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Sethmar Transportation Case Study

Sethmar Transportation Chooses Orderful to Modernize EDI Infrastructure and Enable Scaling at Speed

Business Challenge

Sethmar Transportation uses its extensive carrier relationships to help clients keep their freight moving in load-dense markets. As Sethmar Transportation grew, the young company found it difficult to start working with new customers because it lacked control and visibility into the process of onboarding EDI trading partners.

Solution

Sethmar implemented Orderful's modern EDI platform as the central system for managing its EDI operations allowing them to control the onboarding of new partners. By managing all EDI relationships in the cloud, Sethmar can effortlessly integrate its existing TMS platform, as well as any future solutions it may adopt, to Orderful for smooth uninterrupted business transactions.

Results

Configured EDI connections in less than 48 hours

Onboarded 17 trading partners with no EDI expert on staff

Reduced time spent on EDI troubleshooting each month through process optimization

Avoided hiring a full-time employee dedicated to EDI data management

In 2017, several colleagues recognized the industry's shift from a static supply chain to a continuous one and purchased Sethmar Transportation. Today, the Kansas-based 3PL has three additional offices in the U.S. Sethmar's 85 employees work to provide excellent communication and service as they deliver lasting logistics solutions. Sethmar specializes in over-the-road freight, including temperature-controlled freight such as alcohol, food, and beverages as well as dry-van and agricultural loads.

From day one, Sethmar's founders aimed to grow the company quickly. But like many startups, Sethmar struggled to find the technology mix that would enable it to deliver elite levels of service as cost-effectively as possible. The company initially managed its loads on a homegrown transportation management system (TMS) that resembled a spreadsheet. Although the application worked well, it was server-based and couldn't provide adequate performance to employees in Sethmar's newly established Colorado and Arkansas branches.

Sethmar moved its operations to a TMS. Although the solution provided the performance that the growing company had sought, its EDI functionality wasn't robust enough to meet Sethmar's needs.

"Our TMS employed an in-house EDI team to set up connections for customers like us," recalled Mike Tuley, Vice President of Operations, Sethmar. *"But once our connections went live, we had no visibility into the status of our shipments."*
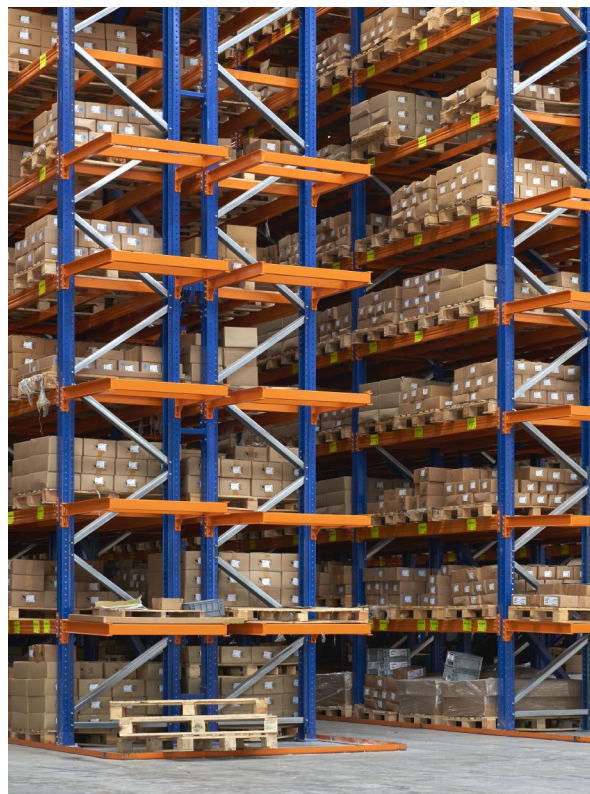
Mike Tuley
Vice President of Operations
Sethmar

This setup became even more cumbersome when there was a problem with an EDI integration. Sethmar had to wait for its vendor to perform fixes, delaying revenue.

