homegrown EDI platforms to achieve greater IT agility and reduce ongoing technical debt	Use a simple three-step wizard to set up a new EDI partner, define a communication method, and assign EDI messages for exchange	Reduces the manual effort and coding previously required for setting up new EDI connections, saving time for IT team as well as customers and partners
Increase resiliency of EDI B2B systems to help ensure that invoices and advance shipping notices are sent and processed in a timely manner	Support the order-to-cash workflow with multiple Informatica Intelligent Cloud Services (IICS) instances, increasing the resiliency of B2B integrations	Improves the overall stability, reliability, security, and scalability of business-critical EDI function
		Provides a reliable destination platform for all existing EDI connections to be migrated off legacy (in-house built) platforms

Business Requirements:

• Standardize on a single cloud-based B2B integration solution

• Accommodate multiple protocols and file types for EDI messages

• Scale to eventually onboard hundreds of customers, banks, and trading partners

About Interfor
With operations across North America and customers around the globe, British Columbia-based Interfor has approximately 3,400 employees and an annual capacity of 3.1 billion board feet from world-class sawmilling facilities. It offers a broad line of lumber products for framing to finishing.

British Columbia's expertly managed forests are a foundation of its economy, with lumber and wood pulp accounting for a significant percentage of the province's exports. In Burnaby, BC, Interfor supplies "quality wood from great trees," with all products sourced from Interfor's reliable, sustainable fiber supply.

Over the past decade, Interfor has embarked on a bold new vision to become one of the world's largest lumber providers, selling to customers in North America, Europe, and Asia-Pacific. Its customers range from well-known big box stores to independent distributors. Many of these customers prefer to receive advance shipping notices and pay invoices via electronic data interchange (EDI) to improve speed, increase accuracy, and avoid the costs associated with paper-based processes.
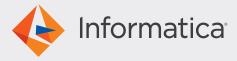
As Interfor grew, it developed four homegrown EDI platforms, each the result of in-house, custom development efforts with large customers. Depending on the customer, the engineering and analysis work to establish a new EDI connection could take a year or more. Interfor wanted a way to onboard customers faster, as well as establish EDI connections with banks and transportation partners. It also wanted to increase the resiliency of its EDI systems to make sure invoices and advance shipping notices are sent and processed in a timely manner.

"We didn't want to keep custom building platforms for EDI transactions, mainly because the time to market was unacceptably slow," says Kelly Gilchrist, Vice President of IT at Interfor. "We wanted to standardize on a mature, commercial B2B integration platform that would allow us to respond much more quickly to new connection requests from our customers and partners."

Streamlining the order-to-cash process

Interfor completed a formal request for information (RFI) procedure, evaluating various solutions and compiling a vendor shortlist. After a 60-day proof of concept with Informatica Cloud B2B Gateway, Interfor knew it had found the right solution.

"Informatica Cloud B2B Gateway was the best fit for our EDI use cases, and Informatica was very responsive to our requests for information and customer reference calls," says Gilchrist. "We quickly became convinced it was the best choice for us."

Informatica®

Interfor used Informatica Cloud B2B Gateway to implement six high-priority connections for key customers, using a simple three-step wizard to set up each connection, define a communication method, and assign EDI messages for exchange. Without any manual coding, Interfor can enable, test, and move EDI messages directly to production. Because Informatica Cloud B2B Gateway runs on Informatica's iPaaS solution, Informatica Intelligent Cloud Services, Interfor is increasing the reliability and resiliency of its B2B integrations, supporting the order-to-cash workflow with multiple cloud instances.

"Having a cloud solution was important to us because we don't have to provide that resiliency or manage the infrastructure ourselves," says Gilchrist. "Instead, we can focus on our core business."

Faster time to market for EDI connections

With Informatica Cloud B2B Gateway, Interfor is accelerating time to market for new connections, allowing it to provide more responsive service to customers that require invoices or advance shipping notices to be sent by EDI. Informatica Cloud B2B Gateway also includes a monitoring system for comprehensive end-to-end tracking, providing full visibility into EDI messages and acknowledgments exchanged with customers and partners.

"With Informatica Cloud B2B Gateway, we've taken the process of setting up a new EDI connection with a customer from a very long time to three weeks," says Gilchrist. "That's given our sales leadership the confidence that when we land a new customer or get a request from an existing customer, they can say 'Sure, we can establish an EDI connection. No problem.' We're just that much easier to do business with now."

The ability to add connections without manual coding reduces the engineering and administrative time previously required for setting up new EDI connections, allowing Interfor's IT team to concentrate on other projects. And with stable, cloud-based integration with trading partners, Interfor is increasing the overall stability, reliability, security, and scalability of its business-critical EDI function.
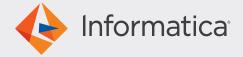
"*With Informatica Cloud B2B Gateway, we have a reliable system that allows us to add, subtract, and modify connections and connection types on request. It's easier administration for us and also for our trading partners.*"

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Migrating hundreds of customers and partners

Over time, Interfor plans to migrate all of its existing EDI trading partners to Informatica and onboard hundreds more, including banks and transportation partners. With the ability to automate secure data exchange through a cloud interface, Interfor can evolve as data standards evolve without maintaining custom integrations.

"Using Informatica Cloud B2B Gateway, we have a reliable system that allows us to add, subtract, and modify connections and connection types on request," says Gilchrist. "It's easier administration for us and also for our trading partners. EDI is now one more thing we can tell our customers and partners that we can do quickly, and do well."

Inside The Solution:

- Informatica Intelligent Cloud Services
- Informatica Cloud B2B Gateway