

EDI and ERP

What would happen if a mid-size company replaced its ERP system from one brand to another? What are the effects on the EDI system?

Yes it does happen, and integration never seems to be a “natural” where EDI and ERP fit together like they had the same mother! SAP IDOC comes the closest unless you find the right “mid-ware”.

Would all the EDI coding be lost? Would manual systems have to be used until the EDI gets re-integrated from scratch? Neither ERP or EDI could be replaced piece by piece. If the data exchange layer between your EDI system and ERP system is well defined, you may not have any effect; but, if the EDI system is well documented including mapping specs, it should ease the pain of ERP system changes.

Enterprise resource planning systems (ERPs) are management information systems (MISs) that integrate and automate many of the business practices associated with the operations or production and distribution aspects of a company engaged in manufacturing products or services. ERP stands for Enterprise Resource Planning Software and is a integrated computer based system used to manage a company's resources effectively. It ensures smooth information amongst various departments in an enterprise or a company and manages work flows. Some of the most common ERP's are: SAP; Baan; JD Edwards (now acquired by Oracle); Siebel; Peoplesoft (now acquired by Oracle); and Microsoft Dynamics. ERP systems are generally classified by their perceived area of excellence (their primary focus): production, logistics or finance. All can and must integrate with EDI.

Replacing your ERP system is a HUGE change for a company and requires a very large migration project. Any ERP consultants should include the communication with mid-ware / EDI in the migration project time lines.

During implementation, you should end up with a few pilot / test partners for your new EDI mappings (from your new ERP *test* database). So, batches of trading partners should be moved over to the new (test) system, get tested and can go live when all “show green”. It's not unusual for such a migration process to take weeks or even months, which falls well within the scope of an ERP migration project.

If you have mid-ware that you map into and from before feeding or extracting the data to/from your ERP system then your programming will change but not your maps. One example is EMANIO: EMANIO EDI to ERP Integration Solutions helps organizations successfully integrate their EDI data into their ERP systems by providing a powerful, flexible data integration and EDI platform that provides out of the box solutions to accelerate the integration process. With EMANIO's powerful data integration capabilities, EMANIO clients can quickly enable a truly integrated system that allows for the fastest possible order-to-cash cycle, allowing organizations to receive, process, invoice and collect on orders in record time. EMANIO provides a powerful, flexible data integration and EDI platform that provides out of the box solutions to accelerate the integration process.

Unless the new ERP system reads raw EDI data, the integrated transaction mappings will have to be modified. The EDI transactions currently traded and their data content should not change at all. The goal would be to be able to send and receive the same transactions and their EDI data content with the new ERP system. The mapping project could be as simple as building the interface file layout and then applying it to the existing mappings. The problems come in when the ERP system and the EDI transactions don't work with the data as it exists within your current integration. Additional data manipulation routines often need to be built to support other integration data requirements. Here is one company that has thought of the conversion: Data Masons Software has specialized in simplifying EDI by providing tight integration and compliance management services. Data Masons' EDI Made Simple® approach offers advanced turnkey EDI solutions for ERP products such as Microsoft Dynamics®. The company's Vantage Point EDI solution provides an end-to-end EDI processing platform that gives companies a competitive edge through seamless EDI integration, predictable ownership costs and comprehensive, ongoing compliance services - all without expensive and disruptive ERP platform customization.

Your company should have a backup or a continuity between your trading partners. At some point, manual intervention might be required like a service bureau (land-based or cloud-based) or going back to EDI-to-FAX.

Changing from one system to another is another thing. Prior planning is essential.