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NFI Case Study

NFI Sets Up New Trading Partners in Days with Orderful's Cloud EDI Platform

Business Challenge

It took NFI an average of 10 weeks to onboard new trading partners on its EDI system. As the company transitioned from a packaged transportation management system to a homegrown one, it began to look for a cloud EDI solution that would streamline onboarding and allow business users to manage EDI connections without IT intervention.

Solution

NFI chose Orderful to eliminate the need to manage infrastructure on premises, move infrastructure into the cloud and decrease the time required to onboard new trading partners.

Results

🕒 Reduced onboarding time by 90%, resulting in new partner setup within 4 to 5 days

👤 Enables business users to manage EDI without the need for developers

↔️ Increases financial flexibility by paying by trading partnership

NFI is the sixth-largest dedicated carrier and fourth-largest warehouse provider in the U.S. Driven by the desire to provide first-class service, the company recently realized that the EDI capabilities within its transportation management system (TMS) were holding it back.



“Getting a new customer up and running with EDI was taking us 10 weeks, on average,” recalls David Broering, President of Integrated Logistics, NFI. “Some integrations dragged on for six months. That was due to a combination of our previous system being complicated to set up and our trading partners not being responsive enough with information.”

When NFI decided to build a new TMS, the company took the opportunity to research modern EDI solutions. Among the five solutions NFI evaluated, Orderful soon stood out.

“Most of the other solutions we looked at were just typical on-premise EDI solutions with very little flexibility,” explains Broering. “Our customers tend to use more than one of our services but want to connect with us through a single EDI channel. We needed a platform that could support that. We wanted to transition our existing EDI relationships to our new TMS with no business interruption and no involvement of our IT staff. Only Orderful empowered our business users to develop rules and build workflows on their own. We also loved the Orderful architecture—specifically, the ability to use a modern API to integrate new trading partners and the ability to test connections before going live.”

Busy Carrier Shaves Weeks Off EDI Processes

Because NFI couldn't afford any business interruptions, the company planned a gradual two-year transition to Orderful. The flexible Orderful architecture made it possible for NFI to migrate its trading partners to the new platform on its own timeline. As soon as employees had fully embraced the Orderful API, NFI decided that all future EDI customers would go straight into Orderful. NFI now has at least 70 trading partners set up in Orderful and is relying on the platform for tens of thousands of transactions per month. Using Orderful's modern API, NFI now sets up trading partners in a fraction of the time it previously spent.

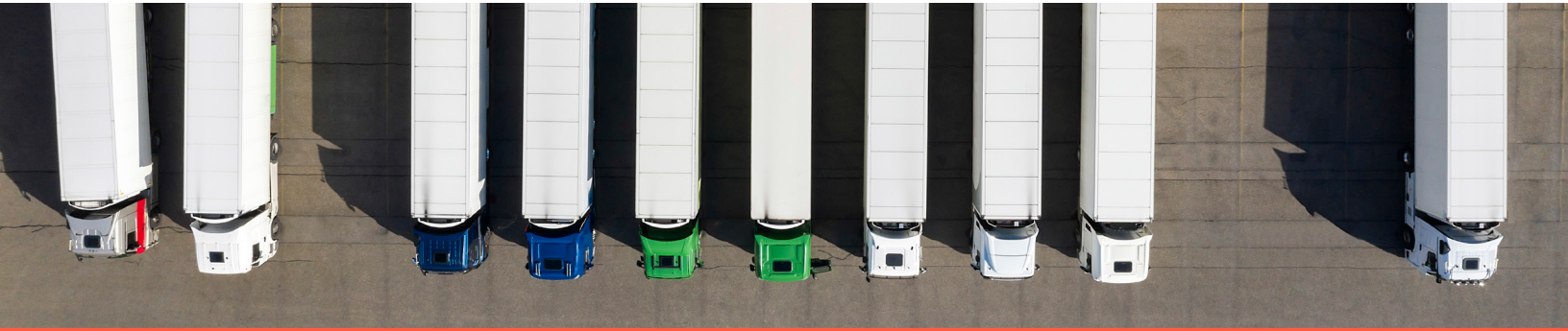
4-5
DAYS
ONBOARDING TIME



“With Orderful, we routinely set up new partners within four or five days,” reports Pete Amico, Project Manager, NFI. “Much of that is because so many partners are already in Orderful’s network, which makes it easy to establish new connections. But some of that is due to customer responsiveness, which is better now because Orderful is so much easier to use.”

