June 2008 (UPDATED RESULT FROM – JUNE 2012)

Case Study: How Ports America is using EDISPHERE for Terminal Operations

THE CUSTOMER

Ports America Group is the largest American terminal operator, stevedore and vehicle processor with operations in 50 ports and 97 terminals within the United States, Mexico and Chile; handling over 12 million TEU, 2 million vehicles, 5 million tons of general cargo and 1 million cruise ship passengers, Ports America has operations ranging from pure container terminals to 'under the hook stevedoring'. Operations also include bulk and break-bulk facilities, intermodal facilities and quality care RoRo handling. For more information, please visit www.portsamerica.com

THE CHALLENGE

- Ports America (formerly P&O Ports, North America) was part of global P&O Ports organization, wherein P&O Ports, Australia, providing **EDI services to Texas port was soon to be discontinued** as a result of Ports America becoming an independent organization. Ports America wanted EDI to be implemented at Texas port **within 3 months**, integrating their CPMS application proprietary flat-file format (for Empty Parks, Equipment Maintenance and Repair) with 7 shipping lines comprising of 6 different business messages (Load, Gatein, Gateout, Discharge, Container Release and Container Booking); i.e. 42 different mapping or trading partner agreements.
- Ports America was using EDI VAN, for doing EDI for all it's ports and with all it's partners, which comprises of shipping lines and US Custom. Ports America wanted to do EDI using direct FTP over internet through in-house EDI system that can route messages to different internal applications and partners; and **reduce EDI recurring expenses.**
- The **EDI solution at Ports America had to be AMS certified by US Custom** in a service centre setup, which will bypass EDI VAN and receive EDI messages directly from US Custom using MQ Series over a secure VPN link for all it's ports at one central location and then get distributed to appropriate port application.

"We were embarking on an endeavor that was somewhat new to us. While we had a great staff with EDI experience, knowledge and skills, we had never implemented or maintained our own EDI system. We had always employed the services of VANs and utilized resources from our corporate group in Australia. In addition, **we were challenged with meeting very aggressive and non-negotiable time frames**." says Mark Manuel, Sr. Director – I.T. Operations at Ports America.

Ports America was therefore looking for an EDI solution with following objectives:

- The EDI solution should meet the above challenges with their existing EDI staff.
- It should be possible to add a new EDI partner quickly.
- The EDI system must be robust and scalable in high availability architecture.
- The EDI vendor should be flexible and quickly responds to all support requests.
- **The EDI recurring expenses should reduce with ROI in 3 years**.
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After evaluating several EDI products, Ports America finalized EDISPHERE in Dec 2006.

THE EDISPHERE SOLUTION
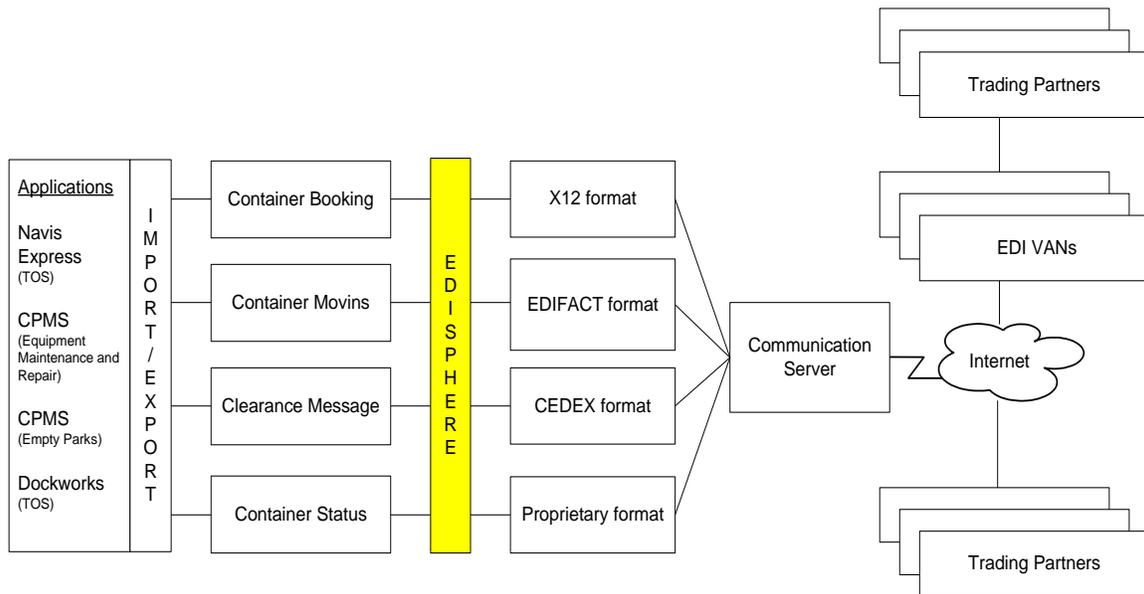
EDISPHERE MAPPING

Ports America EDI specialist started mapping the outbound 'gates' and inbound 'booking' EDI messages and was sending the Implementation Kit (a feature in EDISPHERE to exchange mapping for remote implementation and support) to EDISPHERE software for testing. EDI specialist also started picking up live messages, converting them to necessary EDI output and sending it to the shipping lines and applications group via email for verification. Suddenly – the EDI specialist got busy with correcting mappings as not all mapping scenarios were part of initial verification! It was time for everyone to put in extra efforts!

EDISPHERE staff was now also doing the mapping and after verification deploying the implementation kits on Ports America Test Server. The time difference of $10^{1/2}$ hours was highly beneficial as by next day, the EDI specialist was not only having kits with desired changes but also new kits for testing with live messages!

