



7bridges



CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

Boosting profits, improving service and simplifying workflows for the delivery of medical devices.

The 7bridges platform enables medtech company Ability Matters to manage and automatically optimise its outbound and returns logistics across multiple sites, couriers and freight forwarders, and provide the best service levels to their customers at the lowest possible cost.

ABOUT ABILITY MATTERS

Ability Matters is a Medical Devices & Technology provider, with a supply chain spanning the EU and beyond. Based in the UK, it has several warehouses across the country. Before adopting the 7bridges platform, the company used five carriers to ship parcels ranging from 1kg to 300kg, including container air freight shipments to and from US and Asia. Their operations also included a significant domestic returns component that were unmanaged.

“Two months after starting with 7bridges, our costs were down 20%, and now we’re on track for over 40% savings as we roll it out across the company.”

James Lyons, Operations Director,
Ability Matters Group

CHALLENGE

Like many companies after a period of rapid expansion, Ability Matters had outgrown its logistics operations. Methods and systems had developed piecemeal, with booking based on an ad-hoc process involving post-it note instructions, print outs, word docs and excel sheets. Consequently, any process change was difficult to implement.

- Booking errors were common,
- Staff training was complicated and time-consuming,
- Efficiency was compromised as the effects were felt across 15+ fulfilment and return locations.

As James Lyons, Operations Director at Ability Matters explains, a fundamental change was needed. ‘We were looking for a way to introduce a simpler, consistent shipping process throughout – one that would allow us to gain control over outbound, inbound and returns shipments.’

Initially the company’s management considered a move towards a single-source arrangement, reasoning that processes would be simplified and rates could be improved through concentrating all shipping volume into one contract.

‘We knew that single-sourcing might hurt our service levels because no one provider performs equally well across all shipment types and locations, but we had to address costs and the complexity of our operation.’ But negotiating a better deal with a single-source provider would not be easy. Without complete data and good analysis capability it would be impossible to understand which lanes, terms and surcharges to focus on them during negotiation. It would also be very difficult to work out the effect on costs and service levels to customers.

APPROACH AND RESULTS



20

% cost reduction
within 2 months

40

% cost reduction in
the first year

1

UI for all logistics
operations, analysis
& reporting

By adopting the 7bridges platform at the end of 2018, Ability Matters acquired the means to meet its cost-reduction and process control aims - without having to limit its operations to a single provider. The platform was rolled out to eight outbound warehouses within a month (with the return hubs being added during 2019).

- Booking processes are now automated and accelerated: each time a fulfillment site receives an order, the 7bridges AI technology has already selected the best shipping provider and route for the job (based on multiple variables including carrier performance and price).
- Everything is handled via the intuitive 7bridges UI, so it's easy for staff across the business to access the logistics data and insights they need (and rapidly respond to anticipated problems).
- Visibility into logistics for finance and accounts payable staff is greatly improved thanks to automated GL coding and freight audit.

MODULES USED:



SEND

Intelligent, automated booking and dispatch



MONITOR

Realtime tracking and notifications



AUDIT

Automated audit and error reclaim

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OUTCOMES FOR ABILITY MATTERS

- **A single consistent, highly automated outbound and returns process**, which adapts in real-time to changes in the supply chain.
- **Greater leverage with providers in negotiating new contracts and renewals**, and the ability to introduce new services, such as same day delivery, within days or weeks.
- **Operational resilience - the ability to respond at speed** to changes in the business, or in the wider logistics landscape.

‘An exciting characteristic of the platform is that it intelligently uses the data and analyses it to continually improve the accuracy of its automated decision-making, so there’s constant optimisation. 7bridges delivers really exceptional capabilities, and it’s surprisingly easy to adopt and use.’ Operations Director, James Lyons.