



Improved Communications, Enhanced Data Security from EXTOL Helps Covenant Transport Go the Extra Mile for Partners

In 1986, Chattanooga, Tenn.-based Covenant Transportation Group launched its domestic carrier business with 25 trucks, 50 trailers and a foundational trading partner network.

Nearly 25 years later, Covenant provides temperature controlled trucking, regional delivery and longhaul delivery to a widespread network that features more than 400 trading partners, 3,000 trucks and 7,000 trailers. This expansion has seen Covenant grow to rank as one of the 15 largest truckload carriers in the U.S. in terms of revenue.

During a time of significant growth, Covenant quickly realized it needed to upgrade its internal technology from the AS400 platform it had been using to better monitor transactions and accommodate varying EDI standards. To better manage the ever-changing volume of interactions between its carriers and its growing partner map, Covenant required more scalable, quick-turn EDI tools that would enable smooth integration. In addition, Covenant sought greater flexibility for its integration services to allow for configuration with various business processes.

REPAVING THE EDI ROAD

In 2009, Covenant implemented the TMWSuite® transportation management software package from TMW Systems. While TMWSuite helped Covenant expand its visibility and logistics planning capabilities, the company quickly discovered it required additional assistance for its EDI activities.



“In order to ensure proper transaction completion and maintain communication across our network, we felt we required a more robust enterprise-level EDI mapping solution,” said Eric Whitton, vice president of IT for Covenant Transport. “Additionally, as our partners and internal staff adapted to the new software, we needed to ensure our transaction processes would not be vulnerable to security threats, and that our partners’ information would remain secure during the transition and beyond.”

After evaluating three additional EDI providers, Covenant decided that EXTOL’s Business Integrator (EBI) solution provided the best combination of configurable, automated business processes and integration services to connect its applications and partners.

“Through my experience within the industry, I had heard nothing but great things about the reliability and efficiency of EXTOL’s services, and kept a close eye on their progress throughout the years,” said Whitton. “When we realized our need for EDI tools, EXTOL was one of the first providers we reached out to, and we were instantly drawn to how EBI could enhance our business activity monitoring and process synchronization capabilities.”

In addition to EBI, Covenant implemented EXTOL’s Secure Exchange (ESX), a standards-compliant solution that protects the privacy and integrity of partner data shared online through AS2 protocol encryption. As a result, only Covenant and its select authorized users could access transaction information.

OVERCOMING THE SPEED BUMPS

Facing greater demands as a result of the sheer network size and the volume of information exchanged, EXTOL's support team worked overtime with Covenant to ensure its solution was scalable to the carrier's needs.

"The amount of partner transaction data we process on a daily basis is considerable, but we were confident that EXTOL's team would work with us to make the necessary adjustments," said Whitton.

"The customizability of its software and knowledge and patience of its support team were several of the key factors that led us to choose EXTOL from the beginning. EXTOL provided us with all the necessary resources to solve our throughput challenges, and the system has performed without a significant glitch since."

Having seamlessly worked through the onboarding process, Covenant continues to work with EXTOL's support team to ensure ongoing EBI efficiency. Covenant's partners have reaped the benefits of the switch to EXTOL as well, enjoying uninterrupted transaction flow during implementation and seamless communications and tracking.

DRIVING TIGHTER SECURITY

With such a substantial quantity of information moving back and forth within its network, and the potential holes in security created by the operating platform upgrade, it became even more critical for Covenant to secure its electronic communications. As a result, Covenant immediately recognized the benefits of ESX, a solution that would enable

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Covenant Transport



the carrier to safely conduct business with partners that use AS2 compliant systems.

ESX creates a secure proxy layer that enables only Covenant and its partners to unlock encrypted data. Additionally, ESX immediately alerts Covenant to problematic events, including system failures and configuration interruptions, which can occur during communication.

EXPERIENCE PAVES WAY FOR EXTOL/TMW CONNECTION

When conferring with TMW regarding the effectiveness of its transportation management plan, Covenant noted it had filled the EDI gap with a trusted partner in EXTOL. Intrigued by Covenant's successes, TMW took notice.

"TMW saw a great opportunity to enhance its offering for future customers, and eliminate the hassle of finding a third-party EDI source for current customers,

Covenant Transport®

by working with EXTOL as well," said Whitton. "We were happy to discuss the improvements EXTOL brought to our partner communications, and as a result, TMW now offers EXTOL's EDI tools within its transportation suite."

As the requests of its more than 400-member partner network continue to change, EXTOL and Covenant are eager to continue growing together.

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Learn more about EXTOL's B2B Integration Solutions:

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