The implementation kits were getting produced at great speed and one month before the deadline EDISPHERE was running Live at Ports America!

"The team from EDISPHERE worked closely with our team in getting things done and in fact, picked up additional responsibilities to assist us in meeting our deadlines. **The teams working in opposing time zones was surprisingly beneficial to productivity and allowed us to be prepared ahead of our deadlines.**" says Mark Manuel

THE RESULT

- The operation at Texas port was unaffected as EDISPHERE was implemented timely.
- Subsequently, EDISHERE solution is integrated at Ports America's several major ports, including, New York, New jersey, New Orleans, Baltimore, etc.
- As of June 2012 (5 years later), Ports America is doing over 10 million EDI transactions per annum using EDISPHERE solution (up from 2 million per annum in 2007).
- All major shipping lines are integrated with the EDISPHERE Solution.
- The EDISPHERE solution at Ports America has been AMS tested by US Custom.
- There hasn't been a single day when the EDISPHERE system was down

"**It is well known that EDI is the lifeblood of the shipping industry**. The design of the EDISPHERE system and infrastructure has provided us with a very robust, reliable and highly available system that allows us to confidently own and maintain the system in our 7X24 environment." says Mark Manuel.
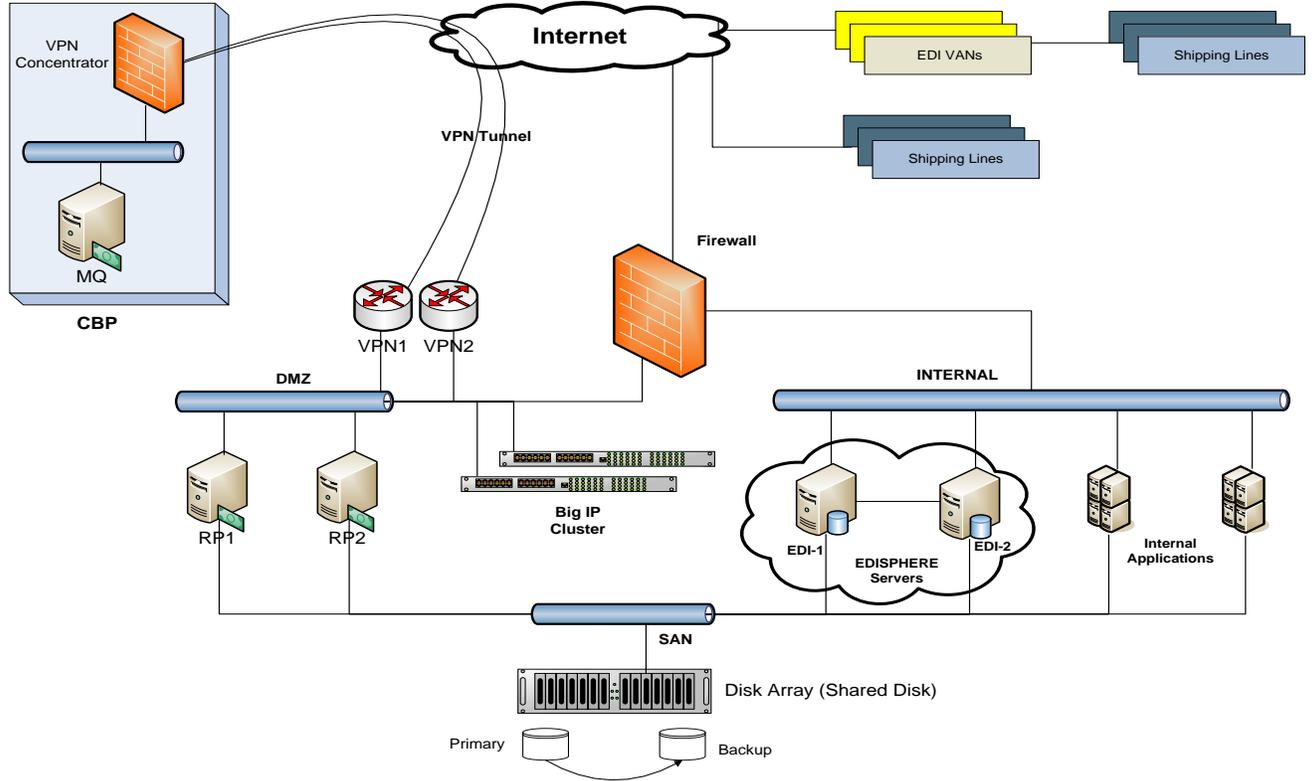
EDISPHERE Architecture at Ports America

"It has been a pleasure in working with the team at EDISPHERE. It seems their approach to support of the system puts themselves in our shoes, they treat our issues and data as if it were their own. The support they provide has far exceeded any contractual obligations as they have assisted beyond the scope of the agreement and beyond our expectations. **The support we received with the product has elevated our implementation from a success to an extraordinary success**." says Mark Manuel.

"It has been a wonderful experience working closely with Ports America for such a major implementation, which aligns very well with EDISPHERE offering robust products that can handle large volume of EDI data in a 24x7 business critical EDI environment", says Ajay Sanghi, Founder & Managing Director of EDISPHERE Software.

ABOUT EDISPHERE

EDISPHERE is a powerful suite of EDI products for seamlessly integrating internal applications with external partners in any data format – X12, EDIFACT, XML, proprietary data formats (fixed length, variable length, CSV). It also maps directly to databases. For more information, please visit http://www.edisphere.com.