

SOLUTION SNAPSHOT:

- Industry: Port Facilities
- Challenge: Support a variety of business partner connectivity media, protocols and formats while accommodating growth
- Solution: GXS BizManager® BizLink®

BENEFITS:

- Translates EDI documents without the need for programming.
- Facilitates the timely transfer of documents to and from trading partners.
- Requires little IT experience to set-up.
- Integrates with business applications easily.
- Requires minimal effort to manage and use.

Yantian International Container Terminals

About Yantian International Container Terminals

Established as a joint venture by Hutchison Port Holdings Group and Shenzhen Yantian Port Group and functioning since mid-1994, Yantian International Container Terminals Limited (YICT) is a joint venture that runs port facilities in the Yantian district of Shenzhen, China. A total of 35 shipping lines offer more than 80 weekly services through the port. With double-digit percentage increases in annual handlings in recent years, YICT is no stranger to strong business growth. In 2007, more than 10.016-million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) passed through the port.

To cope with the significant increase in both the number of shippers served and the number of containers shipped, YICT expanded the port and installed sophisticated, state-of-the-art technology that allows its cranes to handle more than 35 moves per hour. When the last phase of the current expansion is completed in 2010, YICT's facilities will boast 16 births, 74 quay cranes and 298 yard gantry cranes.

To ensure that shipping companies continue to favor its ports, YICT uses a six sigma methodology that enables it to meet very high customer service standards.

The Business Challenge

Every business would like to achieve perfection in all of its transactions, but that is a particularly important goal for ports. Correcting mistakes in this industry can take much longer than in most other sectors. If, for example, a transoceanic shipment is loaded on the wrong ship, it may be weeks before the container can be retrieved and sent to the right port.

In its dealings with shipping companies, YICT sends and receives a great many messages concerning bookings, containers, shipment movements and other information. Because the manual handling of paper-based data and the loading of flat files are error-prone, cumbersome and labor-intensive processes, YICT automated the processing of transactions and documents. This automation is complicated by the fact that, while YICT uses industry-standard EDI to exchange transaction documents, it must accommodate the wide variety of media, formats and protocols that shippers use, including EDI, XML and flat files.

In addition to the need to communicate electronically with other businesses, the EDI system must also interface with YICT's internal terminal booking and other back-end systems, which run on HP servers.

Scalability is another issue for YICT. The system that it used for electronic transaction communications was becoming overburdened due to the enormous growth of YICT's port operations. In addition, the old system had to be re-started every week or so as it tended to crash if left running for too long. Clearly, this was not acceptable.

Because it can take weeks to correct transoceanic shipping mistakes, error-free transactions are critical.

One more hurdle that YICT had to overcome was that it couldn't afford any downtime when implementing its new solution.

The Solution

GXS, with assistance from its Hong Kong-based certified partner, Core Solutions, helped YICT meet its shipping communication needs with GXS's BizManager® BizLink®, a powerful, scalable enterprise-level server solution that simplifies the management of a complex community of trading partners, business partners and internal organizations. BizLink enables simple point-and-click configuration of each shipping company's data exchange preferences, accommodating any data format, any data transport mechanism and any security protocol.

In order to prevent downtime during the BizLink implementation, Core Solutions divided the project into three phases. The first two phases ensured that YICT's existing transaction mappings and conversions would run on the upgraded platform. Then, after installing BizLink on YICT's HP servers, Core Solutions used stress testing tools to ensure that the new system would be able to handle the messaging loads that YICT would place on it when the system went live.

The implemented BizLink solution will be responsible for handling all EDI messaging processing for YICT, including performing all of the required protocol and format conversions. Regardless of the media and protocols shipping companies use, transaction-related messages to YICT are, if necessary, converted to the EDI and XML formats in the background, without the need for operator intervention.

IBM WebSphere MQ messaging middleware provides the interface between BizLink and YICT's back-end systems, with messages being exchanged in an XML format. Playing a central role in the solution, BizLink serves as the glue that holds together many of YICT's complex, back-end enterprise systems.

The Results and Benefits

With the implementation of the latest version of BizLink, YICT enjoys a business partner transaction exchange platform that is much easier to manage and administer than the previous system.

Core Solutions also reports that BizLink is much more open than the previous software. The software that YICT used to use didn't offer any customization points, but BizLink allows Core Solutions to, for example, write Java applications that easily plug into BizLink to provide added functionality that fulfills unique requirements if necessary.

Furthermore, BizLink offers sophisticated reporting capabilities that weren't available in the previous software. These reports give YICT considerably greater visibility into its shipping transactions, allowing it to spot problem areas and take immediate corrective action.

BizLink also meets and surpasses YICT's need for scalability. In addition to being a very high-performance solution, BizLink allows YICT to employ functionality that will batch EDI transactions should a large surge in transaction messages arrive faster than the system can handle.

About Core Solutions

Core Solutions is a privately held information technology and services firm specializing in global sourcing solutions. Core Solutions is the only solution provider that helps both buyers and sellers streamline business processes across the end-to-end sourcing lifecycle—from product development to costing, from QA to QC, from order to payment.

Core Solutions offers a powerful set of electronic and web-based solutions that dramatically improve Product Lifecycle Management (PLM), Global Sourcing Management, Global Vendor Automation and Supply Chain Collaboration. Leading retailers, wholesalers, brand manufacturers and thousands of vendors around the world use Core Solutions' software and services to coordinate activities, synchronize data, increase visibility and eliminate manual processes.

Core Solutions is based in Hong Kong with offices in the US and China.

For more information, visit www.coresolutions.com.

Facilitating the seamless, automated exchange of shipping transaction data, BizLink serves as the glue that holds together many of YICT's complex, back-end enterprise systems.



About GXS

GXS is a leading provider of B2B e-commerce solutions and operates the world's largest and most expansive network of integrated business communities. The company's software and services simplify and enhance businesses process integration and collaboration among networks of trading partners. Organizations worldwide, including more than 75 percent of the Fortune 500, use GXS solutions to extend their supply chain networks, optimize product launches, automate warehouse receiving, manage electronic payments and gain supply chain visibility. Based in Gaithersburg, Maryland, GXS has operations and offices around the world. For more information, see <http://www.gxs.com>, <http://blogs.gxs.com> and <http://twitter.com/gxs>.

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