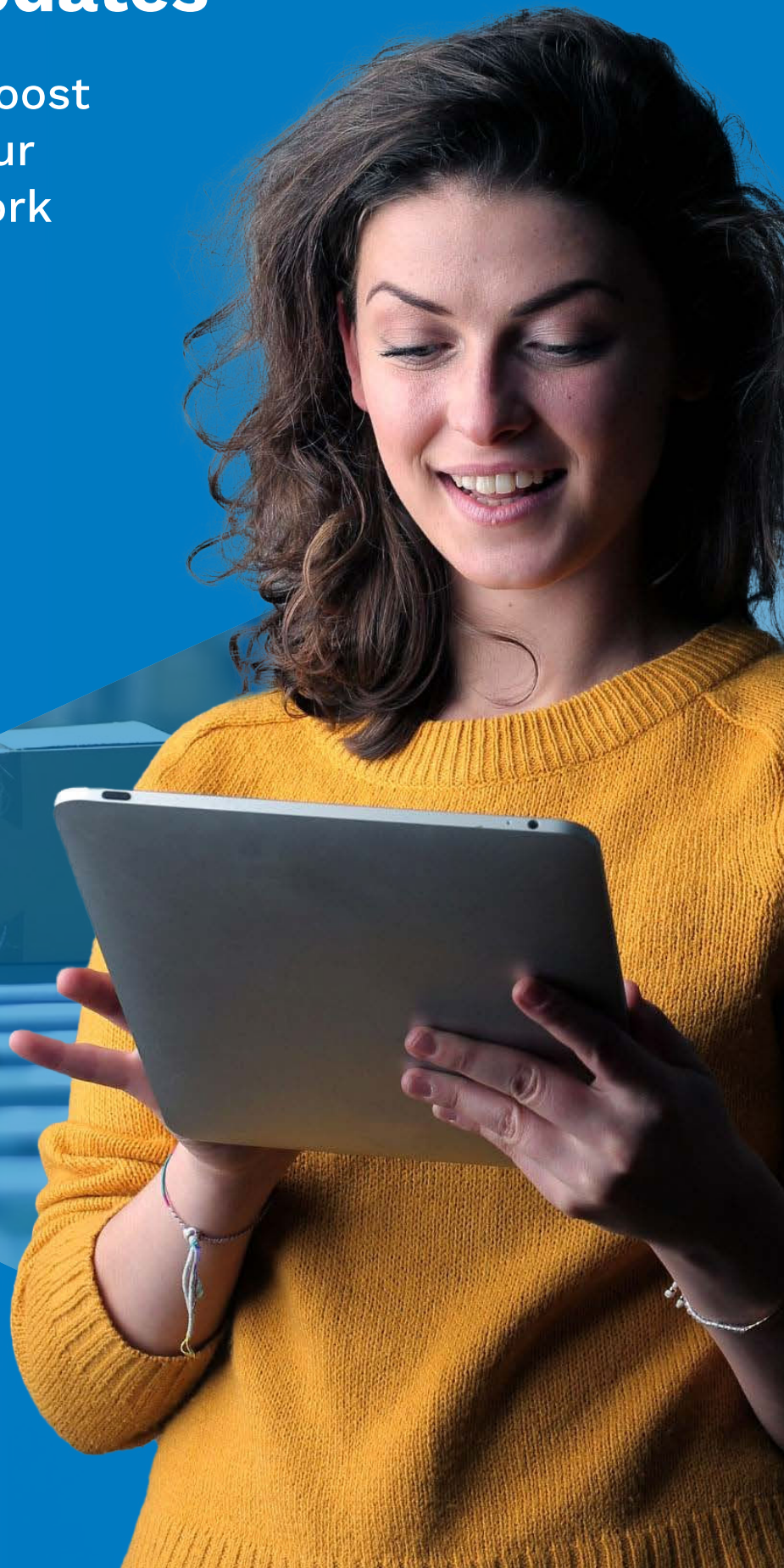A Guide for Manufacturers & Suppliers

Automating your product catalogue updates

Eliminate errors & boost efficiency across your entire retailer network

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Introduction

If you're a manufacturer or supplier selling through wholesalers, eCommerce platforms, and retailers, managing product catalogue distribution can be complex and error-prone.

Retail partners rely on accurate, timely product data to maintain sales and avoid supply chain issues. Regular updates ensure optimised stock levels and smooth sales operations.

