

GLOBAL AIR FREIGHT BUSINESS ENHANCES SERVICE AND CUTS COSTS WITH SHIELD INTELEFILE



AIR LOGISTICS

Air Logistics Group provides airlines with complete, outsourced cargo operations. They are growing strongly and were awarded best in class and winner of the worldwide 'General Sales and Service Agent (GSSA) of the Year' award for 2014 by Air Cargo News.

Air Logistics is growing by providing high quality, value-added services in a highly competitive global industry. They understand outsourcing, and when they wanted to radically improve their core document processes, they came to Transputec.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Air Logistics Group's challenge was always to ensure a real value-add service was delivered cost-effectively to their clients and partners. As Stephen Dawkins, Founder and Chief Operating Officer, puts it: "Air Logistics has grown by offering a compelling proposition to airlines. We deliver revenue and profit without capex, without additional staff. The more value-add we can offer, the quicker we can give data to our customers, the better".

In 2013 the Air Logistics team focussed on improving their information flows – the way they process air waybills, manifests and all the other documents that are generated and processed when air freight travels around the globe. The central thrust was to make accurate information available to all appropriate parties as quickly as possible.

In the old manual world paperwork was stored in boxes and distributed by fax, email or even post. Station staff, across the world, were heavily involved in paperwork, and information could take hours or even days to be made available.

OVERVIEW

The need

Paperless operation to take the delays out of worldwide processes. The key need was to make accurate information available to all appropriate parties as quickly as possible.

"We're competing in a global industry. Transputec and SHIELDIntelefile have helped us win new business, control our costs and deliver real added value to our customers. They will play a key role in our on-going growth."



Stephen Dawkins, COO and Founder, Air Logistics Group

In this industry the quality of incoming paperwork is often low, having been through the rough and tumble of busy airports, and errors could take a long time to track down and correct.

Manual paper handling always generates delays and mistakes, and the global scale of Air Logistics's business meant that improving these processes offered huge potential benefits to service and efficiency. Air Logistics started looking for a solution, and discovered that in the same industry, Swissport were already successfully streamlining logistics and improving customer service using SHIELDIntelefile. Swissport suggested that the Air Logistics team discuss their requirements with Transputec.

SHIELDIntelefile is designed for air freight, and is a fully hosted service, so it's quick to deploy. After a short series of design meetings and workshops, Air Logistics Group's own system went live only a few weeks later.

THE SOLUTION

The new system captures and automates air waybills, manifests and the other forms and documents that are generated in the process of transporting air freight.

SHIELDIntelefile offers a flexible solution for capturing and submitting document images whether from centralised or distributed sources. This lets Air Logistics scan paperwork as close as possible to, or in, the airport, straight from the handlers. These images are queued by ShieldIntelefile for a combination of automatic and manual data recognition and extraction, at which time accurate, categorised, searchable data is securely available to appropriate people, inside and outside the company, anywhere in the world. Workflows become paperless too, so there are no transmission delays, even in global inter-company processes.

The benefits

Better service,

SHIELDIntelefile has led to a direct improvement to Air Logistics' service by streamlining the document management process.

Competitive edge,

It has given a direct improvement to Air Logistics' competitive position. Air waybills can be processed in 2 hours against as much as 48 hours before.

Operational cost savings

Airline document processing is automatic with a very few exceptions. Station staff have the information they need, when they need it,

Flexibility and growth

As the business grows and new customers come on board with SHIELDIntelefile, capacity is easy to add in an efficient, cost-effective manner.

Integration

SHIELDIntelefile is ready for integration with Air Logistics accounting systems and other systems.

Future proofing

Air Logistics Group is well placed for paperless operation with IATA's e-Air Waybill initiative.

Invoice processing using SHIELDIntelefile is the next phase in the project.

THE BENEFITS

The new system is a great success, and Air Logistics Group has seen a wide range of real benefits from it. Here is an overview of how SHIELDIntelefile is helping the business:

Competitive edge

This approach has directly improved Air Logistics's service, and their competitive position. Stephen Dawkins: *"The old way was to take a copy of the air waybill and manifest, and send it off. This process could, in the worst case, take up to 48 hours. We can now make it available within 2 hours of departure. People need data now, and they need quality. That's what we provide, and it puts us ahead of the pack. It gives us an edge against our competitors."*

Operational cost savings

Station staff, after 3 to 4 days training, are able to manage all aspects of the scanning process. From then on processing is automatic, with exception management handled by a small, central team for the worldwide operation. Once extracted, the information is both available centrally, for an up-to-date global picture, and back at the local station, for an excellent local service.

Station staff are no longer inundated by administrative tasks, hunting for paper – they have the information they need, when they need it, onscreen in front of them as they deliver service to their customers.

