

By contrast, when EDI works in conjunction with a VAN only one communication connection is necessary (Figure 3). To send the same series of EDI messages the following communications would occur:

1. Trading Partner A's computer prepares many EDI messages destined for Trading Partners B and C.
2. A's computer makes just one call to the VAN's local or toll-free number and transmits all the EDI messages destined for both trading partners. The VAN then *sorts* the EDI messages and *posts* them into the correct electronic mailboxes of trading partners B and C. EDI operating with a VAN is compatible with virtually all computer communication systems, including A's.
3. When Trading Partner B's computer is scheduled to process messages, it calls the VAN's local or toll-free number and removes any waiting EDI messages from B's mailbox. The EDI VAN is compatible with B's computer communication system.
4. When Trading Partner C's computer is scheduled to process messages, it calls the VAN's local or toll-free number and removes any waiting EDI messages from C's electronic mailbox. The EDI VAN is compatible with C's computer communication system.
5. The entire process works in reverse when either B or C wants to send messages to A.