Syncrofy

Hachette Book Group Saves Time and Manual Effort Resolving EDI Issues with Syncrofy

CUSTOMER STORY

The first publishing company to eventually become part of the Hachette Book Group was Little, Brown and Company, founded in 1837 and acquired by Time Inc. in 1968. Today, HBG is based in New York City and is one of the five largest book publishers in the United States. Each year HBG publishes roughly 800 adult books, 200 young adult and children's books, and 300 audio books among other genres.

hachette BOOK GROUP

Executive Summary

As one of the world's leading book publishers, approximately 90% of HBG's business comes in through EDI. HBG's small EDI team primarily supports their internal fulfillment group (order to cash) who work to ensure orders are received, documented, and shipped on time.

Due to HBG's size and high output, the EDI team faced many challenges. Many of them involved manually searching for EDI and EDI-related documents, gathering specific data from those documents, and providing that information to the fulfillment team. All of these tasks took up a tremendous amount of time and prevented the EDI team from carrying out their main function—onboarding new customers.

When they realized they needed a solution that could help automate these processes, they engaged a consultant and began searching for a tool that could fit their needs.

The Business Challenge

Prior to implementing Syncrofy, HBG's EDI team was bogged down with requests to dig through countless documents while up against tight deadlines. One ongoing challenge involved determining if and when they provided a functional acknowledgment (FA) to a customer after receiving a document.

"Many times a customer would come back to us and say they never received a functional acknowledgment or a purchase order," said Jon Jarocha, EDI Manager at HBG. "When that happened, we had to take the time to search for those documents manually, an immensely time-consuming task."

Another challenge HBG faced was researching data from an original purchase order in the event there was a discrepancy with the customer.

"Oftentimes, the fulfillment team would ask for the original EDI document, including the line items ordered and "ship to" information," says Jarocha. "We would then have to gather all of that information and manually provide it to them."

The EDI team would also have to provide timeframes on when they sent certain documents to customers, not only functional acknowledgments, but also advance ship notices and invoices.

It would take the team anywhere from 15 minutes to 3 hours (per request) to manually gather this type of information, depending on how detailed the requested information was.

Initially, HBG's EDI team had an offshore component that helped to ease some of the workload. After experiencing some downsizing, they eventually parted ways with their offshore partners and the team was shorthanded.

"After that happened, I knew there was no way we could handle everything," says Jarocha.

> "We were spending too much time spinning our wheels looking for EDI documents rather than onboarding important revenue producing partners."

Shortly thereafter, HBG brought in a consultant to determine what could be done to help and they began searching for an EDI visibility tool. They identified three potential solutions, including Syncrofy.
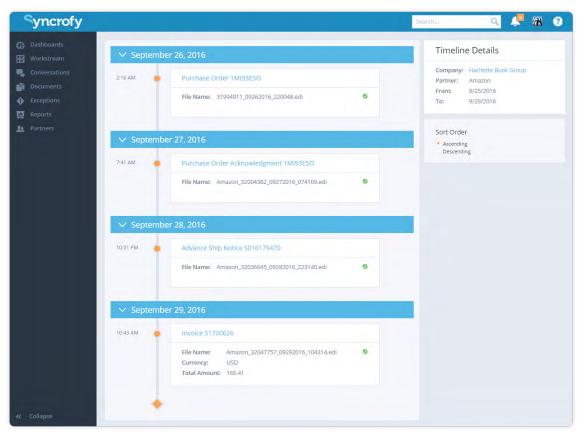
Why Syncrofy?

HBG determined that they needed a software solution that would enable them to automate processes that were previously done manually in order to take the pressure off an overtaxed EDI team. In essence, they needed the software to empower non-technical users to complete technical tasks on their own. Additionally, they needed complete visibility into all their documents and data so people would not have to spend hours looking for information.

After comparing solutions, they discovered that one of them would only provide visibility to data within their VAN (Value-Added Network), which would eliminate access to certain types of data. As a result, the solution was ruled out. Following an underwhelming presentation of the second solution, HBG turned their attention to Syncrofy.

"Because of the way Syncrofy received and displayed the data, combined with the Timeline functionality, I knew that this was the solution we needed," says Jarocha. "It was a best-fit for our organization."

The consultants then took a closer look, and they were all in agreement—Syncrofy was the tool for them.

Pictured: Syncrofy Timeline

The decision to go with Syncrofy wasn't simply based on the software's functionality alone, another factor that went into the process was the company behind it, CoEnterprise.

"The fact that CoE was New York-based and very responsive was certainly appealing to us," says Jarocha. "That combined with their reputation as a company that would work with you to customize and tweak their solutions to your specific needs was a major plus and really something we were looking for in a partner."

Measurable Results

With Syncrofy, HBG has successfully reduced the time they spend solving EDI requests. That has freed up more time to onboard customers and support the business.

> "Before Syncrofy, we had two offshore resources that spent all day, every day handling EDI issues. Now, it's just me for a few hours in the morning each day. That's a huge difference!"

Syncrofy has not only streamlined the EDI team's day-to-day tasks, but it has also helped HBG's fulfillment team become more self-sufficient because they have all the information they need, on-demand.

"Syncrofy dramatically reduces the time it takes to look for information," says Jarocha. "Taking it a step further, the fulfillment team and our other business groups don't have to ask us for that information because they have the tools at their fingertips that provide them with what they need, when they need it."

HBG has also made great use of the Timeline feature in Syncrofy. Timeline views allow users to track the lifecycle of a document, providing important information like the date and time it was created and any associated exceptions.

"Timeline is one of the features that really stands out for us. In EDI, you have so many documents and you always need to know the associated documents that go along with them."

In addition to the software, HBG has also found the support team and related resources to be extremely helpful.

"So often, help sites can be so dry and simplistic. But Syncrofy's help screens are detailed, engaging, and they really answer any question you may have about using the software. On the support side, when I submit a question or have a request, responses are extremely fast and the team goes above and beyond to help solve my issue."

In the end, Syncrofy has enabled HBG to significantly reduce the time they spend searching through documents, allowing them to focus on supporting the business and tending to what matters most. Their EDI team is no longer overtaxed and scrambling to find information and their entire business is more efficient.

There are smiles all around.

> **"Syncrofy has become a tool I can't live without."**