



EDI SOLUTIONS BUYERS GUIDE



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Executive Summary

The purpose of this guide is to provide organizations with a comprehensive resource that will assist them in navigating the process of selecting and implementing an EDI solution. It aims to equip businesses with the knowledge and tools necessary to make informed decisions about EDI, understand its benefits, assess their specific needs, evaluate potential providers, and successfully implement EDI within their organization. The guide will explore key considerations, best practices, and industry insights to help organizations optimize their EDI initiatives and unlock the full potential of electronic data interchange.

By the end of this buyer's guide, organizations should have a solid understanding of EDI, its advantages, and how it can positively impact their operations. They will be equipped with the knowledge to assess their requirements, choose the right EDI solution, and successfully integrate it into their business processes, paving the way for improved efficiency, reduced costs, enhanced collaboration, and a competitive edge in the digital marketplace.

What is Electronic Data Interchange?

Electronic Data Interchange, commonly known as EDI, is a computer-to-computer exchange of business documents between trading partners. It enables the seamless transfer of structured data, such as purchase orders, invoices, and shipping notices, in a standardized format. By eliminating manual data entry and paper-based processes, EDI streamlines business operations reduces errors, and enhances efficiency.

Who Needs EDI?

EDI has come a long way since its inception in the 1960s. Initially, EDI was primarily used by large organizations in industries like automotive and retail to exchange purchase orders and invoices. Over time, it has evolved to support a wide range of document types and industries. Here are some industries which can benefit from EDI,

1. Retail
2. Grocery
3. Food & Beverage
4. Manufacturing
5. Healthcare
6. Pharmaceuticals
7. Government Organizations
8. Banks and Insurance
9. Logistics
10. Automobile

5000+
Trading Partners

For over 35+ years Commport has established great B2B communication relationships with many major retailers across the world. Today we have a network of over 5000+ trading partners with which we can easily integrate and connect. Let Commport take your business to the next level.

"Because making your business more efficient is our business"



How Does EDI Work?

EDI operates on a set of established standards that define the format, structure, and content of business documents. These standards ensure compatibility and interoperability between different systems. EDI messages are typically transmitted through secure networks using various protocols such as sFTP, AS2, and VAN. Upon receipt, the data is translated into a format compatible with the recipient's system, enabling seamless integration and automation of processes.

EDI Document Structure

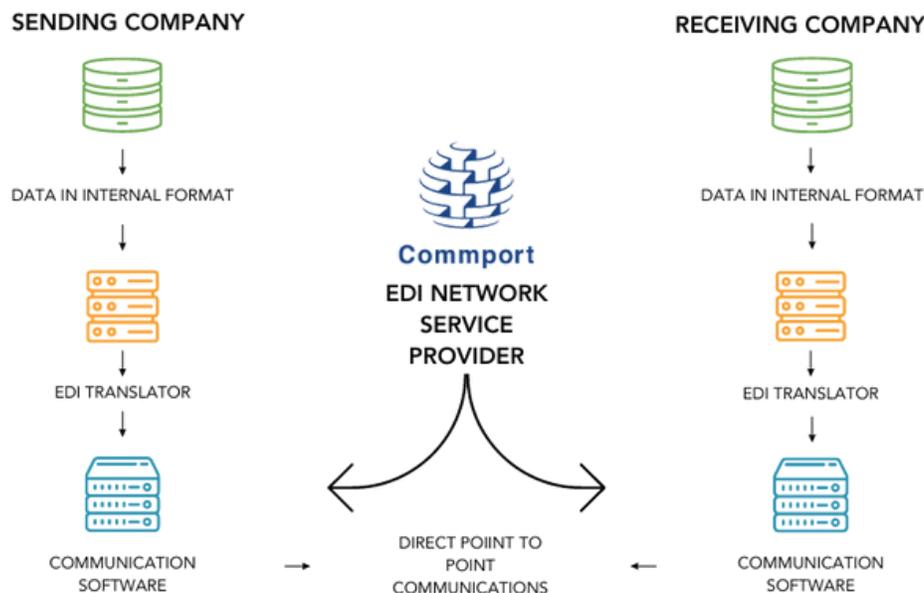
EDI documents consist of structured data segments and elements, organized according to industry-specific standards. These standards define the format, syntax, and semantics of the data exchanged. Examples of EDI document types include purchase orders, invoices, and shipping notices.

