

# Sterling B2B Collaboration Network consolidates and centralizes AT&T's business processes



#### Location

San Antonio, TX

#### Industry

Telecommunications

#### Business challenge

Consolidate each acquired company's decentralized value-added network, providing visibility and centralization into all business applications

#### Solution

IBM® Sterling B2B Collaboration Network

#### Benefits

- Centralizes all processes, thus becoming the standard operating procedure
- Automates invoicing process by consolidating multiple resources supporting 16+ interfaces, thereby redirecting full-time equivalents to other critical projects
- Automates procurement process with purchase orders to all suppliers
- Provides visibility into every business application
- Saves more than 20% each year in network costs

## AT&T Inc.

#### Customer background

As the largest communications company in the United States and one of the largest in the world, AT&T Inc. provides the most advanced IP-based business communications services, as well as the nation's leading wireless, high speed Internet access and voice services.

#### Business challenge

Each time AT&T acquires a new telecommunications company, multiple decentralized value-added networks come with it. Each company uses its own value-added network for procurement, billing and service ordering, which means each has its own set of rates, contracts, budgets, and bills. In an effort to centralize all network usage, AT&T embarked upon a collaboration initiative and invited all acquired companies to participate.

Specifically, AT&T wanted to automate and track the consolidation of business processes, such as invoicing 5,000 large business customers. The company also wanted to automate and track the procurement process of purchase orders to all suppliers.

"We were already a value-added network customer of Sterling Commerce at the time, so it made sense to explore the possibility of collaborating more effectively with our new business units," explained Stephen F. Reynolds, Senior Technical Architect for AT&T. He continued, "As we continued through the integration process, Sterling Commerce became the provider of choice because of their superior service and transparent rates. Now we have exclusivity with the Sterling B2B Collaboration Network and save more than 20% each year in network costs."

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*“When we needed to centralize all value-added network usage, Sterling Commerce became the provider of choice because of their superior service and transparent rate structure.”*

Stephen F. Reynolds  
Senior Technical Architect,  
AT&T Inc.

## Solution

The Sterling B2B Collaboration Network is a hosted solution that enables AT&T to maintain unprecedented agility in its multi-enterprise environment. It offers much more than traditional value-added network functionality, such as the ease with which it handles multiple communication methods and data formats, including EDI and non-EDI files.

The Sterling B2B Collaboration Network also enables AT&T to automate and track numerous business processes, from procurement (via purchase orders to all suppliers), to onboarding new telecommunications companies, to invoicing consolidators and partners, to monitoring internal operations. This centralized, collaborative network also gives the company complete visibility into key processes involving multiple customers. For instance, when a customer requests the status of an order, shipment or payment, the Sterling B2B Collaboration Network provides the visual status of in-process documents, as well as additional business level reporting and performance metrics about each specific process. “It gives us a much better view of the work from inside AT&T,” Reynolds said.

## About Sterling Commerce

Sterling Commerce, an IBM® Company, helps organizations worldwide increase business agility in their dynamic business network through innovative solutions for selling and fulfillment and for seamless and secure integration with customers, partners and suppliers. More information can be found at [www.sterlingcommerce.com](http://www.sterlingcommerce.com).

## Key benefits

### Centralization

Centralization is another key component of the Sterling B2B Collaboration Network. “It allows us to gather disparate organizations and look for synergies among them,” Reynolds explained. “We found people who were doing the same thing across telecommunications companies, which allowed us to more seamlessly integrate acquired companies into a single entity.” Reynolds said the conversion of each newly acquired company takes less than six months, and the return on investment is always good. “That’s because Sterling Commerce does 90% of the work,” he said. He added, “All we have to do is give them a list of partners and onboarding into our centralized structure begins. We’re approaching 5,000 customers in 2007, many of which are quite large.”

### Visibility

Since all communications go through one central process, AT&T can see exactly how transactions are being processed (via Document Tracking and Report Visibility). This also allows the company to monitor volume month by month and to be proactive before problems occur.

### Cost control

Now AT&T saves more than 20% each year in network costs by having one network contract with established rates.

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