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Documentation

Getting Started

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Auto-generated at November 26, 2026

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Introduction

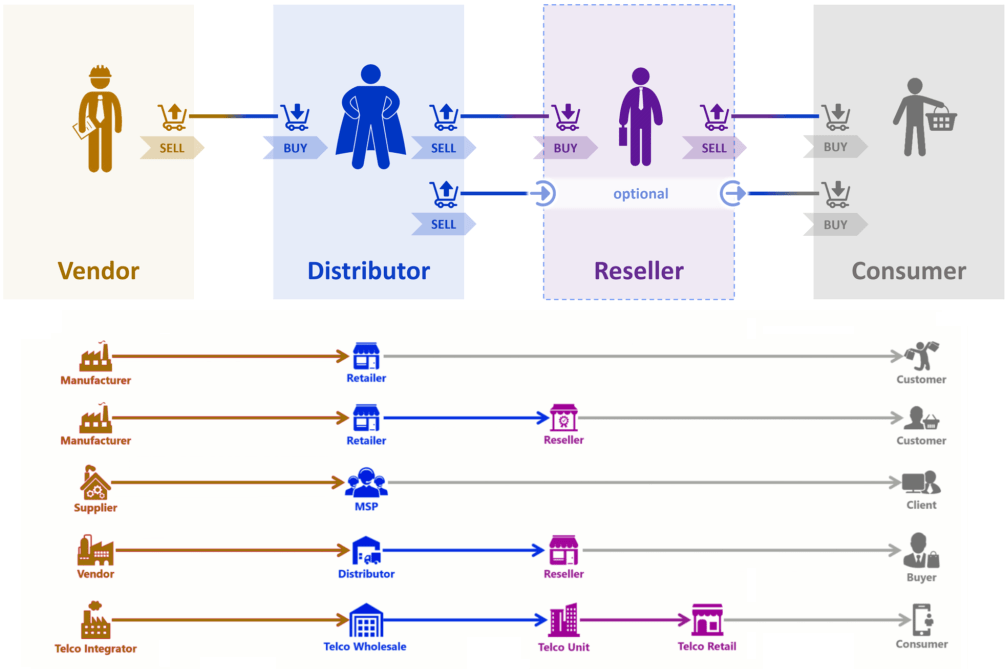
CloudBlue Connect® (shortly, Connect) represents an automation platform that enables partners to build complex supply chain applications and integrate those into various business scenarios. Therefore, the Connect platform is used to boost efficiency, speed time to revenue and establish a scalable business quickly.

The following introduces and describes key concepts on Connect, such as *actors*, *portals*, *accounts*, and *users*. Furthermore, the following outlines *business flows* within the Connect platform.

Connect Actors

As mentioned above, the Connect platform is a comprehensive solution for streamlining supply chain implementation. A supply chain represents a system of organizations, people, information, and resources involved in moving a product or service from a supplier to a customer.

While similar in their nature, the aforementioned systems and actors have different names and form different hierarchies across various regions and industries. Thus, the following terms are used to refer to different actors of a supply chain:



- **Vendors** represent manufacturers or developers. In other words, where products and services are originating from. Vendor organizations provide products only to *Distributors*, as Vendors do not typically have direct business relationship with Resellers or Consumers.
- **Distributors** (sometimes called **Providers**) are elements of the supply chain that are involved in the distribution of Vendor's products and services downstream to *Resellers* and *Consumers*.
- **Resellers** are optional elements of the supply chain involved in reselling products rather than consuming or using them. Reseller organizations provide products to *Consumers* and in some cases to other *Resellers*.

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- **Consumers** (or **Customers**) represent the *last mile* of the supply chain process. Namely, these are the consumers of provided products and services.

Portals, Accounts, and Users

There are three types of *Portals* in Connect; one for each role in the supply chain excluding customers (i.e., *Vendor*, *Distributor* and *Reseller* Portals). It is important to outline the difference between portals, accounts and users:

- **Portal** is a comprehensive platform that implements a set of related business scenarios for Vendors, Distributors, and Resellers.
- **Account** is a 'container' object that consist of *Users* and *Groups*. In general, Accounts represent organizations, companies, or corporations. Groups are usually represent various departments (e.g., legal department, finances, etc.). Users, as the name implies, are individuals that can access Accounts and that belong to one or several Groups. The following introduces Account types on Connect:
    - **Distributor** account type that enables its users to procure products that are acquired either directly from Vendors or via referral agreements.
    - **Reseller** account type allows procuring products from Distributors (via syndication agreements). Resellers also list those products within their own marketplaces.
    - **Vendor** account type that defines product on Connect and manages fulfillment processes. Vendors can list their products in marketplaces of one or multiple Distributors/ Resellers.

> Note
>
> Connect Portals and related attributes (such as API URLs) can be white-labeled and be accessible through different domain names and have different visual "themes" applied to them. Refer to Branding for more details.

Diagrams and instructions within the Community page often use terms, such as *Vendors, Resellers*, *Distributor*s, or collectively *Partners*, to refer to corresponding account types and its users. Furthermore, note the Connect platform supports scenarios, in which one user can access several accounts.