EDI Standards

EDI standards ensure interoperability between trading partners by defining the structure and content of EDI documents. The two most widely used EDI standards are ANSI X12 (commonly used in North America) and UN/EDIFACT (used globally). These standards provide a common language for data exchange, facilitating seamless communication between different systems.

Data Translation and Mapping

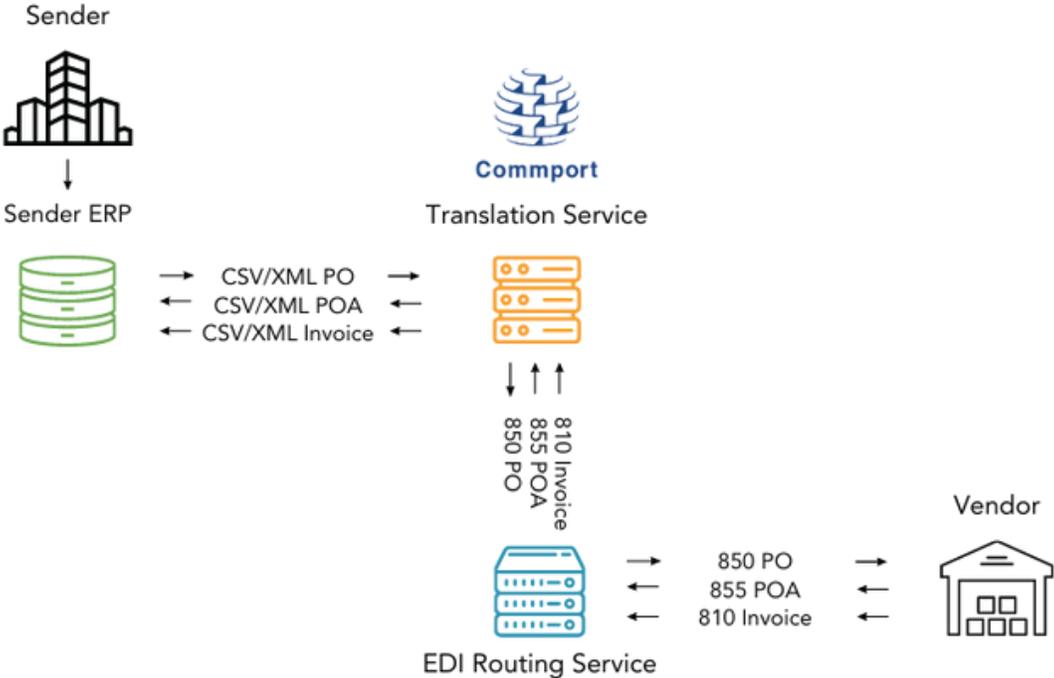
EDI data is typically exchanged in a specific format based on the chosen standard. However, different trading partners may have unique data requirements or use different versions of the same standard. To ensure compatibility, EDI solutions employ data translation and mapping techniques to convert data from one format to another.



EDI Communication Protocols

EDI communication protocols facilitate secure and reliable data transmission between trading partners. Some commonly used protocols include:

- FTP (File Transfer Protocol): A standard network protocol for transferring files between computers.
- AS2 (Applicability Statement 2): A widely adopted protocol that enables secure and encrypted data exchange over the Internet.
- sFTP (Secure FTP): An extension of FTP that adds encryption and authentication for secure file transfers.
- VAN (Value Added Network): VANs are third-party service providers that act as intermediaries that receive, validate, translate, and route EDI transactions between businesses, ensuring smooth and secure communications.



Benefits of EDI

Implementing EDI brings about a myriad of benefits for businesses, from improved operational efficiency to enhanced customer satisfaction. Here are some key advantages of adopting EDI:

1. Cost Savings

By eliminating manual data entry, paper-based processes, and associated errors, EDI reduces operational costs and enhances productivity.

