



# PREPARING YOUR INTEGRATION INFRASTRUCTURE TO SUPPORT BUSINESS STRATEGY

**The age of digital business** is increasing productivity and efficiency among companies, but it's also increasing the complexity of B2B operations. The more organizations rely on purpose-specific electronic data interchange (EDI) solutions of old, the more likely they are operating in antiquated, siloed environments. This limits their ability to share data across their own internal systems, or worse, support their business partners' integration requirements.

That's a big problem. Most industries require compliance with electronic-only B2B transaction initiatives. Plus, partners and customers are demanding greater data transparency, faster communication, and transactional compliance at every step of the business cycle.

Upper management has a strategic need to pull together data from across the supply chain for deeper insight into day-to-day operations, more informed decision making, and more effective interactions. However, IT can only deliver on this expectation with an infrastructure optimized for integration, and most infrastructures simply aren't.

## A WIDESPREAD PROBLEM

When technology market research firm Vanson Bourne surveyed 700 business decision makers worldwide, 87 percent called their business network very or extremely critical to success. However, 76 percent admitted that they don't collaborate effectively with their business network. Only 30 percent reported full end-to-end integration throughout their value chain.

The older legacy B2B integration solutions are, the less likely their ability to accommodate evolving document standards and communication protocols, cloud services integration, or emerging security measures. That leaves companies that rely on legacy solutions struggling to keep up with the constant changes to EDI system instal-

lations and configurations necessary to onboard and work with new business partners.

IT must convince management that existing tools and systems aren't enough to deliver the optimal performance the business requires. To do that, IT needs additional investment to build a more highly integrated infrastructure.

## THE BUSINESS VALUE OF IMPROVED INTEGRATION

This requires IT integrators to make a business case for that additional investment. These three value propositions are a good starting point:

- 1. Greater integration** improves end-to-end visibility into supply chain transactions, which improves both supply chain management and strategic planning.
- 2. Ensuring access to data across multiple systems** improves the results of analytics and business intelligence (BI), driving more accurate predictions and actionable decisions.
- 3. Replacing multiple siloed integration solutions** that were implemented for specific problems with a simplified, streamlined, unified integration system that crosses all business-critical systems improves IT operations. Specifically, it reduces IT maintenance, personnel demands, and integration time and costs; improves flexibility; and frees the IT staff to work on more strategic projects. It also allows companies to create an integration Center of Excellence that optimizes resources.

As a direct result of integration modernization, companies can automate and streamline internal and shared processes, improve data exchange among existing systems, and resolve business problems faster. Appropriately, these were the top three priorities cited by respondents to the Vanson Bourne survey.

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Additionally, improving infrastructure makes it easier to add new integrations—not just internally, but also for new customer and partner onboarding. This increases collaboration, productivity, and both user and customer satisfaction.

## SETTING GOALS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Since few companies are in a position to redesign their infrastructure from a blank slate, they must next evaluate their current state of integration and benchmark it against peers.

Typically, organizations progress through these stages of maturity. See the chart below to find out where yours falls.

As IT moves end-to-end integration incrementally forward, it delivers measurable improvements in performance and user satisfaction over time. This also enhances IT's status and perceived value to the enterprise—a bonus for CIOs, who reported in IDG's 2016 *State of the CIO* survey that “aligning IT initiatives with business goals” and “improving IT operations/systems performance” are their top two current concerns.


## MOVING THE BUSINESS TOWARD INTEGRATION MATURITY

Replacing individual integration solutions with an enterprise-wide integration system is a necessary goal, but

not a minor one. At many companies, assigning it to the already overcommitted in-house IT staff is the same as not pursuing it at all.

REMED I addresses these challenges with offerings that include short-term support for business/data integration and EDI projects, managed services that let clients retain control of integration infrastructure while REMEDI maintains it, and staffing/training services that help clients build integration competency in-house. REMEDI helps companies assess, deploy, maintain, and support leading EDI, integration, and communications software packages at every stage of the maturity lifecycle, from project planning and interface development to system audits and upgrades.

By [working with REMEDI](#), companies can create a unified integration system that improves collaboration across the business network, both now and in the future as new standards emerge and integration requirements evolve.

 **CONTACT REMEDI TODAY**

to find out how to mitigate your integration pain points and move your organization forward toward greater integration maturity—and therefore, toward even greater efficiency, productivity, and profitability.



## INTEGRATION MATURITY SPECTRUM — WHERE DOES YOUR BUSINESS FALL?

	Importance of value chain	Level of integration and collaboration	Understanding and level of synchronization	Proactive/reactive about integration	Integration and collaboration ambitions	Integration and collaboration tools used
<b>Beginner</b>	Unlikely to realize	None or little	None or little	Reactive	EDI compliance requirement driven by customers	Entry-level on-premise EDI solution, general or industry-specific cloud EDI solution
<b>Intermediate</b>	Slightly likely to realize	Partial	Low	Reactive to slightly proactive	EDI compliance requirement by customers, some EDI with others in the business network	On-premise EDI solution, general or industry-specific cloud EDI solution, or a combination
<b>Advanced</b>	Realize	Modest	Some	Proactive	EDI and B2B integration (B2Bi) collaboration compliance with customers, EDI and B2Bi collaboration among large/medium (revenue or transaction volume) members of the business network	On-premise EDI solution or B2B integration gateway, EDI/B2Bi cloud solution, or a combination
<b>Expert</b>	Realize	Full	Moderate	Proactive	B2Bi and supply chain collaboration compliance with customers, EDI and B2Bi collaboration among large/medium (revenue or transaction volume) members of the business network	On-premise B2B integration gateway, cloud integration solution, or a combination
<b>Professional</b>	Realize	Full	Full	Highly proactive	Full supply chain collaboration with members of the business network to their highest level of capability	On-premise comprehensive integration suite, cloud integration solution, or a combination