This automation has allowed Air Logistics to build a lean, efficient, global structure, simplifying tasks at airports, and centralising expertise into a small exception processing team that looks after the global process.

Flexibility and growth

SHIELDIntelefile doesn't just deliver low cost and efficiency - it also results in flexibility. As the business grows and new customers come on board, capacity is easy to add in an efficient, cost-effective manner.

"Where now a station manager receives a manifest and matches it up with an Air Waybill, the new process means they just scan it. SHIELDIntelefile and the central accounting function do the rest."

Stephen Dawkins, COO and Founder, Air Logistics Group



This flexibility doesn't just apply to people costs - SHIELDIntelefile is delivered as a service, with a simple volume-dependent monthly fee. It will scale on demand with no capex. Everything is a plannable variable cost, ready for peaks, troughs, and more growth.

So Air Logistics can expand rapidly while providing excellent service, and new stations become effective more quickly. This is key to Air Logistics because: *"Every month we open a new station,"* says Stephen, *"and we immediately train the local staff to use SHIELDIntelefile. It's a lot simpler and more efficient than the old way. To illustrate: after a year we are now scanning 60% of our transactions, and we'll be at 85% in 2015. This is from zero when we started the project in 2013."*

Integration – a pragmatic approach

SHIELDIntelefile is ready for integration with accounting systems, and Air Logistics Group is embarking on an integration phase for their systems. But Stephen Dawkins is adamant about his advice to other businesses: integration of systems isn't a pre-requisite for business benefit – don't let your existing IT complexity hold you back. Air Logistics Group has given itself a competitive edge, and now it knows exactly what needs to be integrated with its internal systems. He says: *"...don't integrate immediately - prove the system adds value first."*

Future proofing

IATA's e-Air Waybill initiative will bring paperless Air Waybills to the whole industry, and Air Logistics Group is well placed for paperless operation, having gone a lot further than just Air Waybills. They have already adopted a global structure and global, paperless processes to fit the needs of its customers.

And they're going further: the next phase of their project brings SHIELDIntelefile to bear on supplier invoice processing, supported by a global, consolidated accounting function. Stephen: *"Where now a station manager receives invoices and processes them locally, the new process means they just scan it. SHIELDIntelefile and the central accounting function do the rest."*

"Accountants looked after operations in their own countries 10 years ago. Now our UK accountant runs 17 businesses in 8 different countries, and we run the whole business from 4 key hubs. Airlines act globally, so as a supplier we have to support Airlines globally. SHIELDIntelefile is a key tool for us to do that"



Stephen Dawkins, COO and Founder, Air Logistics Group

So Station Managers lose yet more admin workload and gain a new level of visibility vital to managing their local business relationships. Meanwhile the global picture becomes even more up-to-the-minute.

Stephen is excited about the new global challenge: *"Accountants looked after operations in their own countries 10 years ago. Now our UK accountant runs 17 businesses in 8 different countries, and we run the whole business from 4 key hubs. Airlines act globally, so as a supplier to the airline industry we have to act globally. SHIELDIntelefile is a key tool for us to do that"*

Finally

This short case study shows how Air Logistics Group has used SHIELDIntelefile to pursue its global strategy. They have successfully outsourced key document processes, and successful outsourcing is never just about technology.

Relationship is key, and Stephen and his team work very well with Transputec. Stephen again: *"Transputec is a rare asset in the IT industry... they fully understand our needs, and are able to deliver. Every challenge we've set them they've come through. And they're always pushing us to consider new possibilities - there's always 'something else' that they want to tell us about."*

"Transputec is a rare asset in the IT industry... they fully understand our needs, and are able to deliver. Every challenge we've set them they've come through. And they're always pushing us to consider new possibilities - there's always 'something else' that they want to tell us about."

Stephen Dawkins, COO and Founder, Air Logistics Group



TRANSPUTEC'S PEDIGREE

Since our inception in the mid-1980s, Transputec has had the trust of Britain's foremost IT users, including the Ministry of Justice, Samsung, Danone, Camelot, Chubb Insurance and DP-DHL/ Williams Lea to name but a few. Vertical sector experience covering banking & finance, media, third sector, technology, retail, SMEs and health care adds further value to IT users in the form of industry-specific knowledge.

A business like Transputec is as much about its people - their experience, customer-focus and expertise - as anything else. From initial assessment to delivery of turnkey solutions and day-to-day customer care, these professionals take solutions from Transputec's hardware, software and professional services business units and ensure they're a perfect fit.

TRANSPUTEC

First published in 2014

© Copyright Transputec Ltd 2014

Transputec House
19 Heather Park Drive
Wembley
London
HA0 1SS

All Rights Reserved

+44 (0) 20 8584 1400 (Enquiries)
+44 (0) 20 8584 1440 (Support Desk)
+44 (0) 20 8584 1321 (Support Fax)

For more information please visit transputec.com