"When something goes wrong with a customer shipment, time is of the essence," explained Tuley. "With our TMS vendor controlling the EDI setup, we had to contact their service desk and work on their timeline, even as drivers or warehouse managers were calling us for updates on their shipments. It became clear to us that we needed more control over, and visibility into, our EDI activities."

Cloud Solution Promises EDI Autonomy

Because Sethmar was in hyper-growth mode from the day of its launch, the company focused relentlessly on engaging carriers, putting loads on the board, and providing updates to customers. But the company had little time or manpower to devote to optimizing these processes. When Tuley joined the company, he aimed to maximize efficiency, especially for data entry. He soon discovered that the most efficient way to upgrade the company's EDI function was to move to Orderful's modern EDI.

"We met an Orderful account executive, and he had an infectious enthusiasm for modern EDI," Tuley recalled. "He demoed Orderful and showed us how easy it would be to go in and configure rules ourselves with the rules engine, rather than waiting for our TMS vendor to make changes. That's what convinced us that Orderful is a natural partner for us. We want to be able to build as many EDI connections as we need. Orderful makes that easy."

Storing EDI Integrations Centrally Enables TMS Flexibility

As soon as Sethmar started to work with Orderful, the Orderful account executive analyzed Sethmar's EDI implementation process and came up with a strategy. For each new integration from then on, Tuley would set up a call with Sethmar's TMS vendor and the new customer to discuss the technical details of the integration. This approach immediately eliminated many delays and problems.
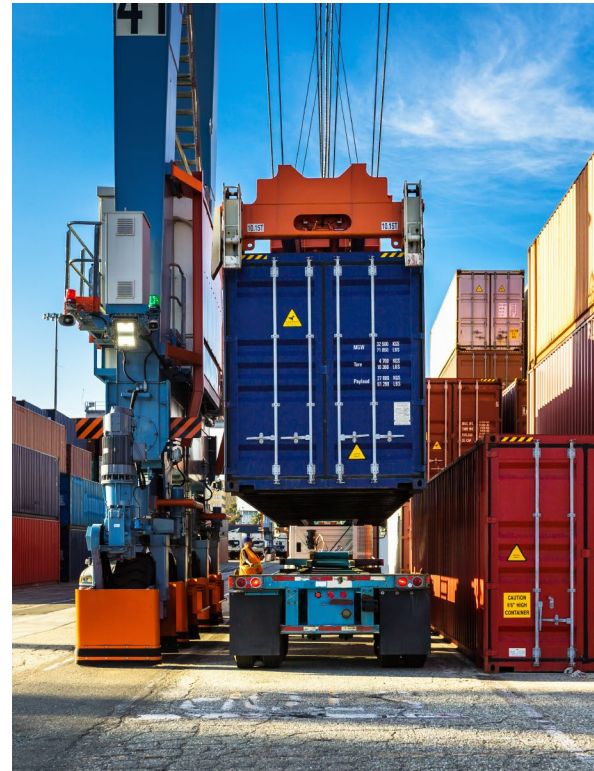
Encouraged by the prospect of forming EDI connections more easily in the cloud, Sethmar set the goal of adding a new EDI integration each month. When the company fell short of this goal, they realized it was because they were dependent on outside services to configure new connections which often caused delays.

"Orderful has dramatically increased the efficiency of adding trading partners," Tuley reported. "But our outsourced service provider has to configure each connection on their end, and they have limited resources to meet our timelines."

Seeking to eliminate this bottleneck, Sethmar is now embarking on a multiyear project to create an in-house solution that they can control. Tuley is confident that Orderful will help make the transition as smooth as possible.

"We're so glad that our EDI integrations are stored within Orderful," said Tuley. "When it comes time to switch systems, we can simply unplug Orderful from the old system and plug it into the new one. From there, we'll speed up the onboarding process even more."

