Combined Transport
Maximizes EDI to Improve Ease of Use and Simplify Audit Compliance

Industry
Transportation

Challenge
Balance the need for secure communications and compliance demands with ease of use

Results
• Automated EDI data to streamline and enhance key processes
• Simplified audit prep time by tracking information in real time
• Integrated password support to facilitate secure file sharing

Products
• Rocket® R/Link

Application
• Secure File Sharing

Company

Combined Transport, Inc., provides flatbed, heavy haul, and specialized transportation solutions to customers throughout the 48 contiguous United States and Canada. Founded by Richard Card in 1980, Combined Transport continues to operate as a family-owned business in Central Point, Oregon. With state-of-the-art technology to ensure complete and reliable service, the company's mission is to be a growth-oriented service provider, the preferred employer for its drivers, and the preferred transportation provider for all of the company's shippers.

Challenge

To handle critical business functions such as purchase orders, invoices, shipping notices, and order confirmations, Combined Transport relies on Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), to share information with partners and suppliers over the File Transfer Protocol (FTP).

Over time, the technical team at Combined Transport determined that FTP was simply not robust enough to handle all the company's complex information- sharing requirements.

Combined Transport needed a way to safely and securely manage EDI while still benefiting from the ease of use of its FTP standards. Audit compliance had also become an increasingly important issue. Effectively tracking and cataloging information was imperative for meeting both regulatory and internal demands.

The company had been using the Rocket® UniVerse MultiValue database platform and Rocket® SB/XA software, a fast track application development tool, for many of its critical operations. According to Jon Card, Vice President of Special Projects at Combined Transport, "We have been working with Rocket for several years, and we knew how easy they were to work with." Based on that successful experience, the company again turned to Rocket to bridge the gap in its technologies and add new, much-needed functionality.

Solution

After looking at a number of technologies to supplement FTP, the technical team selected Rocket® R/Link. Rocket R/Link is a secure file and data transfer solution that lets organizations track and use relevant information in real time. It is designed primarily for enterprises that need a solution to run effectively on a variety of devices—including mobile—without compromising control of the underlying security and networking infrastructure. The fact that R/Link also integrates with Rocket UniVerse and Rocket SB/XA made it an easy and logical choice for the shipping company.

Results

The comprehensive integration between Rocket R/Link, Rocket UniVerse, and Rocket SB/XA technologies proved critical to Combined Transport's successful implementation. "We were able to take several sample programs that Rocket sent me and use them to modify and enhance our current programs to communicate with R/Link using the RESTful API that is provided with the R/Link product," explained Card.

"One of the most important things for us is audit compliance," Card continued. "Our old FTP-only system didn't allow us to track the information we needed. We could send files, but there was no good way to catalogue all of the transactions," he explained. "R/Link has that capability built right in. Before, I was using transmission and scripts, but I didn't have good confirmation in the scripts. R/Link lets me walk through the entire process, including confirmations, in an automated way."

Another significant improvement that R/Link provided for Combined Transport had to do with password support. "Believe it or not, we actually needed to use a second program just to handle passwords because AIX didn't do it," Card says. "With R/Link, I don't have that problem because everything is integrated. That's just one of the reasons why it is the gateway from our ERP system to all of our trading partners. More than a dozen people here use R/Link, and it has really made our lives easier."

The new solution also streamlined and enhanced some of the company's key processes. "One of the best things about R/Link is that our EDI data is all automated, which wasn't the case when we were just using FTP," Card said. "I need to make sure that I have the correct error messages to take action if there is a problem, and R/Link makes that possible. This allows us to get the most out of our EDI system, remain compliant with audit standards, and improve our level of service when it comes to things like tender acceptances, tender status, and billing." He added, "R/Link is just a good fit for us."

> " *R/Link lets us share files and other information easily while also providing a level of security that FTP by itself simply can't match.* "
>
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