

3 Tips for a Successful EDI Implementation



To implement EDI successfully all organizations must make EDI a part of their overall business strategy with complete buy in from all departments including senior management. Needless to say, good communication between the organization and its trading partners is also an essential component in implementing a successful EDI strategy.

Here are a few tips that should help your organization develop a successful EDI implementation:

1. PUT IN PLACE A DEDICATED PROJECT TEAM



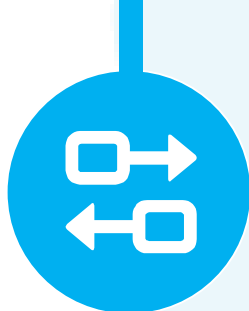
A dedicated project team is needed to determine your overall business objectives (e.g. remove manual data entry to reduce errors and chargebacks, comply with trading partner requirements, etc.) and to define deliverables over a set time period.

2. COMMUNICATE WITH TRADING PARTNERS



Ensure your trading partners have full commitment. Ask for a copy of your trading partners agreement and find out which EDI standards (X12, EDIFACT, Tradacoms, Odette, etc.), transaction sets (850, 810, 846, 856, 997, etc.) and communication protocols (VAN, FTP, AS2, etc.) they will require.

3. USE FIRST IMPLEMENTATION AS A PILOT PROJECT



If you have many trading partners to communicate thru EDI, use your first implementation as a pilot project, one that you can tweak and make improvements to as you move forward. Many organizations make the mistake of trying to add too many trading partners at once. This is a huge drain on your resources and can make trading relationships go sour very fast. A stepped or phased approach may be better. Decide which trading partner relationships are a priority and implement accordingly over a phased basis.