For example, Vendors (*Vendor account*) and Distributors (*Distributor account*) may include a user that can access both portals as schematically illustrated below:

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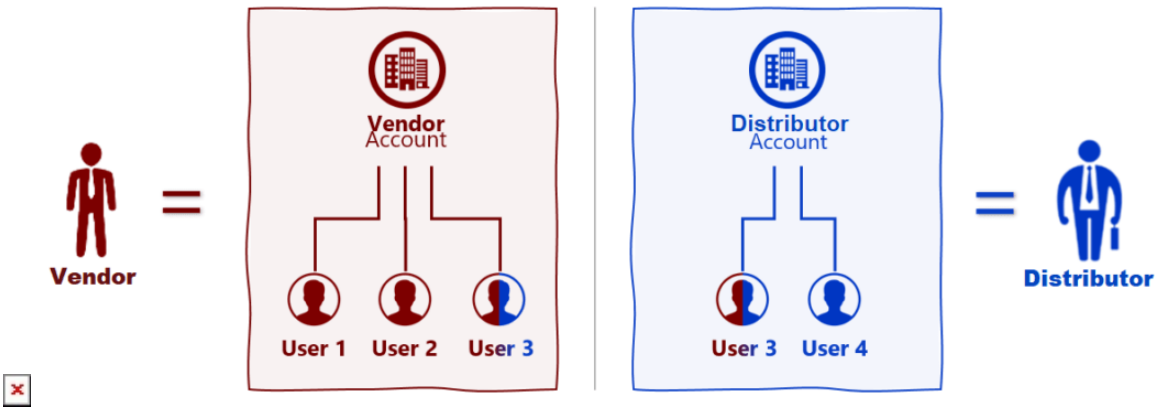
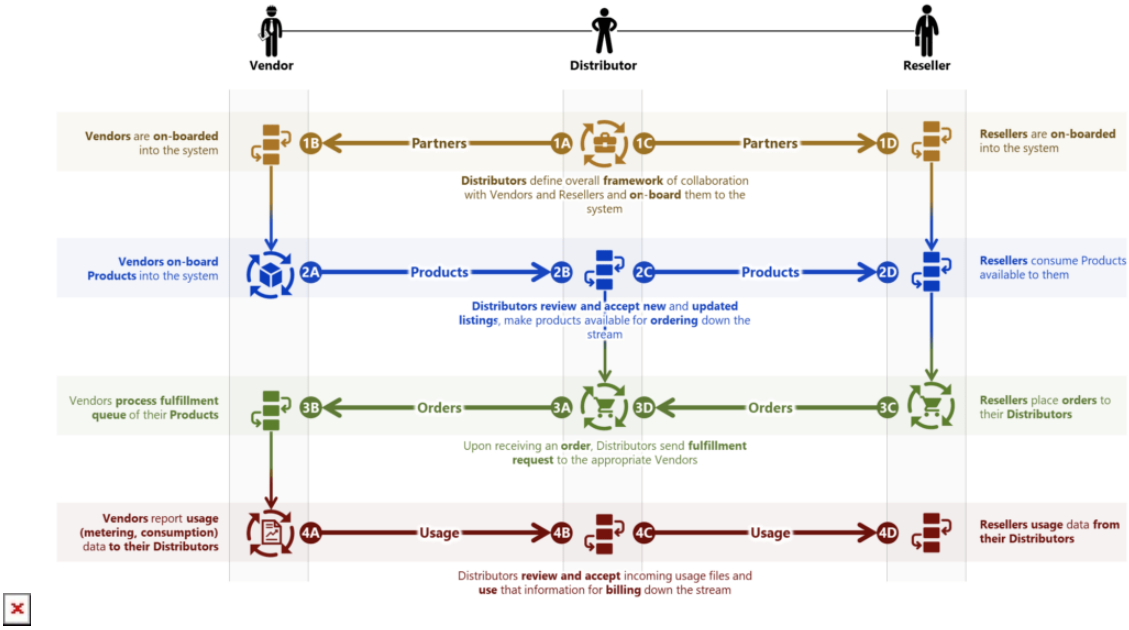


Business Flows

Connect implements four primary business supply chain flows (scenarios) between Vendors, Resellers and Distributors as schematically illustrated and described below:



Business Flows

1. **Contract Flow**
   Business process that enables Distributors to bring new Vendors and Resellers into the system and manage contractual relationship with them. Thus, this flow includes the following stages:
   1. Distributor define an overall framework of collaboration with Vendors and Resellers by creating agreements.
   2. Vendors or Resellers accept terms of their agreements to access the Connect platform.
2. **Product Flow**
   This business operation requires Vendors to onboard products and list them to Marketplaces that are defined by Distributors and Resellers. Therefore, this flow includes product definition and product listing processes:
   1. Vendors on-board their products and send a listing request to Distributors.

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2. Distributors review and accept listing requests. Therefore, Distributors make products available for Customers and Resellers.

3. **Order Flow**
   Business process that requires Distributors or Resellers to submit subscription requests to Vendors. This allows processing and consolidating various operations in the product life cycle, such as purchase, change, cancellation and other types of scenarios.
   1. Once specific product items are bought, Distributors/ Resellers (or their commerce systems) send a subscription requests to corresponding Vendors.
   2. Vendors process pending subscription requests in their fulfillment queue and either accept or reject them.
4. **Usage Flow**
   This flow requires Vendors to submit structured product consumption reports that support *pay-as-you-go* model. Such operations are available in case your product features corresponding capabilities. The usage flow contains the following stages:
   1. Vendors generate product usage reports and submit them to Distributors.
   2. Distributors (or Resellers) review and accept incoming usage files and use that information to bill their customers.

Tutorials and Use Cases

In case you are new to the CloudBlue Connect® platform, it is strongly recommended to familiarize yourself with the following tutorials and use case scenarios:

- Portals Interface
- Distributor Tutorial
- Vendor Tutorial
- Reseller Tutorial

If you need to update your knowledge on a certain flow or an operation, navigate to the required article by using the left-hand navigation panel.

> ●
> Help & Support
>
> Use the Help and Support topics to access maintenance information, the educational channel, and other helpful resources. In case it is required to contact support, follow the guidelines provided in the Contact Support article.

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