



intelligentXchange®

# Case Study

## Lifetime Brands

**LOCATION:**

Garden City, NY

**INDUSTRY:**

Retail and Manufacturing

**PRODUCT TYPE:**

Home Goods

**EDI SOFTWARE:**

Gentran

**BACK OFFICE SYSTEMS:**

SAP

**PRIMARY USAGE OF IX:**

Research efficiency and chargeback dispute resolution

**DEPARTMENTS USING IX:**

EDI, compliance, customer service and purchasing



### Situation

With thousands of business documents being passed back and forth via EDI every day, Lifetime Brands, like so many other companies in the retail supply chain, found that supporting its internal informational needs was becoming overwhelming.

“We were getting countless emails from customer service and compliance asking, ‘When can we get a copy of this purchase order (PO)? Did we send out this invoice, and was it accepted?’” said Charles Gardella, EDI and SAP programming manager at Lifetime Brands.

“My team was constantly cutting and pasting raw EDI data into emails and highlighting things like purchase orders (POs), item numbers and quantities. It was pretty time-consuming and was costing us hours in productivity,” Gardella said.

### Solution

Prior to IntelligentXchange (IX), errors that resulted from a partner transmission would have to be corrected and then loaded one at a time. Now Lifetime Brands receives proactive alerts on all EDI errors and is able to correct and reload documents all at once. What’s more, the data is broken down into an easy-to-read format, allowing Lifetime Brands employees in compliance, purchasing, finance and customer service to leverage its capabilities.

“When I saw that IX allowed us to see the lifecycle of a document from purchase order to invoice all on one screen, I was sold.”

—Charles Gardella, EDI and SAP programming manager at Lifetime Brands.

Gardella went on to say, “When they click on ‘document view’ they can see the ‘human readable’ version, which has stopped the cutting and pasting and provided customer service with a self-service tool that allows them to solve issues on their own in real-time.”

Lori Julius, vendor compliance manager for Lifetime said, “Before IX, I was actually working with raw EDI data; now it’s all translated into plain English. I used to spend a ton of time trying to find the data to dispute chargebacks, but IX makes it easy to go through the data, print it out and extract the right information.” She added, “It’s a great tool to use for ‘ship to’ information and validate that the information is coming in and set up correctly in our SAP system.”

Even the company’s vice president of purchasing uses IX to check incoming POs. “Before he’d have to send it to compliance and wait, but since it’s now presented in a way he can understand, he can check prices, changes, etc., on his own,” said Jerry Glinnen, Director of Vendor Compliance at Lifetime Brands. He added, “The alerts and research capability allows us to identify potential issues. It also allows us to research issues in greater depth than we ever did before, because it’s all self-service, and eliminates the need to interrupt the other teams to find the data we need.”



## Driving Business Impact

By integrating IX, Lifetime Brands has saved its Customer Service team at least 10 hours of research time each week and the Compliance Department another three to five hours. But the platform also has saved the company raw dollars.

“We have a particular retailer that requires we route orders by a specific date, but we were not sending that date down to our warehouse,” Glinnen said, adding that the problem was resulting in chargebacks multiple times per month.

“We had developers work on the warehouse management system and make a spot for that date, but we were still getting chargebacks,” he continued. “We used [ix] to research the issue and found that the programmers never finished the job—they set the date for one distribution center, but not the other. How much did it save me? I don’t know, but I don’t see the deductions coming through.”

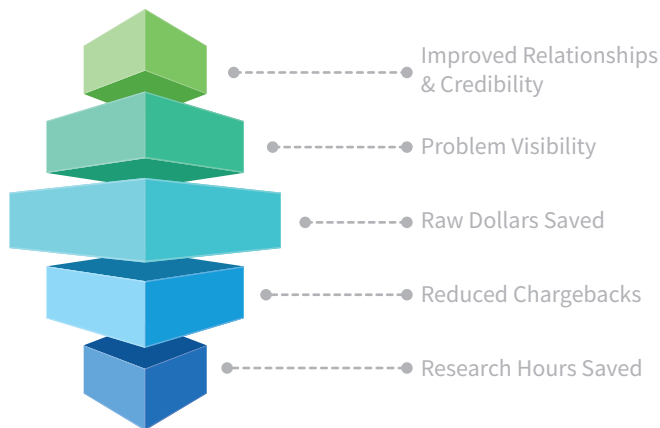
Not only did IX help Lifetime Brands discover the problem, but it also became part of the solution. “This distribution center doesn’t use SAP, so without [ix] the only solution would be to look up that information for them ahead of time and say, ‘Hey, you’ve got this PO in your building and you need to route it by this date,’” Glinnen added. “Now we’ve trained them to self-serve by looking it up in IX, and it’s the first time we’ve been able to have our warehouse people do that.”

## Relationships

Lifetime Brands has always maintained great relationships with its retailers, but IX has further strengthened and organized those connections by allowing the company to provide additional research up front when issues arise.

“Previously, if we were presented with a chargeback for a late shipment, it was very challenging to pull together the data to research the issue, so disputing it was difficult and very time consuming,” Glinnen said.

“Now with IX, if we go to dispute something with a retailer we can print the raw data as well as the English version, make a PDF, send it off to the customer and we’ve got legs to stand on,” he added. “So it saves us from embarrassment too, because when you dispute and your ducks aren’t in a row you lose your credibility.”



[intelligentXchange]<sup>®</sup>

intelligentxchange.com

877.334.3678

ixsales@1edisource.com