

CASE STUDY

Importing export expertise



Outsourcing accountability, in-sourcing trust

Challenge Summary

Help ISOICHEM North America develop export management operations to move product from the company's new manufacturing sites in the USA to overseas locations. Ensure both import and export processes are lean and efficient.

Services & Technologies Used

- Imports and Exports Across Multiple Trade Lanes
- Global Documentation
- Regulatory and Security Compliance
- Customs Clearance
- Data Management
- Process Improvement
- Performance Management
- Hazardous Materials Handling

The Challenge

ISOICHEM North America had focused exclusively on imports for some time until a few years ago when the company was faced with handling export products from the company's new manufacturing sites, first in Texas and then in Lockport, New York.

The Solution

To make that happen, the chemical company turned to PSA BDP, their imports specialist.

According to the manager of ISOICHEM North America's operations in Princeton, New Jersey, the company began working exclusively with PSA BDP for their exports needs, in addition to all of their imports. Beginning from scratch, PSA BDP began to handle ISOICHEM export logistics and transportation to Europe, India, Australia and South America. PSA BDP not only mapped out the export process but also provided just about all of the administrative support and export services, including plant releases. ISOICHEM would send an order through PSA BDP's system and the inventory release would go direct to their plant. The transition to exports worked out well for the client, with no disruption to their other business activities.

"Because we had no experience handling exports, we looked to [the team] to help us," says ISOICHEM's manager, who oversees logistics and customer service for North America.

"[PSA BDP] handled everything: in addition to transportation management, they took care of all of our documentation - dock receipts, letters of credit, export permits, even invoices and insurance. They were a critical part of our exports team."

A subsidiary of France's ISOICHEM, GROUPE SNPE, the fine chemicals company produces intermediates for the pharmaceutical, agrochemical and specialty chemical markets. It also makes key products for the space industry - for launch vehicles, including Ariane rockets and satellites.

Working Smart

"By outsourcing and using [their] services, we were able to take on the expanded responsibilities and continue managing our other business without having to add any staff," ISOICHEM's manager points out. "That was important for us. We saw the value and the benefits of outsourcing all of those activities. [Their] wide range of capabilities and their experience enabled us to do that."

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The emphasis at ISOICHEM is to work smart and work lean. That means relying on outside resources to keep costs down and productivity high. "One of our company's main goals is optimization of resources, which is why our partnership with [PSA BDP] has been a good one for us," ISOICHEM's manager says. "We look to them to help us in areas where we do not have specific expertise. It has been a very good relationship."

In fact, the ISOICHEM-PSA BDP relationship stretches back nearly 20 years. "We are in a highly competitive industry, where an increase in costs or a problem with shipments, especially hazardous cargo, can affect not only our bottom line but also those of our customers," she says. "We require reliability at all stages of our operations."

Currently, ISOICHEM imports from their parent company in France from their facilities in Hungary, as well as from a site in China. "[The team] has helped us resolve problems on many occasions throughout the import/export process," says ISOICHEM. "PSA BDP's Regional Sales Manager liaisons with the global operations to coordinate all of our needs. He is the go-to person at [PSA BDP]. We use their online customer service reports for daily updates on our shipments. On the export side, [their] technology helps us tremendously, especially in the documentation process - preparing all of our documents and proof of delivery. It enables us to efficiently fulfill our customers' needs."

"[PSA BDP] is very reliable and provide fast responses and follow up. We rely on them to handle all of the documentation access issues, which can be difficult at times because initially that documentation is often not always accurate or complete, and it is obtained a day before the vessel arrives. [The team] gets involved and resolves any potential problems and ensures our entries and clearance steps are done on a timely basis, so that we do not have to go into demurrage, or require extra time."

Because nearly all of the materials ISOICHEM utilizes are classified as hazardous, and since September 11, 2001, trade regulations have become stricter and require more coordination with Homeland Security and other government agencies. "That's where [PSA BDP's] regulatory compliance capabilities are important," PSA BDP's Regional Sales Manager says. "Our expertise in handling HazMats combined with a 55-year reputation of deep expertise in the chemical industry clearly pays off for our clients. We watch their backs and they know it. ISOICHEM also participates in PSA BDP's annual Import/Export Compliance seminars to stay current and to be certain we are on top of our game in the regulatory and security compliance area."

"It's basically a one-stop shop for us," adds ISOICHEM's manager. "And that's what we like about our relationship. It helps us manage our costs better, it's convenient, and there is no need for us to coordinate the activities of multiple resources. They do it all." She pointed out that they frequently look at other resources "because it is important for us to keep our pencil sharp and to ensure that we have the best resources."

Customer Benefits

- One-stop shop for import and export services
- Global network providing competitive ocean transportation rates
- Cost management and efficiencies

We evaluate PSA BDP on their rates as well, which are very competitive, so in the long run they have helped us reduce costs. And while it is important in all industries, it is particularly so in the chemical sectors, as cost savings take on an even more critical role. As transportation costs have been increasing, the team has been able to obtain better ocean rates for ISOICHEM."

Trust Factor

To PSA BDP's Regional Sales Manager, while it takes "utilizing our global relationships to get our client the best rates," he points out that it is also much more than that. It's about the business intangibles, which can make all the difference in the world. "Intangibles are important and often get overlooked when discussing a successful business relationship," he says. "We go that extra mile."

"There is a free flow of information on both sides. Where there are service issues or concerns - and every business relationship has them - we work them out. ISOICHEM always gives us the opportunity to resolve issues. That says a lot about the trust factor. It is not just business for us. It's sincere. When you develop the kind of relationship we have with ISOICHEM, it's priceless."

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