

Delivering a global supply chain

Increasingly complex factory-to-dealer supply chains demand innovative logistics solutions. It is a challenge WWL's global SCM organisation meets daily.

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The traditional method of managing ocean-linked supply chains has been the norm since the days when clipper ships began rounding the Cape. But in the modern age of dynamic businesses with requirements that can change several times during the duration of an ocean crossing, such methods will no longer do. Today's supply chains have to be flexible enough to accommodate changing circumstances and to react quickly. All parties in the supply chain, especially the end customer, need and expect visibility of what is in transit, where it's at, and when it will arrive. And that's a key part of the Supply Chain Management (SCM) approach that WWL offers.

Scott Gibson, Vice President of SCM & Networks at WWL, explains that WWL is continuously improving the supply chain solutions that they are providing.

"We are working across our businesses, regions and customer base to deliver uniform and integrated approaches to Supply Chain Management. This approach offers our customers the highest levels of consistency, visibility, flexibility and of course economy while still allowing for the level of customisation expected."

For example, a typical customer requirement to transport a car from Germany to the US will involve many parties. There is at least one party responsible for inland transportation to the port, a shipping line and then another land transport link. There may also be storage facilities, stevedores, freight forwarders, shipping brokers and so on, all working on separate contracts. All of these will have different business procedures and IT systems, and can typically only 'see' their particular part of the process.

"As a truly global provider involved in all aspects of the factory-to-dealer supply chain, WWL is able to see and manage the full supply chain for our customers," he says. "Moreover, we are able to offer the same range of services independent of where our customers are – be it Asia, Europe, Oceania, Africa or the Americas."

IN THE EXAMPLE OF TRANSPORTING CARS from Germany to the Americas, WWL would not only pick up the cars at the German factory but would also prepare the unit for shipping. Following that, the vehicles will be processed through a terminal onto a ship – be it WWL, or other,

→ SCOTT GIBSON

Scott Gibson brings over twenty years' experience in SCM to WWL. He spent six years as a Logistics Officer with the US Air Force, and then joined Sears Logistics Services (part of the major US retailer Sears Roebuck). Other positions held include an engineering post in a logistics company, managing transportation operations at American Stores and consulting on business process change at Manugistics.

Before joining WWL in March 2007 he spent three years working out of Oslo for Bearing Point, a leading business and technology consulting firm.

vessels. On the other side of the Atlantic, WWL off-loads and handles any rectification, recalls, late configuration or customer changes, pre-delivery inspections and onward transport to the dealer or the end customer.

"Throughout this, one of the real advantages is the visibility available to our customers for every link of the chain under WWL management," Gibson says.

"There are also multiple other advantages independent of whether we are managing the supply chains for cars, heavy equipment or any of the other specialised equipment. The visibility that we are providing drives down the need for 'safety stocks' at ports, at depots or at dealers, thus saving on expensive inventory."

ALSO, BECAUSE THE PROCESS IS UNDER a single management, delays can be minimised. However, if delays do occur, WWL can proactively re-arrange terminal and onward transportation requirements, including special handling of prioritised units – all while the ship is at sea.

"Another example of where WWL's global network is proactively meeting changing customer needs is in our ability to manage changing destinations. If a customer's demand pattern shifts while the unit is in transit, we are able to react and redirect the unit to the correct market."

In addition to providing support for changes at the single unit level, WWL has the ability to provide solutions that affect the entire supply chain. With customer supply chains reaching globally, management decisions can affect all aspects of the chain. WWL is actively engaging and creating the innovative solutions needed to support opening of new markets and deployment of new manufacturing concepts.

"At all levels of change for our customers, WWL's integrated approach to Supply Chain Management ensures that manufacturers and their distribution networks can maximise the benefits from what may often be fleeting windows of opportunity," says Gibson.

An overall monitoring, management, and optimisation gives WWL control of the total cost and performance of the distribution supply chain. This is opposite the norm with multiple contractors seeking to optimise their own small part of the process.

"Providing value-added supply chain solutions to our customers allows WWL to help manufacturers increase their overall ability to be as efficient as possible," Gibson concludes.

"We've industrialised and standardised our processes so that we can approach customers as a truly global provider"

