

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

- Structure Must Focus on Requirements of the Global Business Environment -

Chicago, IL USA, October 22, 2009 — Kurt Corman, Business Development Manager for CargoWise® edi, a leading provider of integrated international supply chain logistics management systems, says that 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," he says. "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."

Corman says discrepancies in data reporting often occur because shipment data is gathered from many different sources, in multi-country offices with cultural and language differences. Data is not always correctly communicated between offices and vendors throughout the extended supply chain. This can make proper data management difficult if it is not compiled in a format understandable to all parties. He identifies six areas of concern that a global LSP's software system should be addressing:

- **Supply Chain Visibility.** "Visibility is a key buzz word in the LSP community as all customers seek a broader and deeper view into international supply chain functions. As international rules and regulations change, visibility is no longer just a value add for LSPs, but a requirement in order to compete for business," he says. "Superior logistics software should offer logistics service providers the ability to create unlimited milestones on every touch point of freight movement and trigger updates on the locations of the freight to the ultimate cargo user and its agents. They also have to be able to accept and send this information electronically through EDI and XML, or a Web visibility tool, with real-time updating. Efficient movement of freight is dependent on the information LSPs provide their customers about the movement of their goods."
- **Global Reporting.** "Reporting data accurately is second in importance only to real-time visibility in today's global market," says Corman. "LSPs have to be capable of reporting across borders, including on the offshore-to-offshore movement of goods. In the past, if a forwarder wanted to create a global shipping report for its customers it had to go to each country and ask for that report to be generated based on what came in or left from that station or country. Then they would have to consolidate those reports into one comprehensive report for that specific company. This approach to multi-country, multi-language reporting is a very labor intensive process and should be automated for today's global supply chain requirements."
- **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," he says. "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. An export shipment from Hong Kong to the U.S. has to appear to be an import to the U.S. operator without having to double or triple key it. Data should be entered only once."

- **Multiple Language Pack Availability.** "While English is generally used as the universal language for data reporting, logistics service providers may still find the need to localize their software solutions based on which country they are operating in at any given time," says Corman. "Doing so opens up the hiring pool within that specific market – including staff that might not be entirely comfortable with reading and writing in English. 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 designed and in place," cautions Corman. "Freight forwarding company employees must have the ability to not only manage exactly how secure shipment data is recorded, but LSPs should ensure they implement specific workflow templates to show staff how to record it. The software system also has to be intuitive enough to 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," says Corman. "Every freight forwarder has a unique operational model. 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 with the software, whatever system is used by an LSP should be highly configurable, with the flexibility to adapt to specific business requirements."

Ultimately, Corman says 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."

ABOUT CARGOWISE® EDI

CargoWise edi provides solutions for forwarders, customs brokers and logistics service providers focused on supply chain execution capability in an integrated ERP-like globally capable system. It is a world-leading provider of low-cost, high-value software solutions and services for the freight forwarding, NVOCC, express courier, customs brokerage, contract warehouse, container freight station, ships agency, local cartage and other supply chain services.

Every day, 1,300 logistics service providers, consisting of 33,000 users in 45 countries, move goods through the global supply chain using CargoWise edi's flagship product edi*Enterprise*. CargoWise edi offers supply chain logistics management systems that provide full integration across all departments and functionality for domestic, regional and global customers. Headquartered in the U.S., Australia and now in the UK, the Company operates from 12 worldwide offices across the U.S., Europe and Asia. More information on CargoWise edi can be found here: www.cargowise.com.

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