



## Manufacturing Solutions

# CASE STUDY

### Company Objectives Hindered by Logistics Dilemmas

#### CHALLENGE

- Metalfrio Solutions had multiple truckload and LTL providers, but none supplied white glove delivery services for in-store coolers. The company could not offer final mile deliveries or handle other special customer requests and spent too much time addressing logistics issues. Unresolved delivery problems led to lost sales, unresolved claims, and low reimbursement rates.

#### SOLUTION

In 2006, C.H. Robinson established a strategic account manager for Metalfrio to handle all LTL, special handling, and truckload needs. In addition, they structured a more cost-effective U.S./Mexico cross-border program to improve shipping efficiency and reduce risk.

#### RESULT

With support from C.H. Robinson's Special Handling team, Metalfrio could provide products to larger customers, even as they protected the integrity of their brand. Through collaboration, they increased sales with their higher level of in-store, white-glove services for their customers and captured additional market opportunities.



Metalfrio produces and markets plug-in refrigerators, which appear in thousands of retail locations across the country. The units add in-store convenience for beverages, ice cream, foods, and retail items from some of the leading international and regional brands.

#### SPECIAL HANDLING HELPS SOLVE LOGISTICS DILEMMA

Customers have very specific requirements for delivery and installation of the plug-in refrigerator units. New product launches and special events call for a highly organized delivery schedule (on time, inside delivery and placement, unpacking, and removing all debris), synchronizing coordination to minimize in-store disruptions and ensuring coolers can be stocked immediately for sales.

By 2006, Metalfrio was finding it increasingly difficult and time-consuming to handle these special handling requests. And without a logistics provider that could fulfill all these requirements, they were missing opportunities and losing sales.

At the time, multiple logistics providers handled Metalfrio's truckload and LTL freight. Their transportation team was spending a significant amount of time on the phone with different logistics providers, trying to track shipments

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that did not arrive according to schedule. James McVey, director of sales at Metalfrio, said, “We spent hours on the phone, listening to on hold music, as we waited for someone to answer the phone and then pass us off to someone else. There were a number of times when we could not come up with a solution and ended up losing business.”

Many freight claims went unresolved because of the time required to deal with the issues individually. And with little support from their providers, Metalfrio had a very low rate of reimbursement.

Metalfrio’s products are manufactured in Mexico and shipped via truckload, requiring customs clearance. Each order contains multiple SKUs, and as shipments crossed the border into the U.S., inefficiencies commonly occurred due to customer demands for direct delivery. Oftentimes, Metalfrio’s product required delivery to their distribution center in Boerne, TX, which then would be sorted and segregated into specific customer orders. This would result in longer delivery schedules and correspondingly higher transportation costs for Metalfrio’s customers.

### **SAVING TIME AND RESOURCES**

C.H. Robinson started handling Metalfrio’s truckload and LTL freight in 2006. First, a strategic account manager was assigned so that Metalfrio would have a single point of contact for all logistics matters.

For clear visibility, C.H. Robinson introduced Metalfrio’s team to Navisphere® online access. On this proprietary customer website, Metalfrio could tender orders, track shipments, and see information for all types of freight services in their supply chain — LTL, truckload, and special handling — as well as the imported products from Mexico.

The visibility enabled by Navisphere online access helps with customer service, too. McVey said, “It is vital that we have the tools C.H. Robinson provides. Having this information at our fingertips allows us to process customer requests much faster. Our customers can be on the phone, and we can provide them with information instantly.”



## HOW THE SPECIAL HANDLING PROGRAM WORKS

Metalfrio had an opportunity to install 350 POS (point of sale) refrigeration units across seven states, from Florida to Hawaii, for one of the leading global beverage distributors. C.H. Robinson and Metalfrio implemented a highly organized plan to make this campaign a success. This plan included:

- **REGIONAL AND LOCAL STAGING:**

The refrigeration units were shipped by full truckload to regional warehouses across the country, where they were staged for delivery. This made the shipping process as cost effective as possible.

- **FINAL MILE DELIVERIES:**

Installations were scheduled at the convenience of the consignee and coordinated with Metalfrio's customer representative, who needed to be onsite at the time of delivery. C.H. Robinson's Special Handling used two-person teams to deliver the units, un-package and install them, and remove all shipping materials.

- **VISIBILITY:**

Through the high level of visibility and reporting enabled by Navisphere online access, Metalfrio's team tracked delivery information and timing down to the serial number of the unit installed. That made it easy to provide necessary information to their customers.

With C.H. Robinson supporting their shipments and in-store deliveries, Metalfrio can confidently offer these specialized services to a growing number of customers and markets.

Here is how James McVey from Metalfrio summed up this engagement: "Our customer was purchasing product to be placed at hundreds of locations across the country, and did not have the capability of performing this task. Without C.H. Robinson's assistance, we would not have been able to support this customer's request and would have lost the sale."

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C.H. Robinson’s Special Handling team became Metalfrio’s resource whenever their customers needed white glove, in-store deliveries. This team — skilled professionals with the experience, flexibility, and creativity to turn shipping challenges into success stories — customized final mile solutions to meet the needs of Metalfrio’s customers.

For products imported from Mexico, C.H. Robinson facilitated the import and customs clearance process while delivering to a local warehouse in Laredo, TX. The refrigeration units were then sorted and segregated per each customer destination and shipments were consolidated for efficiency and transportation savings. As McVey said, “C.H. Robinson helped us coordinate our shipments to a local warehouse in Laredo. They unloaded our trucks and then reshipped product all over the country, without it ever having to come to our corporate offices. In doing so, they saved our customers much needed time, as well as provided our customers with freight savings.”

Metalfrio delegates the handling of their LTL and truckload freight to C.H. Robinson, saving time and allowing their team to focus on their business. As McVey put it, “C.H. Robinson has impacted our business tremendously. They have given us hours back into our day, so we can focus on doing what we need to do: selling our product.”

#### **THE FUTURE**

McVey sums up the relationship between the two companies this way: “C.H. Robinson has helped us countless times with special handling services and final mile delivery opportunities. We have large customers who need our product but do not have the capability to place the product at the point of sale. Without C.H. Robinson’s assistance, we would have lost out on hundreds of thousands in sales.”

Instead, with the support of C.H. Robinson's Special Handling, LTL, truckload, and U.S./Mexico cross-border services, Metalfrio is confidently pursuing new opportunities. They can provide white glove solutions for national and regional rollouts and can use those capabilities to help grow their business.

What's more, C.H. Robinson's single point of contact helps the Metalfrio team to quickly obtain answers to their freight questions. McVey explained, "Anytime we have a logistics-related issue, we can call C.H. Robinson, and they will help us find a solution."

To learn more about C.H. Robinson, watch [our video](#), visit [our website](#), call 800-323-7587, or email [solutions@chrobinson.com](mailto:solutions@chrobinson.com).