



Freight company soar with new invoicing system

LOCATION

UK wide

FOUNDED

1972

WEBSITE

www.aircargo.co.uk

KEY TECHNOLOGY

Xerox DocuShare solution integrated with Ezescan, Digital Workflow and OCR technology.

KEY BENEFITS

Automation of labour intensive processes, improved productivity and operational efficiency.

Air & Cargo is an independent, privately owned, British freight forwarder. Founded in 1972, they are a rapidly growing business with eight sites across the UK, which serve clients worldwide.



THE CHALLENGE

Within the freight and logistics industry, paperwork is a crucial element of day to day business. From ensuring the correct documentation reaches the right people at the right time, to making sure paperwork is kept in an easy to access way by those who need it, to ensuring the correct fees are paid for each shipment, and of course keeping a track of it all for the regulators. Each and every step of the freight process is crammed with paperwork that all has to be in perfect order, or else it will cause costly problems. This was typical of the issues that freight forwarding business, Air & Cargo faced.

It's a high-volume paperwork based business. The accounts team is made up of five personnel, manually inputting between 4,000 – 6,000 invoices from global suppliers on a monthly basis.

There was a huge amount of work involved in the accounts process. Invoices would come into the business, typically by email or post, sometimes with other documents, which meant delays to processing. Incoming invoices would be scanned into a printer and then manually added onto the system by one of the team.



This cumbersome process often led to duplicate invoices being filed on the system and made it difficult to retrieve paperwork. It created a bottleneck within accounts processing, as the team frequently had to request copy invoices at month end, and with larger suppliers such numbers could be significant, increasing costly man hours within the department.

There was a legacy system in place, Freightfax which is bespoke to the freight industry and provided and hosted by their IT partner. The system manages all of the company's invoices, supplier details and customer details of all the freight jobs.

Air & Cargo needed a smarter solution that had the flexibility to seamlessly integrate with their legacy system, FreightFax, in order to reduce the number of manual steps required to input, approve and make payment on invoices. Basically, streamlining the entire process to reduce operational costs across the business.

THE SOLUTION

Air & Cargo went out to the market and shortlisted three providers. IT Document Solutions was successfully

selected due to their personable approach and customer focus. The solution they proposed was a Xerox DocuShare solution integrated with Ezescan, digital workflow and OCR technology.

The new solution completely revamped the accounts process. A significant amount of work from all parties went into ensuring suppliers shifted to digital transfers of invoices, moving away from posting to emailing invoices to a generic email box at Air & Cargo.

The Freightfax solution was an integral part of the Air & Cargo business, and it was essential that the proposed solution integrated seamlessly with its proprietary system. FreightFax isn't a mainstream application and required a carefully thought-out solution to successfully connect. There was some customisation and integration work from ITDS and their IT company to get the systems linking together.

ITDS provide solutions that are either quickly ready to go or are customised to each client's requirements, ensuring customers receive a solution that provides the best optimisation and efficiency improvement for their business.

Glen Bradshaw from Vixsoft said "Our partnership with IT Document Solutions on this project has worked well, allowing Air & Cargo Services to automate the handling of purchase invoices saving the company time and money. Our two software solutions married together with minimal effort, enabling a speedy delivery of the solution."

The experience and knowledge of the ITDS team ensured that the solution was successfully embedded, enabling Air & Cargo to work more efficiently than ever before.

The client experience and the user-friendly interface offered by DocuShare was a big hit and the mobility element of the solution, which provides the ability to access the system, anytime, anywhere was a huge plus point for Air & Cargo.

Xerox DocuShare is used as a document repository rather than just a front-end system. When an invoice is pushed into the system it is allocated a dedicated URL. This sits behind the scenes, but provides the ability for



the FreightFax system to view all of this information. It seamlessly links, so that users do not have to jump between two systems and can work much more productively, having all the information they need readily available at their fingertips.

The ITDS team built up a strong relationship with the client and they worked closely with their third-party IT partner to ensure the three month implementation went smoothly, project managing the rollout throughout.

Carl Aspital, Group Technical Director comments: "IT Document Solutions were easy to deal with and extremely proactive, they certainly understood our requirements in terms of integration with Freightfax which was hugely important for us."

THE BENEFITS

Air & Cargo operates within a highly competitive industry and therefore it's essential that they run as efficiently as possible to keep their competitive edge, and the new invoicing solution has helped keep them one step ahead.

The automation of previously labour-intensive paper based processes has brought radical benefits for the organisation. The new solution speeds up the invoicing process for the business. It reduces errors and frees up time for the Air & Cargo accounts team, making the department much more productive with time to focus on other key areas of the business.

Considerable time and money savings have been achieved as staff no longer have to deal with duplicate invoices sent directly to individuals, sorting and dealing with incoming post, suppliers chasing invoices that weren't paid on time and resending copy invoices. The process is now much more seamless. Invoices are now processed and paid on time and duplicate checking electronically is part of the automated process. The business has a greener footprint too with a reduction in paper invoices received through the post and a drive to route these electronically.

The successful integration with legacy system FreightFax has ensured that Air & Cargo can truly maximise



the benefits of both systems, as they effectively communicate and link seamlessly. The Docushare solution tracks all documents from initial processing, through to uploading and ongoing access, leaving a footprint of who's accessed the document and when. This is extremely important and beneficial from a compliance and GDPR perspective.

With the OCR technology integrated into the system, documents can be easily retrieved at the touch of a button, enabling the team to access documents quickly and deal with any queries efficiently.

As a result of the new solution, 95% of documents coming into the business are no longer touched. The remaining 5% are pushed into an exceptions queue. The system enables user intervention on screen and any queries are flagged up and can be quickly addressed. The team is no longer dealing with these issues manually, which speeds up the process significantly and saves important man hours across the business.

Carl Aspital, Group Technical Director commented "Invoice visibility has greatly increased, duplication of invoices has been greatly reduced. The accounts team are working more efficiently than ever before thanks to the new system."

Phase 2 of the system will continue to drive further efficiencies, making approvals and expense management far simpler through rules based automated workflows.

Future stages of the project include:

- Electronic archiving through barcode OCR scanning
- Process automation for additional business units
- Reduction of boxed storage
- Redeployment of staff and other company resources

