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**PRESIDENT'S NOTE** BY TOM NABER



# Divine synchronicity

As a kid, I took every opportunity to skip church. One of my greatest scams was to stop by the church, grab a copy of the bulletin, and then head off to the park, a party, or wherever I felt like spending my time. As long as the bulletin was in my possession, I felt like I had solid proof for my parents that I had served my time. This became even easier when a friend—who was much more brazen than I—started arriving at the church early, grabbing handfuls of bulletins, and selling them for a \$1 each at the local parks and hang-outs. From a teenager's perspective it seemed like a pretty good deal: My friend made a profit and I didn't have to creep past the watchful eye of church ushers to sneak out with the bulletin.

But from my parents' and the church's perspective, this wasn't such a good thing. I'm pretty sure that any priest, minister, rabbi, or mullah would point out that those who only show up on occasion, and who don't put the practices into play, not only miss the point of religion, but also have a good shot at condemnation.

I bring this up because it seems to me that religion, IDEA, and data synchronization have a lot in common. (You have to admit that it is pretty clever how I've managed to tie religion to IDEA.) For a religion to be successful, the person exposed to it needs to adopt its recommended behaviors habitually and follow its examples and rules. The church of data synchronization isn't much different: For data synchronization to be successful, companies need to be in the process of constantly synchronizing their data.

Unfortunately, there appears to be quite a few companies out there that have the same mindset that I did as a teenager. Instead of synchronizing their data continuously, they collect their IDW Data Audit Certifications and then forget

about updating their data until next year. But, just like religion, not showing up isn't a good idea.

Manufacturers that are only uploading their data once or twice a year, and distributors who aren't downloading daily, are missing the whole point. These "only on Sunday synchronizers" are opening the door to huge amounts of errors and mistakes and generally screwing up efficiency and profitability—not only for themselves, but also for the rest of their channel partners.

So what are the three commandments of synchronization?

- First, everyone needs to use one central database to store, send, and receive data.
- Second, manufacturers need to update their part of the database whenever changes, additions, or deletions to their data are made—that might even mean a couple of times a day.
- Third, distributors need to update their own databases from the central database as often as manufacturers make changes. At a minimum that means nightly, but it can very well mean more often.

It sounds like a lot of work, doesn't it? Yes, especially for a company not used to doing it. But the great thing about synchronization is that those who do it today don't have to wait until the "afterlife" for their just rewards—they see them on the bottom line pretty quickly.

So two things need to be done: First, make sure your company is really following the commandments of data synchronization; second, if your company follows the data commandments, become a missionary—and spread the word of data synchronization. ■■■

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