2. Increased Accuracy

EDI eliminates the need for manual data entry, reducing the risk of human errors and ensuring accurate and reliable information exchange.



3. Standout from the Crowd

Today all major retailers require their vendors to be EDI-compliant to do business with them. By investing in the right EDI solution and becoming compliant you can do business with all top retailers compared to your competitors who are not compliant.

4. Faster Processing Time

EDI enables real-time data exchange, accelerating transaction processing and reducing cycle times.

5. Enhanced Visibility

With EDI, businesses gain real-time visibility into their supply chain, enabling better inventory management, demand forecasting, and decision-making.

6. Improved Customer Relationships

EDI enables faster order processing, shipment tracking, and invoicing, leading to improved customer satisfaction and stronger relationships.

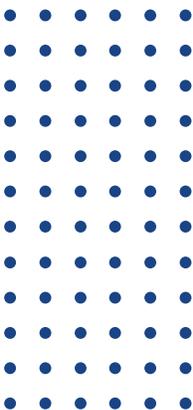
What are EDI X12 Transaction Codes?

EDI documents consist of structured data segments and elements, organized according to industry-specific standards. These standards define the format, syntax, and semantics of the data exchanged. Examples of EDI document types include purchase orders, invoices, and shipping notices.

Each EDI X12 transaction type is differentiated by a unique 3-digit number and there are more than 300 different types of X12 EDI standards for various industries from finance, government, healthcare, insurance, banking, transportation, and many more.

300+
Transaction codes

Established more than 40 years ago, X12 is a non-profit, ANSI-accredited, cross-industry standards development organization whose work is used by an overwhelming percentage of business-to-business transactions upholding America's electronic information exchange.



List of Common EDI X12 Codes

1. EDI 810 - Invoice

EDI 810 is an electronic version of a paper invoice that sellers send to buyers to request payment for products delivered.

2. EDI 832 - Price/Sales Catalog

EDI 832 is used to electronically exchange detailed product and price information between buyers and suppliers.

3. EDI 846 - Inventory Inquiry / Advice

EDI 846 provides information on whether there is sufficient inventory on hand to be shipped, sold electronically, or reordered.

4. EDI 850 - Purchase Order

EDI 850 is an electronic version of the purchase order, it is usually sent to a vendor as the first step in the ordering process

5. EDI 855-Purchase Order Acknowledgement

EDI 855 is sent by a seller to a buyer in response to a Purchase Order.

7. EDI 856 - Advance Ship Notice

EDI 856 is used to communicate the contents of a shipment to the trading partner.

8. EDI 940 - Warehouse Shipping Order

EDI 940 is used for providing shipping instructions from shippers to carriers.

9. EDI 945 - Warehouse Shipping Advice

EDI 945 is usually sent by a 3PL logistics firm to notify a supplier that a shipment has been made.

10. EDI 997 - Functional Acknowledgement

EDI 997 acts as a response to tell supply chain partners that information has been seen and accepted or rejected.

Type of EDI Solutions

1. Direct EDI/Point-to-Point

Direct EDI, sometimes referred to as point-to-point EDI, establishes a single connection between two business partners.

2. Integrated EDI

Integrated EDI solution translates your inbound documents, like purchase orders, from your trading partners' EDI files into a format that can be imported directly into your ERP, accounting, or other business system.

3. Cloud EDI

Cloud EDI is simply conducting EDI through an Internet browser. It replicates paper-based documents in a web form.

4. EDI Outsourcing

EDI Outsourcing also referred to as B2B Managed Services is an option that enables companies to use external specialist resources to manage their EDI environment on a day-to-day basis. This includes software and or hardware, infrastructure, and ongoing updates or changes to EDI specs or maps.



Why Choose Commport as Your EDI Provider?

We opened our doors in 1985, and since then Commport Communications' focus has been to enable business-to-business communications. With over 35 years of experience we can help you find the right solutions for your business needs all in one place. Commport Communications provides a wide range of innovative and comprehensive supply chain management solutions for Electronic Commerce (EC).