Even a single incorrect detail - such as pricing errors, missing SKUs, or delayed updates - can lead to inventory mismanagement, pricing discrepancies, and operational disruptions.

Automated product catalogue distribution ensures manufacturers and suppliers provide retailers with up-to-date product information in a format that integrates seamlessly into their sales and stock systems.

This guide explores how automation eliminates these challenges, enabling real-time updates, improved efficiency, and stronger retailer relationships. To know to make an informed decision.

Contents

The challenge of product catalogue distribution

Manufacturers and suppliers face several challenges when distributing product and pricing catalogues across retailer networks. These challenges include:

- **Accuracy**
  Outdated pricing or incorrect product details cause confusion, lost sales, and customer dissatisfaction. Ensuring consistent, up-to-date data is essential.

- **Real-Time Updates**
  Retailers rely on the latest stock levels, pricing, and specifications. Delays or inconsistencies lead to inaccurate listings and missed sales.

- **Speed of Distribution**
  In fast-moving markets, pricing and stock levels fluctuate frequently. Relying on spreadsheets and emails slows response times and creates inefficiencies.

- **Reliability**
  Manual updates increase the risk of errors and inconsistencies. Retailers need dependable, accurate data to manage inventory effectively.

- **Resource Intensity**
  Handling catalogue updates manually is time-consuming and costly, reducing overall operational efficiency.

By automating product catalogue distribution, manufacturers and suppliers can reduce costs, strengthen relationships with retailers, and enhance overall supply chain performance.
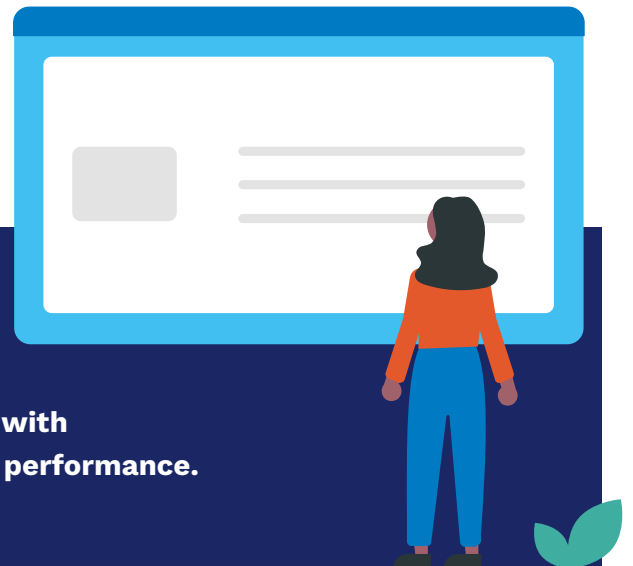
Automated catalogue distribution

Automating product catalogue distribution eliminates manual errors and ensures retailers always have the latest updates.

Centralised data for accuracy

Automated systems centralise product data, reducing discrepancies and ensuring seamless updates. Instead of relying on spreadsheets and emails, manufacturers can integrate their product catalogues with retailers through Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) and Application Programming Interfaces (APIs). These technologies enable direct system-to-system communication, eliminating inefficiencies and reducing errors.

In-time updates, zero delays

Automation improves efficiency by enabling instant product updates – whether daily, hourly, or real-time. This ensures retailers always have accurate pricing, stock levels, and product details, leading to better inventory management and improved sales performance.

Scale without extra effort

As retailer networks grow, manual processes become unsustainable. Automated catalogue distribution ensures data consistency across all retail channels, allowing manufacturers and suppliers to expand without increasing administrative workload.

