

Case Study: Patrick Tasmania

Patrick Tasmania guarantee time of delivery with TBO eLogistics

Background

Patrick Tasmania provides logistics services enabling the products of many Tasmanian business clients to reach their local and global markets. It is a subsidiary of the Patrick group; comprising seventy-plus prime movers and around three hundred people nationally (180 of whom are based in Tasmanian depots). Chris Anderson is Patrick Tasmania's national operations manager - based in Burnie.

One such exporting client is Classic Foods; a company Patrick Tasmania hold up to 3500 pallets of finished goods at any time in its Burnie warehouse. The warehouse is effectively a quarantine area for their customer's outputs prior to shipping. Patrick Tasmania handles 42,000 tonnes of product a year for Classic Foods including dairy products, soups, custards and other food ingredients.



e-Commerce drivers

Originally a hand-written clipboard was used to control pallet movements. Although management suspected an automated system was required, the push came in the form of two valued clients cancelling contracts due to Patrick Tasmania's inability to handle freight consignments electronically. It was at that point Chris decided that the automated system needed serious consideration:

"It was time to take a hard look at how we handled our freight, and to take a realistic look at adopting an automated system."

Another driver was the Patrick group's acquisition of a company providing an electronic solution to be adopted by every Patrick group subsidiary.

The solution

Patrick Tasmania combined the Patrick Group's technology with TBO eLogistics. Patrick Tasmania has been able to integrate data exchange and effectively extend their electronic buyer/supplier relationship. TBO eLogistics provides electronic data exchange and value-adding services to the transport and logistics sector.

Business benefits

One year on, Patrick Tasmania staff have taken ownership of the new system and are enjoying a more relaxed approach to the new technology after the flux of development and integration.

Increased customer satisfaction

Chris believes the level of customer satisfaction has been greatly increased:

“We now have a far higher level of customer satisfaction. The reasons are simple – any customer who has access to our system can track consignments with just a few keystrokes”.

From years in the freight industry, Patrick Tasmania is very familiar with the most common questions posed by customers: Where is my freight? When will it arrive? Chris mentions that “With the new system, all the guesswork is gone and customers can make definite commitments based on a guaranteed time of delivery.”

When customers phone Patrick Tasmania, their details are quickly and easily found by searching for their customer number, consignment number, or even container and trailer numbers, or the names of their trading partners. This saves time for everyone.

Critical Success Factors

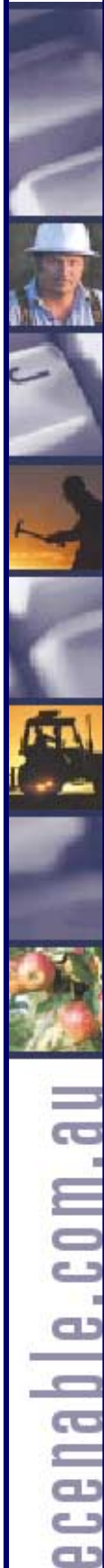
Consistency is extremely important to Patrick Tasmania to enable it to integrate with other operators within the Patrick group. Chris explains “We have gone ahead greatly as a business since that decision. At a practical level, it is no longer a case of say, 30 people all with their own ideas of how an IT program should be exploited.”



Another critical factor has been organised change management and training strategies to ensure programs and applications are used correctly and consistently, so that they remain completely interoperable with other Patrick systems.

Challenges

Why go down the electronic road at all? It's not a flippant question; in Chris' opinion “It was frustrating at times, and certainly demanding on our staff. It takes time to know how the systems work, and it takes more time still to ensure that everyone inputs data correctly. Adherence to correct process is all-important.” In the longer term, Chris predicts that automating many of the previously manual and paper-based operations of the business will bring considerable savings. In common with other businesses that have gone down the same road, he is finding that initially, savings are hard to identify and are incremental rather than immediate.



“But all of a sudden,” Chris says, “you realise that with your old system you probably had somebody working the equivalent of about two weeks a year just processing and faxing out consignment notes!”

“Early on, we found that some staff were finding their own (non-standard) ways of entering data; and they could not perceive any difficulties in making their part of the system function... But, as with many such schemes, the data in one can interact with data in another, and unless everything has been entered in a manner that is compatible, there will be glitches.”

Even though the need for more appropriate technology was apparent, Patrick Tasmania faced changing an industry culture that prided itself on achieving results through traditional work methods. Chris mentions, “I would have to say that within our organisation, there were not too many at first who were happy about the need to learn new ways of doing their jobs.”

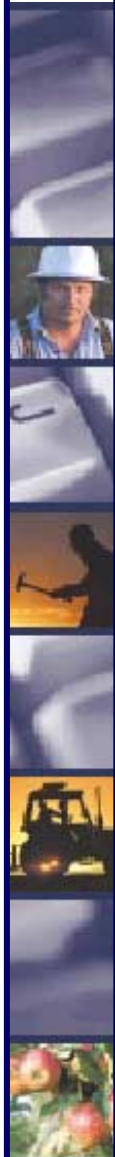
In hindsight

These days, Chris can hardly believe Patrick Tasmania used to manually create freight manifests every night and fax them to every depot throughout Tasmania and interstate. Chris mentions, “We would still have to phone depots to see if freight was available, and data would have to be entered by each receiving depot.” It was labour intensive, “It was a system that worked, but only because people put in tremendous efforts to make it work – it was not inherently efficient.”

The future

Large customers will be electronically linked to the Patrick Tasmania system, replacing a tedious process of generating printed consignment notes for all deliveries, and countless faxes between the two organisations. Chris wants to perfect this process to encourage customers to engage the technology. He is confident that not only will he win back the business Patrick Tasmania lost, but gain additional business as well.

Now the initial move has been made, Chris also predicts automating other manual procedures to bring further savings.



TBO eLogistics

TBO eLogistics provides Providers and Shippers with accurate consignment information to help manage transport relationships. Armed with a wealth of information, transport users can make more informed decisions regarding their shipping activity.

TBO eLogistics performs a clearing-house functionality allowing the server-based application to:

- Integrate with e-commerce platforms via a messaging interface; allowing seamless two-way flow of the transport/logistics information;
- Link existing systems of participating transport companies so that Consignments and transport bookings can be automated;
- Allow transport companies without an existing Freight Management system to access TBO's consignment management functionality via a server-based application;
- Link the status systems of carriers to provide a one-stop-shop for status enquiries; avoiding the need to interrogate many systems; and
- Generate logs enabling automated payment and reporting on transaction performance.

For further information:

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