



# C.H. ROBINSON



## Retail Solutions CASE STUDY

### Improved claims process creates better customer relationships and company savings



#### CHALLENGE

- SolidSurface.com faced high claims rates when moving their solid surface countertops across the country.

#### SOLUTION

Information from C.H. Robinson about claims helped SolidSurface.com design a new pallet and update processes with carriers.

#### RESULT

SolidSurface.com's damage rates are below 1% and continuous supply chain improvements have led to significant cost savings.

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There's nothing more frustrating than taking the time to pick out the perfect item online, ordering it, and having it arrive broken. SolidSurface.com wants better for their customers and they use their supply chain to make it happen. Their relationship with C.H. Robinson, which started at the company's inception in 2007, helps them make ongoing improvements to claims and positively affects their relationships with customers and the bottom line.

Contractors, remodelers, industrial designers, and more trust SolidSurface.com for a wide variety of solid surface countertop options, including overstock items. SolidSurface.com commits to creating rich ecommerce shopping experiences for customers, but also satisfying customers with on time, undamaged, quality products.

#### PROTECTING COUNTERTOPS FROM DAMAGE

As a new organization, the requirements of shipping freight were unfamiliar territory. Ensuring the safe arrival of countertops that are 12 feet long and weigh 150 pounds each takes a lot of know how. In the beginning, SolidSurface.com experienced damage on nearly 8% of their shipments.

SolidSurface.com often turns to C.H. Robinson when freight is damaged. "Our C.H. Robinson representative sends pictures, a detailed explanation of how damage occurred, and has even suggested improvements for our pallet design," shared Vanessa Curry, director of customer relations at SolidSurface.com.

“That’s why they order again and again from us. They know we’ll support them and so will C.H. Robinson,” explained Curry

They took this information to heart and weren’t afraid to make drastic changes about how they were operating. When forklifts hoisted pallets the wrong way and damaged product, SolidSurface.com adjusted the entire pallet so forklifts couldn’t physically lift pallets that way in the future.

And when their initial pallet design weighed in at 200 pounds, C.H. Robinson helped them modify it to find something lighter. Multiple revisions allowed SolidSurface.com to get their pallet weight down to 96 pounds while still protecting each countertop.

Reoccurring damage linked to a specific carrier was also quickly resolved when C.H. Robinson helped SolidSurface.com educate carriers about the improved process and expectations. These two changes helped SolidSurface.com’s damage rates drop to only 1.4% of all shipments.

### **BUILDING A POSITIVE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE**

Beyond the operational changes, SolidSurface.com also focused on delivering a positive claims experience for their customers. They posted freight acceptance guidelines for customers directly on the website. Now customers know exactly what to look for and how to handle damaged products up front.

In the event damage does occur, it doesn’t necessarily mean the product is unusable. SolidSurface.com works hard to ensure their customers know what options are available if their material is lost or if they choose to accept a slightly damaged product. And in fact, of the few damage claims received in the past year, 70% of damaged materials were still accepted by customers, who received compensation for the damage.

“Our customers know that we’ll work with them if their order is damaged,” explained Curry, “That’s why they order again and again from us. They know we’ll support them and so will C.H. Robinson.”

### **SMALL CHANGES IMPACT THE BOTTOM LINE**

Many of the improvements SolidSurface.com made to their claims process also improved their bottom line. The pallet that originally was slimmed down to 96 pounds is just one example. Eliminating 104 pounds from their pallet design helped SolidSurface.com successfully cut freight costs by 3-4%.

“Our logistics strategy isn’t a concern because we know we have our team at C.H. Robinson,” reflected Curry

High fees were another costly challenge that SolidSurface.com routinely encountered for limited access and residential deliveries. This is where the long-term relationship between C.H. Robinson and SolidSurface.com really became an asset.

“Because our C.H. Robinson representative understands our business so well, she knows what to look for in the order information,” added Curry, “She makes sure our carriers have fees up front for special deliveries rather than expensive accessorials, like lift gate use, we didn’t plan for.” The upfront fees are often less costly and are easier to forecast for future deliveries.

#### **MAKING THE RELATIONSHIP EVEN STRONGER**

Currently C.H. Robinson and SolidSurface.com are discussing the integration of C.H. Robinson’s technology. This level of connectivity would give the team at SolidSurface.com even more real time information, make bill of lading (BOL) processing easier, and increase communication times for improved customer service levels.

As SolidSurface.com continues to grow with new customers and products, C.H. Robinson will be there to help. “Our logistics strategy isn’t a concern because we know we have our team at C.H. Robinson,” reflected Curry, “They’re really more like our own employees. Yes we outsource our supply chain, but really, C.H. Robinson is more like an extension of our business.”

To learn more about C.H. Robinson’s programs, call 800-323-7587 or email [solutions@chrobinson.com](mailto:solutions@chrobinson.com).



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