Oracle Toolkit to Fix Your Automotive EDI Needs

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Abstract:

Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) is the standard used worldwide to exchange business documents between organizations in the most effective way. The EDI specific needs vary for every customer especially in the Automotive Industry. To cater to these diverse Customer specific requirements, Organizations largely customize their processes resulting in highly customized Enterprise Application. Maintenance of these customizations is not a simple job and Organizations have to keep spending a lot of resources just to maintain these. Over and above that, whenever the Enterprise Application provider like Oracle, comes up with a major release, there is an overhead of checking the compatibility of these customizations. Understanding the concerns of its Customers, to manage their Customer EDI needs, Oracle provides a toolkit to fix Automotive EDI needs. Oracle's Automotive Trading Partner (TP) toolkit helps to manage the TP specific customizations separate from the Base product without being affected by the future minor/major releases.

Need for Enterprise Applications with EDI capabilities

For Companies, to stay ahead of their competitors, a robust, flexible and scalable IT infrastructure is indispensable. Enterprise applications provide organizations a competitive edge and certainly a greater Return on Investment (ROI). EDI is rampant in the Automotive Industry to manage the Just-in-time (JIT) requirements accurately and effectively. Companies send the EDI demand to various suppliers and it becomes the onus of each supplier to consider the aspects important for itself in a way which helps the particular supplier to fulfill the demand most effectively. These aspects can be but not limited to:

- Past-Due Firm Demand
- Pull Reference Number
- Purchase Orders (850s) processed by supplier as Shipping Schedules (862s)
- Retaining Forecast from previous Customer Schedules
- Considering Request Date changes between two schedules having same Matching Attributes

Due to the nature of the EDI requirements, which is very Customer specific, Organizations are looking for enterprise applications which can cater to it.

Oracle E-Business Suite is closely integrated with EDI using the modules:

- Oracle e-Commerce Gateway
- Oracle Release Management (RLM)

It provides many functional tools to handle Customer/TP mandates:

E-Commerce Gateway Transaction Templates

With Oracle e-Commerce Gateway, Organizations can generate unique inbound and outbound templates for transactions to accommodate additional trading partner data, such as flexfields. It can capture and publish this additional data to a translator.

Translators

Even though it doesn't come under Oracle's umbrella, translators offer robust mapping tools that let you map trading partner specific transaction formats into Oracle e-Commerce Gateway. Changes to a trading partner file format may simply require a change in a translator mapping.

E-Commerce Gateway Code Conversions

The Oracle e-Commerce Gateway lets you define code conversion values for data elements, so you can transform trading partner data into your own application data. You can establish trading partner values and automatically transform inbound and outbound data to reflect this conversion.

Trading Partner Flexfields

As part of Oracle Automotive Trading Partner Toolkit, you can add new attributes in Oracle Release Management, Order Management and Shipping Execution to accommodate trading partner specific attributes. These products have added additional columns in key tables, reserved for trading partner flexfields. You can seed appropriate values for each trading partner and use Oracle Applications flexfield technology to view these attributes from the appropriate forms.
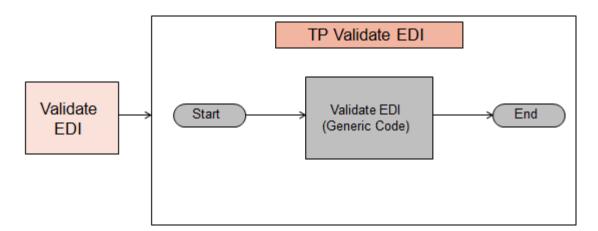
Trading Partner Layers

Oracle additionally offers a very useful toolkit "Automotive Trading Partner (TP) Toolkit" to handle Trading Partner (Customer/Supplier/Bank/Others) specific requirements. In Oracle Release Management and Oracle Shipping, you can adapt "published" code so that it processes according to specific requirements without impacting the processing for other trading partners. You can create custom procedures, then identify and register a group of procedures as a layer. In this way, you can build trading partner libraries in trading partner-enabled forms in Oracle Release Management and Oracle Shipping Execution.

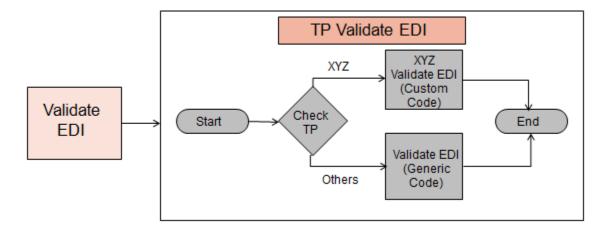**Oracle Automotive Trading Partner Toolkit**

To manage the customer-wise process changes in application, which cannot be fulfilled by the Oracle EDI Extensible Architecture, Oracle provides and endorses the Automotive Trading Partner (TP) Toolkit.

How it works

The toolkit helps manage the customer specific custom code separately from the seeded code. It acts like a multi-output switch, based on the incoming EDI demand, it decides whether to process it using custom code (specific to individual Customer) or the generic/seeded code. Let us consider a program unit, say "Validate EDI" which validates the type of EDI transaction. The Oracle seeded flow is:

When Automotive TP toolkit is introduced and EDI demand for a Trading Partner say "XYZ" is processed then the new flow checks for the TP for which the particular EDI is being processed and based on the TP the flow is decided:

Benefits

- Automotive Trading Partner (TP) Toolkit helps to develop, add and maintain TP specific customizations in the most effective and organized way.
- It helps the Organization with their various TP specific customizations to be at one place. Need not develop individual customizations from scratch rather the common steps to develop TP layers are to be performed just once hence requires less time and reduces redundancy.
- It is Oracle's product which is closely integrated to Oracle Release Management (RLM) and Shipping (WSH) hence highly recommended and related support is provided.
- Not affected by future Oracle releases/patches.

References

- Automotive TP Toolkit User's Guide
  https://docs.oracle.com/cd/A85683_01/acrobat/115veaug.pdf