

Subaru: Fueled by Integrated Software, Auto Part Shipments Turn on a Dime

Have you ever spent hours in your car dealer’s waiting room - only to learn your car can’t be fixed because the part didn’t come in? If so, you have a personal understanding of the importance of efficient parts inventory and delivery to car dealers and end users. That fact is something Dan Ohms never forgets.

Ohms is the International and Parts Traffic Manager for Subaru of America, Inc., headquartered in Cherry Hill, New Jersey. Subaru is a subsidiary of Fuji Heavy Industries Ltd., of Japan and is the exclusive U.S. marketer of Subaru automobiles, accessories and replacement parts.

Ohms is responsible for inbound shipments from foreign and domestic vendors and outbound shipments from company-owned regional distribution centers (RDCs) to 600 U.S. dealers. He also oversees warehouse transfers of parts and accessories between RDCs, independent distributors, vehicle-processing centers and public warehouse locations. In all, Ohms manages about 650,000 shipments annually - a challenging task, to be sure.

And while the speed of change in automotive technology has never been faster, one thing hasn’t changed during Ohms’ 17-year tenure: the need for swift, efficient part shipments to dealers.

Ohms began working with Pitney Bowes in 1994, along with members of Subaru’s IT and warehouse operations departments. “We were impressed with [their] professionalism and their partnership approach,” says Ohms.

A few years later, Subaru installed a new enterprise system and decided to upgrade their transportation management software to allow interconnectivity throughout the company. “We needed the ability to communicate in real time, both internally and externally, to dealers,” says Ohms. Once again, Pitney Bowes fit the bill. Subaru installed Pitney Bowes’ Conquest™ software.

Conquest is powerful, integrated transportation management software that supports and manages shipping and mailing operations. It’s designed for seamless integration with customers’ existing business systems and databases, from order processing, purchasing and warehousing to accounts payable. For Subaru, Conquest’s real-time connectivity with their Oracle® applications has resulted in more responsive customer service, faster shipping turnaround and more informed decision-making.

Before teaming up with Pitney Bowes, Subaru relied on a variety of shipping processes, including handwritten bills of lading. Switching to Conquest has made a noticeable difference in the efficiency of shipping operations and in speed of throughput. In fact, once Conquest was implemented and running well at the New Jersey location, Subaru expanded the installation to include five additional sites.

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Today, Subaru uses Conquest to receive order information such as order number, consignee data and required delivery date from its warehouse management system.

Once the shipment process is complete, Conquest immediately distributes real-time information in a detailed report to the warehouse management system. Anyone using Subaru’s enterprise system can access such data as actual ship date, individual carrier data and actual freight charges. The warehouse management system, in turn, reports back to the order and inventory management system, sending a continuous stream of timely information throughout the organization.

Conquest’s full-featured software automates all aspects of the shipping function, including order fulfillment pack verification, carrier selection and shipping, vendor compliance labeling, international export documentation, reporting and integration modules. Ohms has made good use of the software’s range of features - especially its carrier selection and integration modules.

Conquest’s carrier selection feature has been a proven time- and money-saver for Ohms and his department. It’s helped Subaru leverage its carrier rates by providing an up-to-date carrier comparison.

And Ohms has used Conquest’s notification feature to maintain a high level of customer service. Using Oracle’s Web applications, dealers can easily access shipping status including freight charges, individual carrier data and pro numbers - all by email. The ASN feature improves Subaru’s responsiveness to dealers by alerting them when their parts are on the way.

Since 1994, Pitney Bowes has worked closely with Subaru to understand its business goals and processes. In that time, Pitney Bowes and Subaru have accomplished measurable improvements in logistics performance, improved customer service and lower carrier costs. Says Ohms, “[Pitney Bowes’] field and technical support staff are excellent. We’ve worked with the same people for years, and they’re familiar with Subaru’s business and its applications. They understand what I mean, and they know how to resolve problems quickly. We’re very pleased with Conquest and Pitney Bowes’ service.”

**About Pitney Bowes**

Pitney Bowes Inc. is a $4.0 billion global provider of integrated mail and document management solutions headquartered in Stamford, Connecticut. The company serves over 2 million businesses of all sizes in more than 130 countries through dealer and direct operations. The Pitney Bowes Supply Chain division, formerly Pitney Bowes TranScape, is a global provider of software and services that extend control and visibility of the supply chain throughout transactions between business partners and suppliers. Pitney Bowes’ growth and success are integrally tied to an exciting, invigorating culture in which innovation, research and development, diversity, community support, and volunteerism are encouraged and rewarded. As a result, the company has been favorably profiled and acknowledged in numerous business-related books and major magazines as being a great place to work and build a career, especially for women and minorities.