



OCEANINSIGHTS



Challenges overcome: supply chain services provider chooses automated container and tracking tracing solution from Ocean Insights

SHAPIRO Customer Success Story

Most case studies are out-and-out success stories. This Shapiro story is different. Three weeks into a 60-day trial Shapiro mailed Ocean Insights describing its product as “completely ineffective”. Yet just over two months later, the container tracking and tracing contract was signed and Ocean Insights went live. So what happened to convince Shapiro that Ocean Insights’ automated solution was right?

Shapiro is a third-generation family-owned business founded in 1915 and now employing over 100 people. Although the main office is in Baltimore, Maryland, the company has offices throughout the U.S. Shapiro provides a wide range of supply chain services, including transportation, logistics, distribution, customs clearance, documentation, consulting, freight forwarding, and entry services for import and export shipments. **Although Shapiro had automated solutions for various aspects of its portfolio, it was still using phone calls and carrier website searches to track containers.** The data provider Shapiro was working with in this field relied on EDI updates to track and report container arrivals. But Shapiro was far from satisfied with the service because the EDI updates were neither timely nor consistent. For example, Shapiro staff discovered that a carrier website had been updated before they received the EDI transmission from this provider. For urgent cargoes Shapiro was having to assign staff to track containers via carrier websites – a far from satisfactory situation.

What Shapiro wanted

Shapiro was keen to automate its container tracking and tracing process, which was slow, inconsistent and manpower-intensive. **They were looking for an automated solution providing accurate and timely updates on the location of containers they were transporting,** and was capable of pushing the transaction details to the solution provider via API. Bob Kimmel, Shapiro’s IT Director, asked for a demonstration of the Ocean Insights solution, liked what he saw, and agreed to a 60-day trial based on Shapiro’s Charleston office. The trial started on 9 August 2017 and initially went ok. But on 28 August Ocean Insights received a damning email from Shapiro: “At this point we have found your product to be completely ineffective. The only shipments where we have seen data are after the shipments have already arrived.” What had gone wrong?



Challenging misunderstandings

Ocean Insights' Customer Success team immediately got to work to find the root cause of the problem. It turned out to be a misunderstanding. Shapiro had been selecting the reference container number for tracking purposes when it should have been the booking number or bill of lading number. The trial restarted with fresh data. The next challenge cropped up on 22 September when Shapiro questioned the variances in dates between the carrier website and Ocean Insights data. Again, the Customer Success team jumped in and discovered where the problem lay. **Bob Kimmel was impressed by the Customer Success team's response time and ability to pinpoint the exact issues, which enabled him to sort out some internal issues between Shapiro's Operations group and the IT interface.** Overcoming these challenges were the key factors in Shapiro's decision to move forward with Ocean Insights. The rest of the 60-day trial went smoothly, Bob Kimmel gave notice to the previous tracking solution provider and signed a contract with Ocean Insights. Their automated container tracking and tracing solution went live on 1 November 2017.

Added value

Besides benefiting from the accuracy, consistency and timeliness of the Ocean Insights solution, Shapiro is now profiting from manpower- and time-saving automation in its container tracking and tracing process. Moreover, Bob Kimmel knows he can rely on an outstanding level of support from Ocean Insights' Customer Success team in the event of problems cropping up in the future.

www.shapiro.com



"Based on various department assessments (and some very quick math), I'd say we are saving at least 80 staff hours per week. Some of that was at the Analyst/Specialist level while some was intern labor, but that's still 2 whole bodies in any case. For me, I'd call it a win!"
- Angela Czajkowski, Director Supply Chain Shapiro

