

Case Study: John Louis Inc.

Headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri, [John Louis Inc.](#) is the leading manufacturer of solid wood closet kits to offer the consumer an alternative choice to wire or melamine products. John Louis Inc.'s products are sold through independent dealers and leading retailers nationwide, including Amazon, Bed Bath & Beyond, Home Depot, Lowe's, NEXCOM, Overstock and Target.

Automating Supply Chain Integration with Trading Partners

John Louis Inc. used to receive its purchase orders, mostly drop ship, either directly from the retailer or through Channel Intelligence's order management solution (formerly Vcommerce). From that point, their IT staff would manually enter order and shipping information into their [QuickBooks](#) accounting system. With hundreds of shipments each day and incoming orders growing fast, John Louis Inc. was ready to automate this process by integrating its Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) with QuickBooks and its shipping solutions (primarily UPS and FedEx).

"We knew that in order to service our retail customers well, we needed to become more proficient in EDI," stated Gregg Tines, Vice President of Sales at John Louis Inc. "This would require John Louis Inc. to implement and manage an EDI system, as well as become mapping experts to adapt invoices, shipping notices and other EDI transactions to meet retailer changes in a timely manner. Adding or appointing internal resources wasn't the answer, especially when third party providers could perform these functions -- and much more -- on our behalf at a reasonable monthly fee. After surveying several outsourcing providers, we chose the market leader, SPS Commerce. Their reputation for superior customer service and existing relationships with most of our retail customers made them an easy choice."

EDI Mapping Made Easy, SPS Does it All

Integrations, or EDI maps, are often the most time-consuming and costly part of any EDI solution. This is not the case with SPSCcommerce.net and SPS' EDI experts. It offers pre-built integrations spanning more than 2,700 workflows across 1,300 retailers. For John Louis Inc., their EDI mapping worries are in the past.

"SPS Commerce has relationships with most of our retail trading partners' buyers and EDI departments," continued Tines. "They often know of future changes to a retailer's transactions well in advance, usually before we do. It is not uncommon for them to proactively change a map to suit a retailer's new requirement before John Louis Inc. is even aware that changes are needed. This proactive attention to our account makes working with SPS Commerce easy, and confirms our choice."

Several of John Louis Inc.'s retail customers had unique EDI requirements that required custom mapping for several EDI transactions. SPS Commerce's trained integration specialists adapted SPSCcommerce.net's existing mappings on behalf of John Louis Inc. and kept them in compliance. These changes were completed at no additional cost to John Louis Inc. as their monthly subscription fee covers all map changes and customer support.

Reducing Order Processing Time from Hours to Seconds

In 2008, John Louis Inc.'s goal was to have 90% of its retail customers integrated using EDI. Today more than a dozen trading partners, representing 65% of their order volume, are connected to John Louis Inc. via SPSCcommerce.net, with all EDI transaction data integrated directly into John Louis Inc.'s internal Quick Books system for a hands-free process.

"Our daily order volume used to take up to three hours to download and manually enter into our internal systems," stated Tines. "This entire process is now accomplished in seconds using SPSCcommerce.net."

SPS Commerce gives retail trading partners, including John Louis Inc., an intelligent way to manage and fulfill orders. Its SPSCcommerce.net solution offers more than 37,000 customers a suite of supply chain services, including fully outsourced EDI to make connecting to trading partner easy and affordable.

