

AEB to team up with KSD

Freight software specialist AEB is to unveil a new partnership with Norwegian-based customs software specialist KSD Software in June, it was revealed at a customs compliance seminar in Warwickshire on 28 March. AEB sales manager Phil Lavin said: "We will be putting together two very strong supply chain organisations to offer a customs service, both inbound and outbound."

AEB's international business development director, Mark Brannan, said that AEB was partnering with KSD because of its expertise in handling customs requirements, which were very

complex and, despite the EU, differed widely between 27 EU member states. The two partners would thus be able to provide a full logistics and customs suite.

Such systems would help traders, logistics service providers and others involved in the international supply chain to streamline their processes and avoid endless re-keying of data, he added. "They will get a much better flow of information through the supply chain and simplify a lot of complex procedures," he pointed out. They would also achieve faster clearances, minimise duties and reduce errors, especially if

companies invested in systems "with some intelligence built in" such as customs tariffs or duty regulations. "Very often, I find operational silos in companies with accounts doing Intrastat declarations, the import-export department doing customs documentation and so on. It can be hard to change established practices, but it's not the most effective way to work," he said.

Later in the conference, Ceva Logistics IT solutions design consultant Peter Skov said that KSD was the only supplier able to supply a single database for France, Benelux and the Nordic region.

Do your 'housekeeping' before upgrading

It is important to do your housekeeping before contemplating a switch to a new customs regime such as bonded warehousing, said Invensys specialist Mark Corby. The director of trade compliance at the IT giant told AEB's customs seminar in Warwickshire on 28 March that the 'garbage in, garbage out' rule applied to customs matters and that it was important to ensure that logistics service providers were being given the correct information. Too often, tax identifications were wrong and classifications of goods were "all over the place". There was also a common misconception that outsourcing customs activities outsourced the responsibility for getting it right, whereas it remained firmly with the importer and exporter. "In fact, I have very rarely seen a logistics service contract that says anything about compliance," he told the gathering.

He continued that while HMRC's 'Chief' computer system had come in for criticism, it was virtually the only one in Europe that gave the trade meaningful information. He urged shippers'

to use its Management Support System (MSS) "to check what is being done in your name."

Corby added: "Ultimately, it's Customs view of what you have that matters, not what you think you have." In the event of Customs querying any information, it was also important that companies be able to lay their hands on any supporting documentation or information easily. "Does your ERP system allow for traceability if goods?" he asked.

Later in the conference, Richard Bright, international trade development liaison officer at HM Revenue & Customs cited the case of one industrial company that checked its customs records and discovered "imports of books, chocolate and toy trains." Any instructions to agents should be in writing and they should also have a formal letter of empowerment, he said.

Andrew Boehme, customers operator at German menswear manufacturer Hugo described the German customs' Atlas system as "far too complex and massive", requiring over 50 EDI messages to be sent for a single import to export cycle. "Does it

really have to be this way?" he asked.

Boehme added that good management from a customs point of view was often a by-product of professional merchandise management. It is important to prevent a 'parallel universe', whereby the company was working with one set of data but information given to the customs authorities was markedly different, he explained. Introduction of a bonded warehouse system at the company had demanded a step up in management standards and improved standards of stock-keeping skills.

Corby pointed out, also, that while much has been made of the 'difficulty' of becoming an Authorised Economic Operator under the EU's new security regimes, a lot of the work involved could already be covered by good management practices and existing contracts. "There is a view in fact that AEO can be achieved entirely through contracts," he said. "In fact, if you do airfreight exports there is nothing in AEO that you should not already be doing."

Three paths to invoice efficiency nirvana

AEB has published the first in a series of white papers on freight management optimisation. Entitled: "Three Paths to Efficient Freight Invoice Auditing," it describes how companies can best organise their freight invoice auditing. Whether companies choose to do it manually, outsource the process or automate it through software, the key to success lies in standardising processes and defining rules says AEB. This can yield significant savings and

streamline processes throughout the supply chain.