1. Experience

For over 35 years, Commport's philosophy has been centered around making our customer's business more efficient through the products, services, and support. Commport continues to scale the peaks of the EDI industry in terms of Customer Service, offering dedicated 24/7 service in french and english.

2. Affordable Pricing

All our EDI solutions are available at affordable pricing, In fact, we offer some of the most competitive rates in the industry. We have EDI solutions for every business type and size. You can choose to pay monthly or yearly depending on your business needs and requirements.

3. Integrations & Connectivity

Our EDI solutions can integrate with any accounting software, ERP, and/or any of your internal business systems. Our EDI specialists will handle all integrations for you.

4. Solution Features

Each of our EDI solutions comes with various features some of which include,

1. Support for various EDI standards
2. Multiple communication protocol support
3. Create ASN and MH10 shipping labels & more

5. Security

We take security very seriously. All of our communication channels are highly secure and use advanced data encryption technology to protect your business transactional documents and sensitive data. We are also a SOC2 complaint-certified company and continue to own and operate our data center in-house.

6. Scalability

Commport EDI solutions allow you to connect with any number of trading partners and the solution grows easily as your business grows. No need to juggle between multiple providers.

7. Customer Support

Commport offers world-class 24/7 customer support in multiple languages. Our staff can speak English, French, Spanish and more.

8. Reputation & Recognition

Our customers have rated us 4.6/5 on some of the accredited 3rd party, independent websites and research organizations like Gartner Inc, Capterra, Software Advice, GetApp & more.

140K
Transactions per day

Commport EDI solutions handles over 140k transactions per day. With a 99.99% uptime and full redundancy, Commport's network infrastructure makes it one of the most reliable EDI companies in the industry. Our commitment to network security and stability has led to major investments in security enhancements to ensure the privacy of our customer's data



What Our Customers Say About Us

Customer Reviews From Capterra



Engel

IT in Canada

Textiles, 51–200 Employees

Used the Software for: 1+ year

Reviewer Source [?](#)

Great Customer Service

★★★★★ 5.0 2 weeks ago **NEW**

+ Pros:

They assist with client integration from the project's inception to its completion.

- Cons:

Currently, there is nothing about Commport that I dislike.



Bhawan

Business Relationship Manager in Canada

Food & Beverages, 1,001–5,000 Employees

Used the Software for: 2+ years

Reviewer Source [?](#)

Longo's Review

★★★★★ 5.0 2 weeks ago **NEW**

+ Pros:

Commport's integration team is highly knowledgeable and excel at what they do. They provide clear and concise answers to all questions, respond in a timely manner, and are overall a pleasure to do business with. I would highly recommend Commport's Integrated EDI for any future customers.

- Cons:

I have yet to find any issues with Commport's Integrated EDI.



Makayla

Customer Service Representative in Canada

Wholesale, 11–50 Employees

Used the Software for: 2+ years

Reviewer Source [?](#)

Invoice Processing

★★★★★ 5.0 3 weeks ago **NEW**

Comments: Commport has helped us with the automation of outgoing 810s directly from our system thus greatly reducing manual input.

+ Pros:

Awesome customer support, customized experience, straightforward and easy to use. Any issues we have encountered have been quickly solved by Commport's team.

- Cons:

More complicated when compared to other EDI solutions that have a more 'basic' user interface but offers more customization overall and quickly becomes easy to navigate

Average score

Overall ★ 4.6

Ease of Use ★ 4.4

Customer Service ★ 4.6

Features ★ 4.2

Value for Money ★ 4.6

Reviews by company size (employees)



● <50 ● 51-200 ● 201-1,000 ● >1,001

Find reviews by score

5 ★ 56%

4 ★ 44%



EDI Provider Evaluation Checklist

Finding the right EDI provider is the first step to your success. It's important to assess various factors such as the EDI system type, cost, customer service, system integrations, deployment methods, testing, and additional aspects. Our comprehensive checklist is designed to assist you in contrasting EDI providers across essential product and service criteria. Additionally, there's space at the end of the checklist for you to include questions specific to your business needs. Use this tool to determine the most suitable EDI provider for your company.

