Azha **Systems** Case Study

GSA Vendor Supplier Network (VSN)

Background

The GSA needed to enhance system interfaces and integration between the GSA (General Services Administration) and their vendors. This was accomplished by providing both EDI and non-EDI transaction options. This application is a contractor supplied, pre-built support system called a VSN (Vendor Supplier Network). VSN shortens delivery times, offers competitive pricing, efficient operations and access to commercially available items.

The GSA operates through its Federal Acquisition Service, office of General Supplies and Services (GSS), where it provides a range of acquisition, procurement and supply-chain services to government agencies. GSS needed development for additional methods of supply, including Direct Vendor Deliver, Expanded Direct Delivery-Next Generation and Fourth Party Logistics (4PL) to provide better value to its customers and taxpayers and encourage broader vendor participation.

Project Requirements

Vendor Supplier Network (VSN) required EDI transaction processing between GSA and participating vendors. Transactions were processed through the GSA EDI gateway for multiple EDI and non-EDI enabled vendors. This required interface and procedures for communicating transaction data to and from the GSA EDI (Electronic Data Interface) gateway, non-EDI vendors and EDI vendors. Multiple protocols needed to be supported, including but not limited to EDI, XML, E-mail, FAX and web interfaces. Non EDI transactions were translated into standard EDI for GSA systems and for communication with the GSA EDI gateway. Up-to-date information needs to be maintained for vendors, whether or not they are EDI enabled. Vendor information that must be kept current includes fax numbers, address info, Duns#, VAN information, trading partner IDs, EDI version changes, business hours, POC, etc. A robust and secure EDI interface between the GSA EDI gateway and the VSN was also required. The interface serves as the primary pathway for electronic exchange of transaction data between GSA and vendors. System administration and system monitoring are also required. Technical support is also required for GSA IT staff to ensure smooth transition of upgrades or changes and technical support is also required for GSA vendors. Transaction error processing is required between the vendors and the Contractor's VSN. GSA also required reports and tools to monitor activity that GSA conducts with vendors using the VSN.

Expanding vendor integration and interface supports GSS' business, especially among small businesses and allows GSA to broaden its target base for contracting opportunities. Communication supported by the VSN included multiple protocols, including but not limited to EDI, XML, E-mail, FAX and web interfaces. VSN will also translated non-EDI transactions into EDI.

VSN provided the interface with participating vendors for the purpose of sending and receiving all business transaction data associated with purchases of vendor products and assists with current and future implementation of GSA's business rules.

There are three elements of VSN. Direct Vendor Delivery is used for NSNs (National Stock Numbers). DVD is an efficient and competitive approach to secure supply and encourage opportunities for small/disadvantaged businesses. DVD products are delivered directly from vendor to end customer. Expanded Direct Delivery Next Generation (EDD-NG) is focused on reliably supplying a large assortment of commercial brand name products. Fourth Party Logistics (4PL) gives GSA the ability to provide full and customized supply chain support to Federal Agencies. 4PL includes operation of brick and mortar stores, vendor-managed inventory in stores and customized online shopping portals.

Industry standard technologies were used to support interaction with vendors participating in its supply programs.

The Azha Systems Solution

The Azha Systems solution included the following responsibilities:

- Accounting and Bookkeeping
- Administrative Assistance
- Assist with the current and future implementation of GSA's business rules.
- Communication between various systems and the ability for systems to interface with GSS and GSS' vendors. Vendor protocols must be supported, including but not limited to EDI, XML, E-mail, Fax and web interfaces.
- Integration
- Help Desk
- Interface with GSS vendors to send and receive all business transaction data associated with purchases of vendor products. Interface must be robust and secure because it is the primary pathway for exchange of electronic transaction data between GSA and its vendors.
- Management of transactional error processing between vendors and the VSN.
- Maintain up to date information about the participating vendors, such as fax numbers, address information, Duns #, VAN information, trading partner IDs, EDI version changes, business hours, POC, etc.
- Project Management
- Reports and tools to allow monitoring of all activity that GSA conducts with vendors using the VSN
- Support of EDI and non-EDI transaction processing between GSA and its vendors
- System Administration

- System Monitoring
- Technical user support, including a toll free number that intelligently cycled to engineers during off hours and cycled until the call was answered.
- Technical GSA support on a 24/7/365 basis as required
- Translation of the vendor's non-EDI transaction into standard EDI for GSA systems and communication directly with GSA's EDI gateway. EDI gateway will send and accept all business transactions to and from the contractor's VSN in EDI transaction sets.
- User Support, also see technical user support (above)

Azha Systems used One Network Enterprises supply chain logistics software as the backbone of the system.

Java J2EE is used to provide the core functionality, along with an Oracle database.

Azha Systems implemented Asterisk VOIP system to intelligently route calls to support personnel.