In addition, Orderful makes it easier for NFI to modify connections in response to changing customer needs. “On our previous system, whenever a customer made changes on their end, we would need to file a support ticket with our IT staff and wait for them to update the connection,” explains Amico. “With Orderful, our business users can make those changes on the fly.”

If problems arise in EDI connections, NFI can easily troubleshoot and pinpoint the reasons. Orderful's platform provides real-time validation against any trading partner guideline, meaning that users can immediately understand what data needs to be fixed. Orderful enables NFI to trace



transactions all the way back to the customer and review all the data involved. These validation errors are resolved by users writing business rules in the platform. The flexibility to solve problems in real-time for a business analyst has eliminated the need for the engineering team to look at EDI. Orderful is shifting the problem away from a technical challenge into a business rule that anyone can write. Because the Orderful Network publishes guidelines and requirements, NFI can self-service test each connection thoroughly before putting it into production.

“With Orderful, our EDI capabilities have taken a huge step forward,” says Amico. “We now have total transparency into every EDI connection, so that when some subset of a transmission is non-compliant, we can easily find the reason. We can also test connections between our TMS and Orderful before we go live. All of this helps us to deliver on our promise of first-class service.”



Cloud EDI Pays Off with Lower Total Cost of Ownership

Transitioning to a new TMS has been a major undertaking for NFI. Throughout its implementation process, NFI has engaged a dedicated support representative within Orderful. This strategy has paid off – the support representative has gotten to know NFI’s business and can advise on support and development decisions that will have the greatest impact for the company.

“Having an Orderful partner who understands our business has been invaluable,” says Amico.

“Our support rep knows how to keep us focused on doing only the work that will create value for us in terms of building and managing integrations more efficiently. This gives us the confidence to approach customers knowing that we can provide an outstanding partnership.”



NFI believes switching to Orderful as part of its TMS implementation has been worth the time and effort. Working on the Orderful platform puts NFI in a position to process transactions more cost-effectively in the future.

“Managing our EDI connections on Orderful gives us far more financial flexibility,” explains Broering. “Our previous EDI provider charged us a flat fee per customer per month, regardless of how many transactions. And there was a hefty fee to set up each new connection. I think they were generally coming out ahead on that. With Orderful, we form new connections quickly and cheaply and then pay by the transaction, which is great in a business where shippers can come and go year to year.”

NFI plans to continue growing its business.

Broering is glad he found an EDI partner focused on doing the same.



“When we first saw Orderful, we thought, ‘Wow, can this platform actually do what it says it can do?’” Broering concludes. “We soon found out that it can. Orderful has satisfied every one of our needs in a partner. Because they’re run by someone who understands the pain points of EDI and knows how to scale a business, we’re completely confident that Orderful will continue driving our success for years to come.”

*David Broering
President of Integrated Logistics
NFI*

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Orderful is a complete cloud EDI platform for manufacturers, distributors, retailers, and technology companies. Forward-thinking companies are using Orderful to replace their existing EDI infrastructure. Our product is an API that enables companies to connect once and trade EDI data with their supply chain. Our customers get to consolidate their EDI integration complexity, quickly enable trading partners as self-service and reduce costs.



NFI is a fully integrated North American supply chain solutions provider headquartered in Camden, N.J. Privately held by the Brown family since its inception in 1932, NFI generates more than \$3 billion in annual revenue and employs over 15,000 associates. NFI owns facilities globally and operates more than 60 million square feet of warehouse and distribution space. Its dedicated fleet consists of over 4,600 tractors and 13,000 trailers operated by 3,900 company drivers and leveraging partnerships with 500 independent contractors. NFI has a significant drayage presence at nearly every major U.S. port, leveraging the services of an additional 1,500 independent contractors. The company's business lines include dedicated transportation, distribution, e-commerce fulfillment, brokerage, transportation management, port services, intermodal, global logistics, and real estate. For more information about NFI, visit www.nfindustries.com or call 1-877-NFI-3777.

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