

EDI vs. API: What's the Difference?

The following illustrates just one example of how traditional EDI differs from modern API.

PROCESS FLOW

TRADITIONAL EDI

1

INBOUND ORDER

X12 850 received from trading partner via AS2/VAN, translated to required ERP order format, delivered to ERP via SFTP

2

OUTBOUND ASN

Shipping document picked-up from ERP via traditional SFTP, translated to X12 856, delivered to trading partner via AS2/VAN

3

OUTBOUND INVOICE

Invoice document picked-up from ERP via SFTP, translated to X12 810, delivered to trading partner via AS2/VAN

4

FAST FACTS

- Often done in batches
- Strict standard and formats
- Data validation done via static table lookups
- Very common communication methods

MODERN API

1

INBOUND ORDER

X12 850 received from trading partner via AS2/VAN, translated to API payload (typically JSON or XML), delivered to ERP via API PUT/POST/UPDATE

2

Shipping document picked-up from ERP via API GET, translated to X12 856, delivered to trading partner via AS2/VAN

3

OUTBOUND INVOICE

Invoice document picked-up from ERP via API GET, translated to X12 810, delivered to trading partner via AS2/VAN

4

FAST FACTS

- Near real-time processing
- Flexible data formats
- Lack of standards
- Allows data validation with real-time ERP data