Wrightbus is the UK’s leading independent supplier of accessible buses for public transportation systems. Earning a reputation for producing vehicles which are stylish, durable, high in quality and packed with innovative features Wrightbus has significantly expanded since its foundation in 1946. The company originated in Ballymena, Northern Ireland, and was the location for the company’s factory and aftermarket distribution centre (DC). With the ever-increasing number of Wrightbus vehicle’s operating on mainland United Kingdom roads the company’s aftermarket subsidiary, Customcare, sought an innovative logistics solution to increase availability of servicing and maintenance parts to minimise vehicle downtime and whole life costs.

**CUSTOMER CHALLENGE**

Customcare’s supply chain required re-designing to provide the level of service their customers desired. The two main issues requiring resolution were (a). the difficulty providing consistent levels of service from the Northern Ireland DC to the increasing number of mainland UK customers, and (b). the associated operating costs from holding high levels of inventory.

Historically Customcare used a motor manufacturer’s UK dealership network infrastructure to store and distribute parts however the solution did not provide the level of flexibility, visibility or service. As a result the management took the decision to search for an experienced supply chain partner to design, implement and operate a sustainable solution that would fully meet the demand of the bus operators.

**Customer Challenge**

- Reduce delivery costs and transit time
- Improve service levels to ensure customers receive the right part, at the right time
- Reduce inventory held in Customcare’s supply chain

**DHL Supply Chain Solution**

- Transfer the aftermarket warehouse from Ireland to Mainland UK
- Collaborate with DHL Freight and DHL Express divisions to operate the transport element
- Implement RF scanners to ensure pick accuracy improves

**Customer Benefits**

- 99.98% of parts are picked right time, first time
- 100% of deliveries are sent to the correct address
- 99.99% of parts are delivered undamaged
- The warehouse is now classified as ‘zero to landfill’
DHL SUPPLY CHAIN SOLUTION

Due to the geographical footprint of customers the DHL’s solution involved relocating the main distribution centre from Ballymena to mainland Great Britain. The Automotive shared-user warehouse at Halewood, Liverpool, was identified as having available storage capacity (15 000 sq ft) whilst providing a strong fit with the distribution footprint.

From analysing distribution data it became clear that a dedicated transport operation would not suit Customcare. The fragmented nature of demand and geographical locations of delivery points meant an alternative solution guaranteeing ‘Next Day’ service was required.

DHL Supply Chain turned to counterparts within the ‘DHL Domestic’ (now Yodal) and ‘DHL Freight’ divisions to harness the power of the wider DHL organisation. ‘Domestic’ would deliver small packages whilst ‘Freight’ would be utilised for anything on a pallet. In addition, it was agreed that specialist sub-contractors would be employed for any out-of-scope part movements – such as body panels.

Following a comprehensive assessment process Customcare decided the DHL solution fully met the desired operational, financial and service targets and awarded.

CUSTOMER BENEFITS

DHL Supply Chain successfully supported the transition of stock from Ballymena to Halewood and in September 2009 the operation went live. Since this date DHL has performed to consistently high standards in terms of accuracy and delivery.

- 99.98% of parts are picked right time, first time thanks to the introduction of Remote Frequency (RF) scanners
- 100% of deliveries are sent to the correct address
- 99.99% of parts are delivered undamaged

An additional same-day delivery service is provided from the Halewood site for bus depots within close proximity to the site. Delivering parts in this manner improves customer experience as down time is minimised.

The operational and management have a relentless focus on Continuous Improvement and this has reaped many benefits, including the operation recently being classified as ‘Landfill Free’ (meaning all waste is disposed of via sustainable routes).

Other initiatives include changing from ‘loose fill’ packaging to ‘paper fill’ - saving substantial sums of money and increasing the protection of parts during transit.

For further information

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