Fat Brain Toys Develops an API Solution with eZCom to Manage Rapid Growth and Rising Order Volume

Executive Summary

Fat Brain Toys is both a retailer—online as well as brick-and-mortar—and wholesale supplier of its own line of educational toys that develop design and visual-spatial skills.

The company was founded in 2002 by Mark and Karen Carson after their ten-year-old son discovered it was difficult to find his favorite magnetic toy for sale on the internet. The mission of Fat Brain Toys is to enrich families and provide, "A Smarter Way to Play" by designing and curating world-class toys and games.

As the popularity of its own line of toys grew, the company began to expand its reach beyond small specialty toy stores to major retailers such as buybuy Baby, Target, and Kohl's. The volume of orders jumped significantly, and staff struggled to keep up because orders were processed manually.

Fat Brain Toys worked with the development team at eZCom to create a fully integrated API to manage EDI transactions and automate tasks. The company has been a client of eZCom Software since 2017.

About Fat Brain Toys

Fat Brain Toys is a dual-platform company. It offers a range of products through its online store and its brick-and-mortar locations in Omaha, NB, and Overland Park, KS, while also selling its own proprietary toys through retail trading partners, including buybuy Baby, Target, Barnes & Noble, and Nordstrom.

It does a significant amount of drop shipping business with major retailers, and must ensure compliance with the standards of its many different trading partners.

The company processes EDI transaction through a fully integrated API.

"They are the best, I cannot praise their people enough. They are so patient, because I know I don't ask the most logical questions all the time. I have never, ever had a bad experience"

Tonja Baker
Account Manager & Sales Coordinator

Industry:
Toys

Customer Since:
2017

Integrations:
API

Top Trading Partners:
- buybuy Baby
- Target
- Barnes & Noble
- Nordstroms
- Kohl's

The Challenge

As demand for its own Fat Brain Toys grew, the company found itself working with larger trading partners and handling high volume orders. The manual approach to processing orders that was fine when their toys were sold primarily by small, specialty toy stores was a serious challenge when they were working with retailers of a much larger scope.

Tonja Baker, Account Manager and Sales Coordinator at Fat Brain Toys, has been with the company since its beginnings, and the EDI responsibilities fell to her. As the business grew, it became ever more daunting.

"When we first started with buybuy Baby, orders were just coming through in small amounts," Baker said. "And then during one holiday season, we came in on a Saturday and there were 1200 orders. And there was no way I could manually enter 1200 orders and get them shipped on Monday."

"I entered everything. I would print EDI orders, I would enter it into our system, I would create UPS labels manually," Baker added.

With business growing rapidly and drop ship orders increasing, the company had new compliance requirement standards to meet and needed to ensure accurate inventory reporting was provided.

"Especially with drop shipping, you really have to be on top of inventory," Baker commented. "You have to be 100% sure that what's on the inventory document is available."

Fat Brain Toys turned to eZCom, and began using our Lingo platform. A fully integrated RESTful API was built by the technology staff at Fat Brain, working with the comprehensive documentation and the in-house development team at eZCom.

Results

"I was here from the start so I have seen the transition, and it has been magical," Baker said.

Prior to the API, Fat Brain did everything related to EDI manually. According to Baker, "…it was all manual but it's now fully integrated into the system. It's very automated."

Since the company switched to processing orders with Lingo through their API, Baker believes she has saved hours of time every week. Compliance issues have also been resolved.

"When it comes to compliance, the eZCom team is great. They are familiar with these companies, so it is always pretty easy on my part," added Baker.

As the company continues to add new trading partners, Baker works closely with the eZCom setup team and is impressed by how quickly retailers can be moved into production. A recent example was Dollar General.

"With Dollar General, eZCom had clearly been through the process before. Setups are always very quick. I send them an email, I put them in contact with the team I'm working with at the retailer, and after a call to finalize invoicing and order processing, we're good to go. It's obvious eZCom is very familiar with a lot of the customers we've brought in."

As Fat Brain Toys grows its own line of products and expands its retail footprint, Baker continues to enjoy working closely with eZCom.

"They are the best," she remarked. "I cannot praise their people enough. They are so patient, because I know I don't ask the most logical questions all the time. I have never, ever had a bad experience."

Do you have a challenge we can solve?

In today's retail environment, optimizing the supply chain is critical for any brand. Consumers are accustomed to instant gratification, and stores want to work with suppliers who are nimble enough to respond to changing tastes or spikes in demand.

At eZCom, we are committed to building integration solutions that meet the business needs of our customers. Whether it's an ERP like NetSuite, accounting software like QuickBooks, a WMS, or the system used by a 3PL, our Lingo software can be tailored to match your workflow and allow your company to process orders the same way. And in a lot less time.

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