

communications problem.

Readers should be aware, though, that many companies that try to be their own VAN underestimate:

- the cost of supporting direct partners
- the difficulty in mandating direct connect
- the costs that partners incur accommodating them
- the delay to their EDI program waiting for partners

The point is that while companies may do everything they can to go along with this type of trading partner, there may still be problems that impact on their ability to have a smooth EDI relationship with them.

4.5 Multiple VANs Versus Interconnect

In Chapter 3.2 section iii we reviewed the idea of VAN interconnection and what it involved. **Table 1** compares the two alternatives to determine when one is preferred over the other. Of course, the only reason a company would ever need either service is if they have a trading partner on a VAN different from the one they have chosen to use.

TABLE 1	
MULTIPLE VALUE-ADDED NETWORKS	
Advantages:	
+ No operational control issues (contrast with Interconnect)	
+ Better service from individual networks	
+ Trading partners have no choice of networks. They can choose the one that best meets their needs without being concerned about interconnect issues.	
Disadvantages:	
- Cost of additional mailboxes	
- Operation time to send and pick up messages from additional network	
- Software (translation/communication) must be able to handle multiple networks	
INTERCONNECT	
Advantages:	
+ Only one network/communications interface to support	
+ Can make use of inexpensive VAN-provided PC software	
Disadvantages:	
- Interconnect surcharges	
- Loss of operational controls (potential for "finger-pointing" if documents go missing)	