AEB's future white papers on freight management optimisation will address: Operative measures with immediate impact - optimising freight management through smart freight cost calculation and carrier integration; Tenders, contract negotiations and simulations - how to achieve successful long-term partnerships with transport service provider; and Reallocating freight costs -

automatic allocation of costs to controlling accounts, cost centres, departments, and products.

AEB's senior solutions consultant Iqbal Pannu, said that while businesses have traditionally focused on operations, many "still neglect the tremendous potential for optimisation that exists within the administrative processes. Our series of white papers wants to provide businesses with the guidance needed to help them identify and explore this potential."

TWINE binds Pall-Ex network together

Palletised freight network Pall-Ex says that its TWINE IT system has facilitated growth for both the network and individual members and produced real cost savings, a year after it was launched.

The Transport and Warehouse Information Network Environment (TWINE) IT management system went live in April 2011, replacing local depot management system PALL-IT. It allows members and customers to manage their own shipments as well as Pall-Ex consignments in real-time. Advanced users can also bolt on a host of back office functions including finance, HR, warehouse, and CRM solutions.

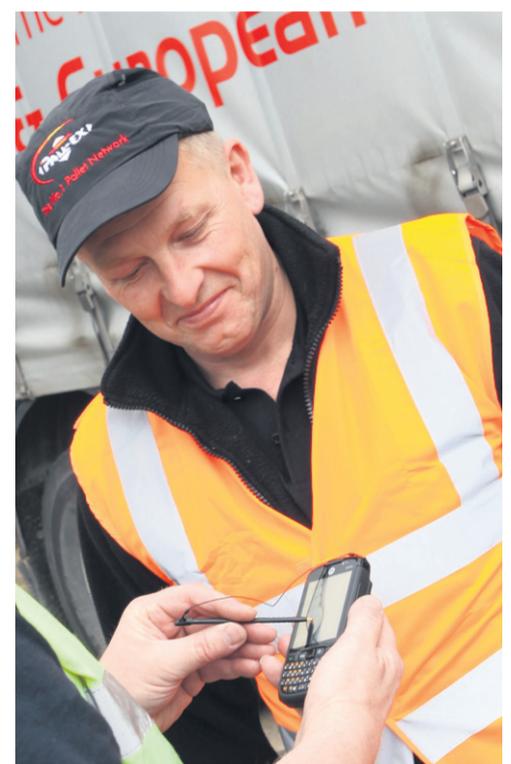
The real-time nature of the system has also helped to streamline hub and depot operations, helping to reduce labour costs for many members in the process, says Pall-Ex.

TWINE also safely stores centralised data, which allows it to be used to greater effect across the network and is helping to win new contracts, worth over £1m.

Pall-Ex's director of IT Sean Sherwin-Smith, said: "From a network point of view, it has facilitated the use of the latest technology. Motorola ES400 PDA devices have been issued to all drivers. Consignments are scanned at the delivery point and, along with proof of delivery, the data is transmitted in real-time to TWINE using 3G mobile technology. This scan data compliments the already detailed depot and hub location scanning, helping to avoid discrepancies, boost efficiency and provide complete transparency of a consignment's journey through the network as it happens."

TWINE has also been instrumental in Pall-Ex's ambition to establish a full Pan-European palletised

freight offering and, two months after the UK launch, went live alongside the launch of Pall-Ex Iberia. Redevelopment for Iberia took just 14 weeks but with every new network, is becoming even quicker and when Pall-Ex Romania began operations in December 2011, it took just 15 days.



Europe specialist joins RedPrairie

Supply chain software specialist RedPrairie has appointed Jan-Paul Boos as vice president of sales for supply chain in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. He brings a wealth

of experience and knowledge gained from more than 18 years of working with retailers, distribution companies and manufacturers and joins RedPrairie from Manhattan

Associates, where he led, as a senior director, the establishment of their growth and emerging market presence. He also spent seven years at IBM's Europe Distribution Sector.

Rational!

“Since choosing the *ForwardOffice* software package, and Forward Computers as IT partners, we have not looked back. The whole system has been the bedrock of our Company since 1999 and the advances, past, present and future, help us to stay at the forefront of our specialised field of NVOC services.”

Bob Andrews, Managing Director, Globelink-Fallow

Speak to the freight software experts today call
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