

EDI from vSync Helps Bil-Jac Foods Doggedly Pursue Electronic Commerce: Results Are "Purr-fect"

COMPANY BACKGROUND

Headquartered in Medina, Ohio, and founded in 1947, Bil-Jac Foods, Inc. is a manufacturer of top-quality dry and frozen dog and cat foods. Bil-Jac clients have repeatedly won top awards at American Kennel Club competitions such as the prestigious Westminster Dog Show at Madison Square Garden in New York City. In addition, some of the world's best-known television-star and movie-star dogs eat Bil-Jac products.

BUSINESS NEED

Bil-Jac Foods initially implemented EDI in 1996. Jo Anne Sanford, Bil-Jac's chief financial officer, recalls, "We installed our original EDI system because our retailer-customers demanded it."

Sanford continues, "After three years it became clear that it would be productive to migrate EDI processes to a Windows-based system in a client-server environment. That's when we turned to our computer consulting company, CBIZ Technologies, who in turn made the contact with vSync, for help."

Bil-Jac also needed a solution that could be integrated with its Microsoft Great Plains System. As a long term Microsoft Great Plains Partner with hundreds of Great Plains EDI installations, vSync was equipped to provide outstanding EDI products and services from Sterling. The result is a fully integrated EDI solution.

A ROBUST AND FLEXIBLE APPROACH

"vSync understood our business processes and was able to streamline the integration of EDI with Microsoft Great Plains," explains Sanford. "Our new EDI system uses an industry standard EDI translator GENTRAN from Sterling Commerce to receive orders, return functional acknowledgments, and create and send invoices."

Sanford notes that the EDI solution is both robust and flexible, yet "easily modified to meet Bil-Jac's particular needs."

She elaborates, "We offer special pricing based on the number of pounds of product a customer orders. The EDI system is able to automatically check the number of pounds ordered and calculate the correct price."

Flexibility is another quality appreciated by Sanford. "Our company consists of four business units, and we've consolidated our EDI processing across these four Bil-Jac entities," she reports. "Thanks to the flexibility of the EDI solution, the system can maintain four separate databases and split order information as needed, sending it to the correct business unit."

She adds, "Another example of the Sterling solution's flexibility occurred recently when a major customer implemented a new replenishment system. We were able to modify their incoming purchase orders and generate the data needed by our business applications. This enabled us to fill the orders quickly and efficiently, in spite of the fact that a new procedure was being used by the retailer."

Sanford observes, "Things are going well with our new EDI system. Our company's owners are very aware of the benefits. They are able to quickly access information such as the quantities of each product ordered and the warehouses from where they will be shipped, giving enough lead time to spot potential low inventory."

STREAMLINED ORDER PROCESSING = IMPROVED SERVICE

Sanford enumerates the benefits of Bil-Jac's new EDI system as follows: "We've greatly enhanced service to our customers as a result of the rapid order processing made possible by the Sterling solution provided by vSync. The processing is rapid because we've eliminated manual data entry and its accompanying errors. And as our company grows, we're able to handle steadily increasing order volumes handled with no increase in staff."

Asked to sum up her company's experience with Microsoft Great Plains and vSync, Sanford says, "vSync has enabled us to implement an excellent EDI solution that is integrated with our internal business processes. The resulting system is easy-to-use, flexible and robust."



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