

# Covast Delivers Next Generation B2B Environment at SMI



## About SMI:

SMI, part of the Commercial Metals Company (CMC), is comprised of steel minimills known as SMI Steel-Alabama, SMI Steel-Arkansas, SMI Steel-South Carolina, and SMI-Texas. Collectively referred to as SMI, these four mills provide steel to customers throughout North America. SMI manufactures a wide range of steel products including rebar, angles, channels, flats, rounds, squares and special sections. These mills also provide a variety of grades including special bar quality (SBQ) steels for forging and customer specific applications.

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eBusiness Applications Supervisor  
SMI

SMI, a part of the CMC Steel Group, is now connected to their trading partners with Covast's EDI Accelerator for Microsoft BizTalk Server. EDI Accelerator provides extensive value-added network (VAN) connectivity and electronic data interchange (EDI) functionality to SMI.

## Challenge

The challenge that SMI had was the ability to access data required to create documents that effectively support its business, including sales order acknowledgements, shipping notices and invoices. In addition, SMI had two legacy servers which were getting to be both costly and obsolete. SMI was looking for a cost-efficient solution to provide connectivity to its trading partners and a solid architecture infrastructure.

## Solution

SMI made the decision to rely on one enterprise server to support the integration and EDI needs for all of the steel mini-mills. SMI decided to go with Microsoft BizTalk Server as its primary solution for integration. This made it imperative that the company find a reliable product to handle EDI, communicate with the VAN and work with BizTalk Server. Microsoft recommended the Covast EDI Accelerator to the sponsors of this project at SMI. Covast's EDI Accelerator was chosen, in combination with BizTalk Server, to provide connectivity to their trading partners and to enable the exchange of EDI documents.

## Results

Covast and BizTalk are now providing SMI with a total communications package. In addition, the mapping technology provided with the solution has given SMI more functionality than its previous system. “A lot of the old mapping tools were very difficult to work with. The tools that Covast and BizTalk provide are seamless and very easy to deal with,” said Patrick Walsh, supervisor of eBusiness applications for SMI.

In terms of cost-effectiveness, SMI has received a solid base for B2B without expensive maintenance contracts. This decision has also reduced the costs of maintaining the legacy servers. And because even older industries such as steel are preparing to offer XML as an integration option, SMI is hoping to eventually use Covast's EDI Accelerator to replace the VANs with less expensive Internet-based technologies. “The people who have committed millions of dollars in an EDI infrastructure aren't in a hurry to change,” said Randy Hill, CIO of CMC Steel Group. “But new partners and more technology capable partners are looking at XML alternatives.”

Covast's EDI Accelerator, in combination with BizTalk Server, serves as the ultimate B2B platform by solving trading partner challenges that businesses like SMI regularly face. “Thanks to Covast, SMI has already begun to see cost savings and has dramatically decreased the delivery time of connecting to our customers. We now have a complete B2B environment to support our trading community today and into the future,” added Walsh.



To learn more, visit [www.covast.com](http://www.covast.com) or call 1.866.COVAST1 or + 31 10.235.10.22 in Europe.

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