



Transport Case Study

Overview

Customer: A leading manufacturer and supplier of food-quality PET and PP packaging solutions to retailers and the food processing industry in the United Kingdom. Operating from two South-West locations, the company supplies both standard and made-to-measure trays to the meat, fish poultry and hospitality sectors, catering for their production of fresh and frozen goods, as well as ready meals.

Requirement

A totally reliable 3PL supply chain solution for time-critical collection of palletised goods from production sites and delivery of full loads and groupage within a BRCGS standard operation Provision of stand trailers for load building, swapped daily. Availability of added value BRCGS services, such as food-grade storage for both raw materials and finished product. Pallet network capability for smaller pallet quantities. Outstanding service KPIs, transparency, EDI and technical capability. Agility and responsiveness, innovation to support changing requirements, cost efficiency.

Challenges

Willmotts initially secured a small element of the UK fleet work from one South West site on the demise of the incumbent haulier who had unexpectedly gone into administration.

We provided an immediate solution to relieve the pressure of a specific supply chain crisis, but we also wanted to demonstrate our operational capability to become a long-term logistics partner. The customer was seeking an increase in efficiency and an overall saving in transport rates across both sites, so we needed to scope their full logistics requirements and identify where both efficiencies and cost savings could be realised.

As principal UK general freight haulier we would need to cover 15-25 full loads a day collecting from both South West production facilities using 4.54m high curtain-sided trailers suitable for tall pallets.

At the time, Brexit was looming, so additionally the company was looking to put contingency measures in place to have raw materials for production close to hand to mitigate the risk of import delays.



Approach

This was a contract implementation over a necessarily short period to achieve continuity of service and no disruption to our customer's business. We needed to quickly understand their internal processes, loading requirements and any specific booking or delivery instructions relevant to their consignments and to set up EDI links to facilitate data transfer. We therefore undertook an open and transparent two week 'Stress Test' where collections and deliveries were monitored by all parties at both sites so that any teething problems could be reviewed and quickly resolved.

Solution

The issue of warehousing capacity was resolved with the acquisition of another warehouse locally and the transfer of several smaller customers' stock out of our Waterlip warehouse to create sufficient space. A further long-term plan for a dedicated new build warehouse was brought forward to ensure capacity for further growth. We liaised very closely with the customer on work processes to ensure accuracy and timeliness of contract packing to order and put in place documented Standard Operating Procedures covering all operational activities. Our warehouse pickers were trained on product-specific reboxing and labelling with a focus on batch and date detail.

Using cloud-based tools, our IT capability allowed the automation of many simple processes to reduce administration and the potential errors of manual data input and to provide complete transparency of order or delivery status for our customer. Our Warehouse Management System has full EDI and API functionality and provides detailed inventory management reporting, augmented by an online portal giving the customer real-time stock and movement data. Additionally, we installed a booking interface allowing third party suppliers and container operators to have visibility of available collection and delivery slots and book times at their convenience.

We set up EDI links with the production site, so all SSCC data is transmitted directly into our WMS ahead of collection and confirmed by barcode scanning of labels on receipt. This includes positive hold and release data, which can then be quickly allocated to orders once the release is confirmed.

To ease the flow of day-to-day communications, we also set up a specific email inbox and online folders, shared with the customer and updated regularly by all parties, so that all routine communications could be easily handled by operations staff and any exceptions could be quickly identified and resolved, keeping service levels and KPIs consistently high.

Conclusion

Within our rolling programme of fleet renewal, we had sufficient new trailers coming on board to meet the requirements of this contract and tied in with the flex from a small number of closely managed subcontractors, we have continued to deliver very high levels of performance and to work in partnership to create opportunities for improvement and cost savings as appropriate.

We have further supported our customer with storage of both raw materials and finished product when needed, even to the extent of providing a 'rip and tip' hopper operation to prepare goods for the production process at one of our warehouse sites.

Our level of resources and the expertise of our people in FMCG markets has been key to our success in becoming a seamless and valued extension to their business. Our team has worked hard to ensure complete customer satisfaction now and to strengthen the bond into the future. Willmotts' contract for logistics services for this customer has consequently been renewed and extended.