

An Essent Case Study



and ORDER  TRAX®

After Problems with Another Provider, a Top Supplier Finds Its Integration Solution with Essent OrderTrax

Supplier Series





After fits and starts with a previous provider, a Top Supplier moves its integration efforts to the Essent OrderTrax Network.

Charles River Apparel Director of Information Technology Jeison Ortega recognized the advantages of trading partner integration.

Customers have immediate access to the information they most often want to know, and sellers become more efficient by providing the information electronically and automatically.

Integration is even more integral for a Top supplier like Charles River, which handles \$47 million worth of sales orders per year. Mr. Ortega knows that sparing manual work like phone calls and emails about Inventory, Order Status, Product Data and more – across hundreds of thousands of sales orders annually – represents untold savings in time and labor that can instead be used on activities that better benefit Charles River and the industry at large.

But Mr. Ortega also recognized when the integration project wasn't going according to plan.

The Challenge Is Industry, Not Just Technology

The technology provider initially chosen to implement the integration endpoints was not versed in the intricacies of the promotional products industry.

The promotional products industry entails a high level of sophistication. With almost every order customized and highly configurable – a single imprinted pencil, for example, can have thousands of configurations – it's important to have Well-Formed™ orders that include

all of the required fine details and to communicate those details accurately. Similarly, trading partner integration in the promotional products industry needs to account for the fine details.

The provider had to learn the PromoStandards™ integration protocol from scratch; was not deeply experienced in trading partner integration; and didn't have a standard method or platform for performing the work.

“We realized that Essent is very well in touch with the promotional products industry and integration. Essent immediately came to mind.”

Jeison Ortega
Charles River Apparel
Director of Information Technology

When Charles River tested the endpoints with promotional products industry distributors, the endpoints faltered.

"A year after we started with the previous provider, after continuous test and data validation exercises with various distributors, our customers started putting pressure on our IT department to upgrade our endpoints and provide data in a way that can be easily imported into their website. We were a year in, and we were in a tough situation," Mr. Ortega said.

Knowing the efficiency that integration creates within a \$47 million company and within a \$22 billion industry, Mr. Ortega needed an experienced integration services who would not only reliably create, host, and maintain the integration endpoints but do so in a way that meets the specific needs of the promotional products industry.

'Very Well In Touch With the Industry and Integration'

Mr. Ortega collaborated with stakeholders at Charles River Apparel.

The team agreed they needed the efficiency that trading partner integration would create for their company and their buyers. They also learned through the prior experience that the integration needed to be performed by someone who knows the promotional products industry.

"Charles River Apparel is among the most forward-thinking suppliers in the promotional products industry. Jeison and his team quickly recognized how integration improves efficiency and customer relationships — and also that providing seamless access to common business information in today's business world is not just a reality but an expectation," Essent Business Development Manager Marco Peña said. "Most importantly, Jeison realized that Charles River needed the endpoints to be implemented just right in order for the integration to be truly effective. Now it was time to find the right integration provider."

Mr. Ortega recognized Essent from the 2019 PPAI Technology Summit, where Essent Vice President of Research Steve Luisser, who is an award-winning integrator and a PromoStandards board member,

delivered a presentation on integration and its rapid spread through the promotional products industry.

"We realized that Essent is very well in touch with the promotional products industry and integration," Mr. Ortega said. "Essent immediately came to mind given my understanding of their involvement in the industry."

Charles River committed to migrate all of its integration endpoints to the Essent® OrderTrax® Network, the promotional products industry-standard integration platform on which Essent has built integration endpoints for 10 years.

The mature, stable platform hosts an industry-leading 1,400+ trading partner integrations, and promotional products companies used OrderTrax to exchange business information more than 5 million times in 2019 alone. Essent also co-authors the very same PromoStandards protocol on which Charles River wanted to integrate.

1 Year vs. 24 Hours

After Charles River experienced a year of fits and starts with the initial provider, Essent implemented the first Charles River endpoint, Media Content, in just 24 hours. In the coming weeks, Essent implemented the Inventory and Order Status endpoints for Charles River.

Charles River distributor partners were immediately pleased, with the integration setting the grounds for long continued business in an efficient way that benefits both trading partners.

"Within a few phone calls we were able to fully implement the Media Service endpoint and we were able to salvage our relationship with a customer that was having issues utilizing the endpoints from the previous provider," Mr. Ortega said.

Mr. Ortega now plans for Essent implement the full set of PromoStandards endpoints for Charles River, including Inventory, Order Status, Order Shipment Notification, Product Data, Invoice, Purchase Order, and Product Pricing & Configuration.



“Essent is very well in touch with the promotional products industry and integration.”

Jeison Ortega
Charles River Apparel
Director of Information Technology

“Charles River needed fully functional endpoints and they needed them quickly implemented. Essent had done it scores of times before and knew we could make it a reality.”

Marco Pena
Business Development Manager



“Within a few phone calls we were able to fully implement the integration endpoint.”

Jeison Ortega
Charles River Apparel
Director of Information Technology



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