

EXPEDITORS HEALTHCARE

Maintaining Temperatures, Packaging Pharmaceuticals

One of the world's largest pharmaceutical and consumer health companies operating in more than 60 countries was in danger of compromising the quality, safety, and efficacy of their temperature-sensitive product during transport. Expeditors assisted the customer with shipments that originated with a vendor in South Carolina, USA and helped them maintain the appropriate temperature while being transported to a distribution center in Limerick, Ireland.





CHALLENGES

One of the larger challenges the customer faced was the shipping site. The site was extremely small and could not load their current packaging model, an active shipping system which has a high cost and requires electricity or other fuel source to maintain the temperature. Also, the pick-up agent used at the shipping site was inconsistent and did not have the appropriate equipment to maintain the quality of the product. The forwarder also proposed problems because they did not have a site in the Mid-Atlantic. This meant the active shipping system had to be loaded at the airline directly after screening, allowing for almost no control of product quality since the shipment was solely under the supervision of the airline. The lack of a Mid-Atlantic site also meant longer transit times since the product had to move to a gateway in Atlanta before moving to Ireland. The airline used was chosen due to the availability of active shipping systems, but they often struggled to meet capacity and support efficient routing.

The packaging was also a challenge because the active shipping system used for the product was a dry ice and battery unit. This type of system is high in cost yet is difficult to maintain at proper temperature requirements during very cold ambient conditions. The customer consistently logged readings below two degrees Celsius, causing a delay in release and, at times, destruction of the product.

OUR SOLUTION

Through a detailed risk assessment, Expeditors identified various opportunities to meet the customer requirements. This information allowed us to develop routing that would minimize cycle time and handling while increasing reliability. In order to provide a consistent pick-up process, the Expeditors origin office worked with the shipper to determine proper pick-up from South Carolina by a vetted carrier in an approved temperature controlled truck.

Expeditors also worked closely with the customer's quality and packaging teams to review alternative packaging options. To maintain product integrity, we substituted passive pallets utilizing gel packs. The product was then moved from Expeditors' gateway where it was screened, loaded into passive

pallets and sealed, then on to the air carrier for direct service. Pre-flight, the airline held the product in a validated temperature controlled room to prevent any temperature excursions. Once the product arrived in Dublin and cleared customs, we arranged for it to be delivered to Limerick by another approved carrier.

RESULTS

Expeditors designed a process to address the customer's challenges, transfer key elements into an SOP with a solid contingency plan, and execute flawlessly. The new routing used at origin provided a controlled environment and faster transit time. The use of improved packaging, direct service, and reliable transit allowed us to ship passive pharma service from the airline, which provided a consistent and reliable cycle time while decreasing the cost of transportation and packaging for the customer.