Selection Criteria	Commport Communications	Vendor 2	Vendor 3	Comments
Number of Employees	50+			
Business Address	155 Engelhard Dr, Aurora, ON L4G 3V1			
Years of Experience	35+			
Customer & Analyst Reviews				
Capterra Rating	4.6/5			
Gartner Peer Insights Rating	4.6/5			
Software Advice Rating	4.6/5			
Get App Rating	4.6/5			
Gartner Magic Quadrant	✓			

EDI Provider Evaluation Checklist

Selection Criteria	Commport Communications	Vendor 2	Vendor 3	Comments
Software / Platform Features				
Pre-Mapped Trading Partners	5000+			
Supported Transaction Types	All transaction types			
Supported File Types	XML, CXML, CSV, PDF, iDoc, Flat file, Positional file, Delimited file, Fixed length file			
Communication Type	AS2, FTP, FTPS, sFTP, VAN			
Multi User Support	✓			
Cloud Based Architecture	✓			
Reporting	✓			
Asynchronous Processing	✓			
Alerts	✓			
Data Retention	✓			
Exception Management	✓			

EDI Provider Evaluation Checklist

Selection Criteria	Commport Communications	Vendor 2	Vendor 3	Comments
Integrations				
ERP/Accounting Systems	Acumatica, Microsoft Dynamics, Sage, NetSuite, SAP and 100+ more			
Services				
New Partner Mapping	✓			
Trading Partner Testing	✓			
EDI Testing	✓			
Integration Testing	✓			
Translation Services	✓			
File Integration	✓			
997 Reporting	✓			

EDI Provider Evaluation Checklist

Selection Criteria	Commport Communications	Vendor 2	Vendor 3	Comments
Support				
24/7 Support Available	✓			
Phone Support	✓			
Live Chat Support	✓			
Email Support	✓			
Multilingual Support	English, French, Spanish			
Included Maintenance	✓			
Proactive Mapping Updates	✓			
Proactive Transaction Monitoring	✓			
Knowledge Base / Self Training Tools	✓			
Optional On-site Services	✓			

EDI Provider Evaluation Checklist

Selection Criteria	Commport Communications	Vendor 2	Vendor 3	Comments
Security				
Advanced Encryption	✓			
2FA Authentication	✓			
User Activity Log	✓			
SOC Certification	✓			
GDPR Complaint	✓			
SOC Certified Data Centers	✓			
Disaster Recovery	✓			
Security Audits	✓			
Security Polices	✓			
Security Compliance	✓			

EDI Provider Evaluation Checklist

Each EDI provider may have different setup fees and recurring fees. To accurately measure them we recommend looking at total cost for up to 3 years. **Request Pricing**

Selection Criteria	Commport Communications	Vendor 2	Vendor 3	Comments
Cost of Ownership				
Year 1				
Setup Fees				
Recurring Fees				
Year 2				
Setup fees				
Recurring Fees				
Year 3				
Setup Fees				
Recurring Fees				
Total Cost for 3 Years				

EDI Provider Evaluation Checklist

When discussing your EDI solutions with key stakeholders, consider use cases and how each provider executes on those needs. Use the space below to evaluate your use cases.

Selection Criteria	Commport Communications	Vendor 2	Vendor 3	Comments
Use Case #1	Met <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Work Around <input type="checkbox"/>	Met <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Work Around <input type="checkbox"/>	Met <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Work Around <input type="checkbox"/>	
Use Case #2	Met <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Work Around <input type="checkbox"/>	Met <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Work Around <input type="checkbox"/>	Met <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Work Around <input type="checkbox"/>	
Use Case #3	Met <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Work Around <input type="checkbox"/>	Met <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Work Around <input type="checkbox"/>	Met <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Work Around <input type="checkbox"/>	
Use Case #4	Met <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Work Around <input type="checkbox"/>	Met <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Work Around <input type="checkbox"/>	Met <input type="checkbox"/> Not Met <input type="checkbox"/> Work Around <input type="checkbox"/>	
Question 1				
Question 2				
Question 3				
Question 4				
Question 5				