Stop wasting time on manual updates
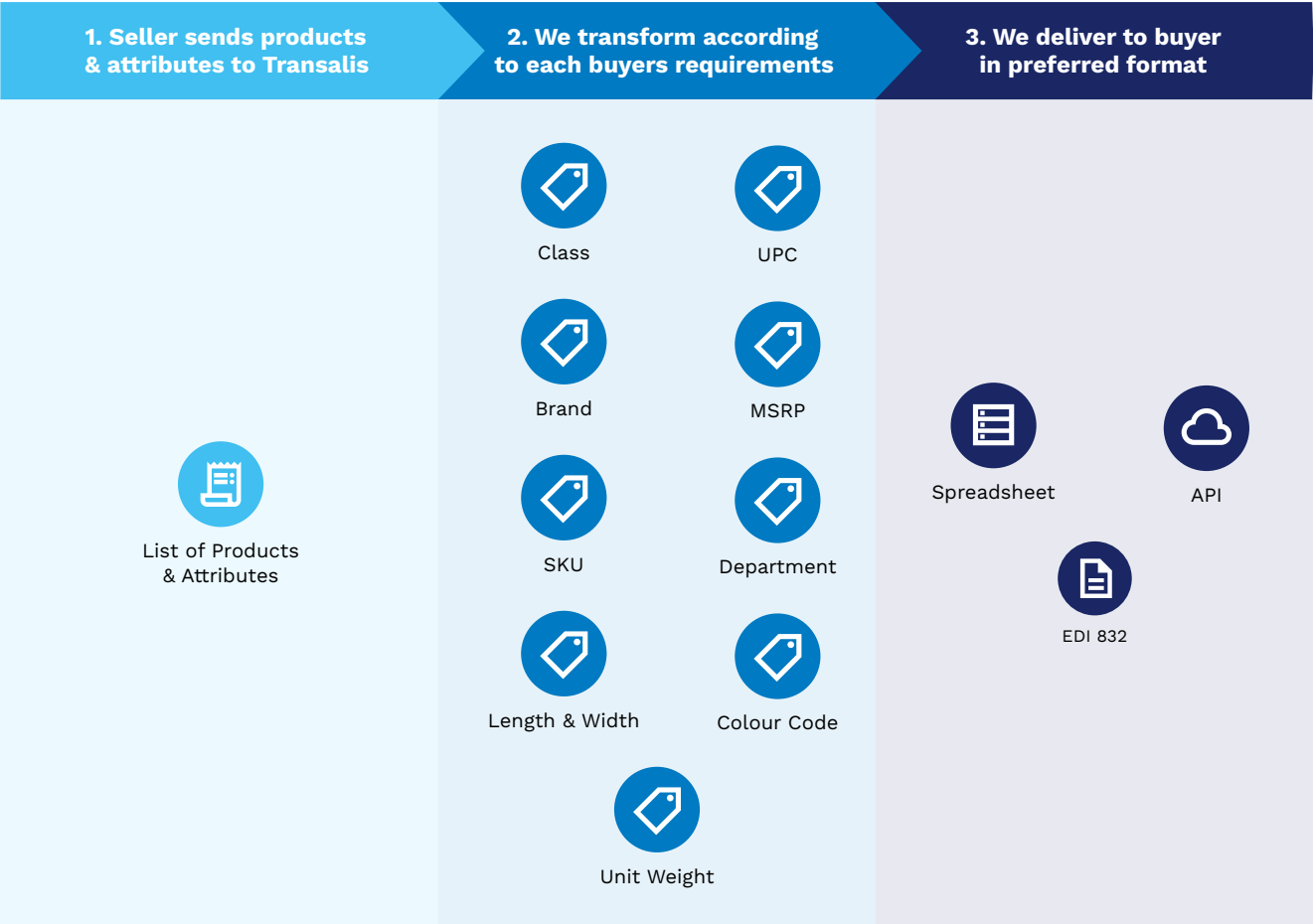
Speak to a specialist

How it works

Automated product catalogue distribution follows a structured, seamless process that ensures data accuracy and timely updates across retailer networks.

Instead of relying on manual uploads and error-prone spreadsheets, businesses can implement a streamlined system that automatically processes and delivers product data according to retailers needs.

At a high level, this process includes three core steps:

1. Seller sends products & attributes to Transalis	2. We transform according to each buyers requirements	3. We deliver to buyer in preferred format
List of Products & Attributes	Class, UPC, Brand, MSRP, SKU, Department, Length & Width, Colour Code, Unit Weight	Spreadsheet, API, EDI 832

Integration methods – EDI and API

Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) and Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) are two key technologies that facilitate automated product catalogue distribution.

Feature	EDI	API
Best for	Structured, batch updates	Real-time sync
Speed	Scheduled updates	Instant Updates
Use Case	Large retailers	eCommerce platforms

- **EDI**
  Enables structured electronic exchanges, reducing errors and enhancing efficiency. The EDI 832 transaction standardises product and pricing details across retailer networks.

- **APIs**
  Offer flexible, real-time data exchange, allowing manufacturers and suppliers to instantly update product details, pricing, and stock levels.

Choosing the right method

EDI works best for scheduled updates, while APIs support real-time data synchronisation. Businesses may require both, depending on their integration needs.

Not sure if EDI or API is right for you?