Meanwhile, Sethmar continues to use a second TMS platform to handle its less-than-truckload freight because this system offers direct API connections to all the major LTL carriers. Sethmar's main TMS doesn't integrate with the secondary system because it is a competitor, so the company uses Orderful to connect the two systems.

"That connection is a huge timesaver for us," Tuley reported. "We would have needed another full-time rep to go into one system and manually pull data out to put into the other system. With Orderful, we've eliminated that need."

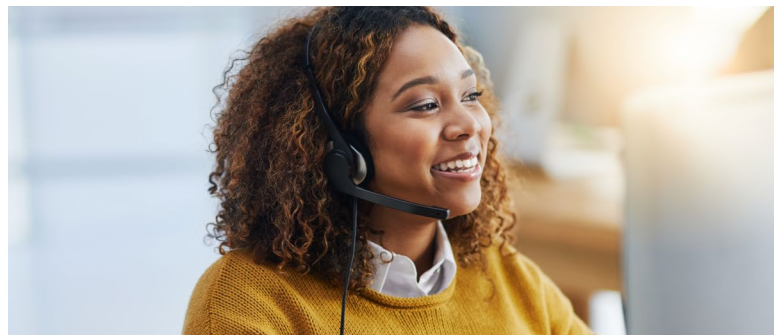## Greater Visibility Saves Weeks of Work Per Year

Now that Sethmar is live on Orderful, the company can submit the specifications for a new trading partner and then receive confirmation that Orderful has configured the connection in less than 48 hours. From there, Sethmar works with its TMS vendor to bring the connection online. Thanks to this simplicity, Sethmar has added 17 EDI trading partners in the cloud despite not having an EDI expert on staff until recently.

As Sethmar runs more and more loads across the U.S., the company will rely on the visibility within Orderful to troubleshoot EDI problems and address them promptly. The company's legacy TMS platform made it difficult to achieve this level of responsiveness.

"Orderful provides acknowledgement status metrics that enable us to quickly determine whether we have problems and then drill down from there to figure out exactly where the problems are and what's causing them," Tuley explained. *"This visibility is already saving us many hours—and if we keep growing at this rate, it will save us weeks each year."*

Sethmar is also benefiting from Orderful's extensive network of trading partners. When Sethmar wants to add a customer or partner that is already on the Orderful network, it can simply connect its TMS platform to Orderful's configuration for that company.

"There have been several instances already where we formed a new relationship and were pleasantly surprised to find the company already in Orderful's network," said Tuley. *"From there, it was just a matter of plugging into that connection, which is a huge help. Between Orderful's network and their responsive, expert customer support staff, we have all the assistance we need to keep building relationships that boost our bottom line."*

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Orderful is the Modern EDI Platform that gives logistics providers, retailers, manufacturers, and technology companies full control to onboard, manage, and resolve all of their trading partner relationships and transactions in real-time. With its unique ability to digitize trading guidelines, Orderful customers build a single API integration against consolidated requirements for all partners. Orderful automatically transforms data to EDI without complex mapping and validates transactions against actual trading guidelines in real-time. Orderful proactively identifies errors before transactions are sent and provides business analysts with a point and click business rules engine to correct errors instantly to keep your supply chain operating smoothly. Orderful is EDI Done Right!

SETHMAR
TRANSPORTATION

Sethmar Transportation, a dynamic Kansas City-based company with a growing footprint, offers no-surprises shipping solutions its customers can count on. With capabilities including truckload, less-than-truckload, bulk, temperature-controlled and intermodal, Sethmar can handle everything from raw materials to finished, food-grade goods. Led by a team of logistics industry veterans determined to create a better experience, Sethmar runs on trust, innovation and proven know-how. Those attributes, combined with infrastructure support including strategically-placed consolidation warehouses across the U.S., a robust cross-border program and advanced self-service tracking technology, allow Sethmar to align its solutions with your priorities.