

Viewpoint: Key to Optimizing Data Management For Logistics Service Providers Lies in Global Functionality of Operating System

In today's multi-national business environment, with diverse cultures and languages, one of the obstacles faced by global logistics service providers is capturing, managing and reporting shipment data correctly throughout the extended supply chain.

Today's IT systems provide extensive reporting data from a variety of sources throughout the global supply chain for trading partners, but many systems do not provide the local language and documentation options necessary for logistics service providers (LSPs) to ensure the reliability of data entered in international offices. What many LSPs require for optimized business processes is a dynamic software program that not only captures the necessary shipment data, but accurately translates the information into functional reports.





Structure Must Focus on Requirements of the Global Business Environment

With globalization of the supply chain, having access to multiple-country and multiple-language functionality within a single database is invaluable for properly managing data across geographic and cultural boundaries.

Data must be properly communicated between offices and vendors throughout the extended supply chain.

Discrepancies in data reporting often occur because shipment data is gathered from many different sources, in multi-country offices, with cultural and language differences. This can make proper data management difficult if it is not compiled in a format understandable to all parties. There are six areas of concern that a global LSP's software system should be addressing:

- **Supply Chain Visibility.** As international rules and regulations change, enhanced supply chain visibility is no longer just a value added service for LSPs, but a requirement necessary to compete for business. Superior logistics software should offer LSPs the ability to create unlimited milestones on every touch point of freight movement and trigger real-time updates on the locations of the freight to the ultimate cargo user and its agents.
- **Global Reporting.** Reporting data accurately is second in importance only to real-time visibility in today's global market. LSPs must be able to report across borders, including on the offshore-to-offshore movement of goods.
- **Single Global Operating Platforms.** More and more LSPs are setting up wholly-owned offices overseas. This means they require a software solution that will enable them to scale the multi-country reporting process quickly and integrate operations with accounting. These service providers need to be able to set up multiple companies in multiple countries, with multiple currencies, while using one global database that is localized for each country.
- **Multiple Language Pack Availability.** While English is

generally used as the universal language for data reporting, utilizing software programs with multiple language packs that provide user level language functionality can significantly help LSPs in the reporting process throughout the global supply chain.

- **Database Roles and Security Settings.** Application security settings are extremely important when rolling out a new software solution and should be well defined, with strict security settings in place. Freight forwarding company employees must have the ability to not only manage exactly how secure shipment data is recorded, but the software system must also be intuitive and alert users of any shipment information or data fields that might not be correctly filled out.
- **Flexible Database Configuration.** Flexibility of data flow management is critical in the LSP environment. The services they offer and the operating processes they use -- from very simplistic to very complex -- may differ widely. Because the key to managing data properly lies within the software, whatever system is used by an LSP should be highly configurable, with the flexibility to adapt to specific business requirements.

Ultimately, the key to properly optimizing the management of international shipment data for LSPs lies in having one flexible integrated enterprise system that provides accurate and comprehensible data throughout the organization from a central database. With globalization of the supply chain, having access to multiple-country and multiple-language functionality within a single database is invaluable for properly managing data across geographic and cultural boundaries.

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Every day, 1,300 logistics service providers, consisting of 33,000 users in 45 countries, move goods through the global supply chain using CargoWise's ediEnterprise system, a powerful and feature rich software solution developed to meet the ever-changing needs of the logistics industry. CargoWise offers the only single platform supply chain logistics management system that provides integration across all departments with functionality for domestic, regional and global customers. The company operates from offices worldwide with headquarters in the USA, Australia and in the UK. More information on CargoWise can be found at www.cargowise.com