One of our experts can help

Speak to a specialist

Real-world use cases

Case Study 1: Consumer electronics manufacturer

Before:

A global electronics manufacturer frequently struggled with pricing changes and stock updates across its vast retail network. With manual catalogue distribution, pricing errors went unnoticed, and out-of-stock items remained listed online. This led to frustrated customers unable to purchase products and retailers struggling with inaccurate stock information. As a result, the company faced lost sales and damaged relationships with key retail partners.

After:

By implementing an automated API integration, the manufacturer enabled real-time updates, ensuring that retailers always had accurate pricing and stock levels. This not only reduced stock discrepancies by 40% but also restored retailer trust and improved the overall customer buying experience.

Case Study 2: Pet products supplier

Before:

A pet product supplier selling through major retailers and eCommerce platforms found its team spending hours every day manually updating product details and stock levels. These inefficient processes led to frequent delays, inconsistent pricing, and miscommunication with retail partners. With each pricing mistake or outdated stock count, the company faced customer complaints and lost revenue.

After:

By integrating an automated EDI-based solution, the supplier cut manual processing time by 80%, freeing up valuable team resources. The company saved over £45,000 annually and achieved a 2.5X return on investment, while also ensuring retailers always had up-to-date product information - improving both efficiency and customer satisfaction.

Case Study 3: Stationery retailer

Before:

With over 500 stores and thousands of SKUs, a national stationery retailer struggled to keep product listings up to date. Pricing errors and stock mismatches were common, leading to frequent customer complaints and lost sales. Staff members wasted hours manually checking and correcting product information, slowing down operations and frustrating both employees and customers.

After:

With an automated data distribution system, the retailer ensured that all stores received daily updates, keeping inventory, pricing, and stock levels accurate. This resulted in fewer customer complaints, improved sales performance, and significant time savings for staff - allowing them to focus on customer service instead of administrative tasks.

These real-world examples demonstrate the tangible benefits of automated product catalogue distribution. The next section will explore how automation helps businesses navigate supply chain volatility and adapt to market changes.

Overcoming supply chain volatility

Manufacturers and suppliers face constant challenges that disrupt supply chains and impact product availability. Global conflicts, raw material shortages, fluctuating demand, trade tariffs, and logistical disruptions all contribute to uncertainty.

To stay competitive, businesses must be agile and proactive in managing these risks, and automation plays a crucial role in ensuring resilience by keeping product and pricing information up to date in real-time.

1. Global conflicts & trade tariffs

Geopolitical tensions and shifting trade policies can lead to sudden tariff changes and supply chain restrictions. These unpredictable factors impact production costs and pricing structures.

2. Raw material shortages

Supply shortages in key materials, such as semiconductors, metals, and packaging, can cause production delays and price spikes.

3. Fluctuating demand & market shifts

Consumer demand can change rapidly due to economic conditions, seasonal trends, and unexpected market events. A slow response can result in stock-outs or excess inventory.

4. Logistical disruptions & supply chain bottlenecks

Shipping delays, port congestion, and transport restrictions continue to cause supply chain inefficiencies. Manual updates can't keep pace with real-time changes.

By automating product catalogue distribution, manufacturers and suppliers can ensure retailers always have the latest stock information, reducing errors and inefficiencies across the supply chain.

Implementation process and best practices

Successfully implementing an automated product catalogue distribution system requires careful planning and execution.

Here are key steps and best practices to ensure a seamless transition:

1. Set clear goals
Define challenges and objectives.

2, Choose the right automation solution
EDI vs. API.

3. Standardise data formats
Use structured templates for seamless updates.

4. Conduct system integration & testing
Ensure seamless updates.

5. Train internal teams & on-board retailers
Ensure smooth adoption.

6. Continuously monitor & optimise
Use analytics to refine efficiency.

By following these steps, manufacturers and suppliers can ensure a smooth transition to automation - reducing errors, improving efficiency, and strengthening retailer partnerships.

About Transalis

Transalis is a leader in Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) and Application Programming Interface (API) solutions, helping manufacturers and suppliers streamline their product catalogue distribution.

With extensive experience in supply chain automation, Transalis provides scalable and reliable digital transformation solutions that ensure accurate, real-time product data updates across retailer networks. For further insights, case studies, and whitepapers, visit our Knowledge hub on our website.

Ready to eliminate catalogue headaches?

Book a meeting with one of our automation specialists to discuss your requirements and explore how Transalis can help you streamline product catalogue distribution, reduce errors, and improve efficiency.

Book a Meeting

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