IBM Sterling
Gentran:Server for
Windows

Handle your business transactions with a premier
e-business platform

Executive summary
IBM® Sterling Gentran:Server® for Microsoft® Windows is a versatile,
high performance e-business solution, designed to assist with the
exchange of EDI and other types of data. IBM® Sterling Gentran®
consists of several logical components: a data store, process,
communication controllers, and user interface clients. Sterling Gentran
is a point product intended to address one need – the translation of
inbound and outbound B2B files and messages.

The pressure to succeed is mounting
Decision makers, like you, are facing increasing demands to lower
costs, improve quality of service, and maintain competitive excellence.
As your company evolves, there is a constant need to keep up with
technology, standards, and processes.

Of course, there are also some practical issues to consider: How
important is it to be technologically savvy, but unable to deploy systems
effectively? What is the benefit of being the standards bearer if you
cannot communicate with suppliers? What good is it to have processes
in place if they prevent you from conducting business effectively?

IBM offers a powerful and flexible e-business solution that has been a
benchmark for business-to-business commerce for over 30 years.
In addition, IBM continues to help enterprises address their business
needs and the needs of their partners.

IBM delivers solutions that meet your distinct business challenges.
IBM provides a mix of software, service and support that helps enable
your company to rapidly integrate and deploy business processes –
within your organization and with your external business partners – so
you can lower costs, provide excellent customer service, sharpen
efficiencies, and strengthen your competitive advantage.
Support versatile business challenges with open architecture
Sterling Gentran:Server is a versatile, high-performance e-business solution for the Windows client/server environment. With Sterling Gentran:Server, you can build upon your investment over time, adding more capabilities as your e-business requirements evolve.

Sterling Gentran:Server comprises open standards. This architecture permits your IT personnel to install and configure components using common features and functions. Your business will appreciate this value differently because of the Sterling Gentran:Server capability to extend processes across the enterprise. It has a number of components that leverage Microsoft standard technologies including support for a distributed processing environment.

By leveraging Microsoft’s development technologies, IBM has created business objects that work together to solve your business pains. The major components are the Process Control, Mapping Utility, Translator, Trading Partner Setup and Maintenance, Archive, Audit Logging and Notification, Document Browsers, Communication Service, Executive Service, and Mailbox Service. Although separate components, the design and architecture provide users accessibility with using a common desktop interface, while the administrative functions help enable system administrators to, for example, provide control and security levels for all user accounts.

A critical piece to the Sterling Gentran success, the database layer, provides the ability not only to store, but also to manage data coming across the network. IBM currently supports two leading database server products for Windows environments, the Microsoft SQL server and the Oracle® RDBMS.

Gain control over your e-business environment
Process Control
It is critical that business documents be delivered; however, not all documents need to be delivered simultaneously. You will need to decide how you, your partners, and your company support e-business activities given current infrastructure and business considerations. For example, your volume of purchase orders may be so high that it creates problems for your network during normal business hours.

You need to have a way to control when, where, and how documents are processed. With Sterling Gentran:Server, you set up the system to match your distinct infrastructure and business requirements.

Specifically, the Process Control Service directs data to areas inside or outside your enterprise, and provides scheduled or event-driven messaging. This control function supports your distinct processing needs, based on commerce partner or message type, making it easier for you to manage processes and data flows.

Perform easier mapping and accelerate data translation
Mapping Utility and Translator
Implementing business processes is an evolutionary procedure. At its foundation are the core practices that make a business operate and that enable that business to collaborate with others. Part of the work required to accomplish process integration is creating maps that help enable companies to pass business data back and forth in whatever format suits their needs. Sterling Gentran:Server not only allows users to trade documents seamlessly but it does so automatically when the process has been perfected.

The Sterling Gentran mapping utility provides broad standards and supports an intuitive GUI for data mapping. Sterling Gentran displays your application or standard data schemas side-by-side on your screen. It allows customers to simply point-and-click establishing virtually any-to-any mapping relationships – a function that used to take extensive time and training.
**Enhance your partner relationships**

Trading Partner Setup and Maintenance
IBM manages and supports one of the largest systems of interconnected buyers, suppliers, banks and carriers in the world and building and supporting the relationships IBM has with customers is very important. Sterling Gentran:Server offers flexibility in establishing new trading relationships. Enhancing your partner relations can enable your company to trade complex documents, based upon XML, that incorporate not only graphics or non-EDI formats, but also business rules designed for further integration across the enterprise.

**Significantly improve your archiving capabilities and avert problems with immediate action**

Archive, Document Browsers, and Audit Logging and Notification
Your business requires you to handle high transaction volumes, and to address partner questions and problems quickly. Sterling Gentran:Server offers reliable auditing, tracking, and archiving capabilities.

In managing your e-business systems, it is important to have a clear view of where documents are transmitted, received, and stored. Sterling Gentran:Server offers document browsers that provide a graphical user interface to the document storage system. The browsers show the user documents (or transactions) that are inbound, outbound, in error, and stored in the system’s database and file system. They also offer the functionality to reprocess, delete, and correct previous transactions.

When problems arise, it is important to have tools that enable a view of the current state of the database. Sterling Gentran:Server has excellent auditing and tracking capabilities that can assist in resolving inquiries about the system and about message processing. Moreover, the selective archiving feature can store your critical data based on specific rules and timers. These features make Sterling Gentran:Server highly accountable, and can help you maximize both your service levels and your productivity. To balance this, Sterling Gentran:Server offers exceptional tracking capabilities. The document browsers offer viewing and tracking capabilities that help enable users to track a document’s history and provide exception management reports.

**Communicate globally or locally**

Communications Service
IBM has spent years planning, developing, building, and supporting multiple communications options. This flexible offering helps enable customers to exchange data with business partners globally. Using standard Microsoft technologies, the Communications Service controls data flow to and from the system, allowing for communication over a variety of protocols.

For customers, the Communications Service provides the ability to manage resource-intensive operations across distributed platforms. It operates in the background until it receives your communications task. By leveraging Sterling Gentran’s distributed-processing architecture, the Communications Service may be placed on multiple machines connected to the primary controller. This arrangement allows resource-intensive communications to be distributed across multiple machines.

The Communications Service incorporates a robust scripting language that allows customers to connect to major value-added networks (VANs) and key business partners in vertical market segments such as the automotive and retail industries. The scripting language is intuitive and helps enable users to create custom communication scripts.
Extend your business processes to the enterprise
Sterling Gentran:Server allows you to create and test document maps, establish communications with a host system, and transmit data back and forth with customers. To further extend your business integration, Sterling Gentran:Server offers an application extension that is designed to integrate seamlessly with SAP® software.

Build a framework for the future
IBM offers a set of complementary products designed to support your enterprise applications. They provide you with the ability to move documents to your enterprise business applications. Once documents are received, it is likely they will need to be translated into other formats that support accounting, sales, engineering, and resource planning activities. Sterling Gentran:Server supports virtually all major industry standards and continually works to refine or add additional support as part of its maintenance program.

Sterling Gentran:Server includes an Advanced Data Distribution option. This option helps enable host-mode communications for your commerce community. In addition, it provides a framework for future communications and connectivity enhancements.