



# The Random House Group (UK) Limited

*Seamlessly automating and extending vital business processes to trading partners*

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## Overview

### Business Challenge

Implement a seamless and robust integration solution to improve collaboration, communications, and visibility into trading partner activity.

### Solution

IBM® Connectivity and Integration

- IBM® Sterling B2B Integrator
  - IBM® Sterling B2B Collaboration Network
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With subsidiaries in Australia, New Zealand, India and a joint venture in South Africa, The Random House Group is one of the largest general book publishing companies in the United Kingdom. Servicing their own imprints as well as those for sixty other publishers in the U.K., they are comprised of five publishers with more than forty diverse and highly respected imprints.

With two distribution sites – The Book Service (TBS) and Grantham Book Service (GBS) – The Random House Group Distribution Division is one of the largest purpose-built book distributors to major retailers in the country.

## Challenge

In the past, The Random House Group Distribution Division's The Book Service (TBS) lacked a defined process and technology platform for onboarding trading partners. They were very reliant on software providers to manage the set-up procedure for onboarding new partners, which could take days or even weeks due to the heavy reliance on third party vendor schedules. To aggravate matters, trading partners who used standards other than the book industry's data standard were difficult to implement. This meant that a new, custom-built map had to be created each time a new partner was added, risking instability to the EDI system.

TBS also relied on two distinct electronic data interchange (EDI) solutions and two value-added networks (VANs) to conduct business with trading partners. With nearly 85 percent of trading partners' orders conducted electronically, this disjointed and labour-intensive model did not provide the visibility required to track and trace trading partners' orders accurately.



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### Business benefits:

- Sustains stability and resilience
  - Offers faster and easier onboarding of trading partners
  - Improves visibility into order tracking across trading partners
  - Enhances customer services due to quick resolution of tracking issues
  - Offers integration gateway to new and existing business partners
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The company needed a robust yet consolidated solution to control the flow of data in and out of the business, and began looking for a reliable system that would make trading with customers and partners alike easier, quicker, and much more efficient.

### Solution

In order to provide a common framework for communication and collaboration with trading partners, TBS chose a hybrid approach using Sterling B2B Integrator and Sterling B2B Collaboration Network – both components of the IBM Connectivity and Integration portfolio – to create an integrated platform for TBS' customers, systems, and technology to help ensure the seamless execution of vital business processes.

Sterling B2B Integrator on-premise software manages customer invoices, credits, and remittances. It acts as a data integration broker due to its ability to integrate bespoke back office applications with its B2B trading partners. Sterling B2B Integrator also enables TBS to onboard trading partners more quickly and efficiently. This means they can now complete their initial configuration and internal testing of a 'vanilla' trading partner within two hours, compared to weeks with the previous system. "Sterling B2B Integrator supports the book industry's data standard and gives us the flexibility we require to work with a range of data formats. We're currently working with the German book industry format, which would have been difficult and problematic with our previous system," explained Angus Gormley, Applications Support Manager, The Random House Group (UK) Limited.



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*“IBM Connectivity and Integration has become a critical component of our business. Not only does it meet every one of our EDI and B2B needs, but above all, our future growth and expansion plans are supported.”*

— Angus Gormley, Applications Support  
Manager, The Random House Group (UK)  
Limited

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Sterling B2B Collaboration Network provides cloud-based B2B integration for security-rich connectivity and collaboration with the company's trading partners. A team of experts from IBM Sterling Community Development Services were deployed to manage the implementation, configuration of core processes and communication setup, paving the way for TBS to continue with the configuration and migration of trading partners. TBS now has straight-through visibility into trading partner traffic, enabling rapid resolution of tracking issues, thus improving customer service.

### **Key Benefits**

IBM Connectivity and Integration has helped TBS achieve a stable, seamless, and security-rich integration of its trading partners. With this, critical business processes are fully automated and provide the flexibility to adapt to the company's dynamic business requirements.

The IBM Connectivity and Integration is more than just a communication and collaboration platform for TBS. It's an integration gateway to new and existing business partners for book distribution which will enable extensive and flexible scalability for the future.

With faster and easier onboarding of trading partners, what used to take weeks can now be achieved in days. The IBM solution supports multiple business and communications standards, including those most common to the publishing industry. Now that TBS has gained comprehensive visibility and are able to track trading partners' orders, customer service levels have improved.



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