



C.H. ROBINSON



Food & Beverage Solutions

CASE STUDY

Retail consolidation program helps West Liberty Foods exceed on time in full delivery requirements

Due to changing consumer expectations and retailer demands, West Liberty Foods faced more rigorous delivery standards. Collaboration with C.H. Robinson and a proactive approach helped develop a successful retail consolidation program for a specific retailer's orders. It provides supply chain visibility, shorter delivery times, and precise real-time updates. Today, West Liberty Foods confidently applies the program to all their retail customers and successfully delivers products on time in full, reliably.

SITUATION

West Liberty Foods is a protein copacker for retailers and quick serve restaurants around the world. With expertise in turkey, beef, pork, and chicken, the company handles a wide range of packaging, processing, and slicing services.

CHANGING RETAILER REQUIREMENTS

Retail compliance programs are one way retailers seek to meet changing consumer demands. Advancing requirements require companies like West Liberty Foods to provide more comprehensive supply chain visibility, consistent delivery schedules, and precise real-time updates.

Today's retail compliance programs vary by retailer, but across the industry the goal is the same—efficiently get the right product in the right location at the right time.

EXISTING LTL STRATEGY NEEDED TO ADJUST

West Liberty Foods previously relied on multistop truckload service when delivering to retailers. In-house logistics planners created shipments based on the company's production schedule. Accordingly, they often moved delivery dates to fit the need of the planned truck.

At the time, the company's top retail customers allowed for a four-day delivery window, making adjustments easy to manage without penalty. Following this process, West Liberty Foods boasted an average on time delivery rate of 80% to retailers—which was well above the industry average.

Then, early in 2017, one of West Liberty Foods' retail customers reduced their delivery window expectations from four days to a single day. West Liberty Foods knew their existing strategy would have to adjust.

OPPORTUNITY

The logistics team at West Liberty Foods began an analysis of their retail strategy. The results were clear, they needed scale and expertise to meet changing retail requirements. Ideally, the solution would have the scale to grow with their business in anticipation of more stringent requirements in the future.

A PROVIDER WITH A GLOBAL SUITE OF SERVICES FOR WEST LIBERTY FOODS

West Liberty Foods turned to C.H. Robinson as a single source provider to help meet changing retail requirements. According to Jerrod Carlson, director of Logistics at West Liberty Foods, "We looked for a provider that had a good amount of shipping volume. Volumes that would scale to grow with our business meant more consistency and a bigger retail advantage for us. That was a big factor in why we chose C.H. Robinson."

SOLUTION

West Liberty Foods began collaborating with C.H. Robinson to develop a cohesive retail consolidation program that provided the consistent, reliable deliveries the retailer expected.

“Because they act as an extension of our team, C.H. Robinson truly understands our business and is willing to help us deliver the shorter lead times and fresher product our customers are asking for.”

— JERROD CARLSON,
DIRECTOR OF LOGISTICS
AT WEST LIBERTY FOODS

A SUCCESSFUL RETAIL CONSOLIDATION PROGRAM

As part of the retail consolidation program, C.H. Robinson combines West Liberty Foods’ orders with orders from other companies that deliver to the same retailers. This allows West Liberty Foods to meet the expectations of their retail customers while improving operational efficiency internally.

Information advantage driving smarter solutions

The West Liberty Foods’ retail consolidation program relies on C.H. Robinson’s information advantage to inform their processes for ongoing improvements.

By taking advantage of C.H. Robinson’s scale and expertise, West Liberty Foods drives better outcomes. Using C.H. Robinson’s unparalleled data and key performance indicator (KPI) reporting, the team can see clearly what’s working well and where improvement opportunities exist—a necessary step to help grow their business.

“Because we have documented processes, action plans, and monthly check-in meetings, we know the smartest way to move forward every month,” explained Jerrod, “From an operational standpoint, each department finds value in these action plans because everyone understands what their role is and how it impacts our overall success.”

Connectivity, automation, and technology

While developing the retail consolidation program, West Liberty Foods realized that the speed of data was crucial to tracking shipments. The team needed a solution that worked for their supply chain professionals.

Together, the teams decided automated connectivity between West Liberty Foods’ transportation management system (TMS) and C.H. Robinson’s Navisphere® platform was the best way to receive the necessary appointment updates and arrival information in a timely manner without tedious manual work.

Through Navisphere, West Liberty Foods achieves many positive supply chain outcomes, including a 100% automated order entry process. West Liberty Foods’s TMS now automatically transmits all orders to C.H. Robinson for planning and delivery appointment scheduling.

West Liberty Foods routinely delivers on time to the retail customer 98% of the time and averages 94-96% on time delivery rates for the rest of their customers.

“This is a crucial piece of being successful and efficient, with distribution centers having smaller receiving windows, it’s critical that we have our orders scheduled prior to a distribution center being full and moving us to the next available delivery day,” shared Jerrod.

And since the company’s logistics planners used to spend 60% of their time building multistop loads and scheduling appointments, this saves West Liberty a great deal of time that they can spend on other areas of the business.

People to rely on

Technology is only part of the equation for a successful retail consolidation program. Deep expertise to support the technology is also required.

“Having someone from C.H. Robinson work internally on logistics operations plays a large role in our success,” reported Jerrod, “Because they act as an extension of our team, C.H. Robinson truly understands our business and is willing to help us deliver the shorter lead times and fresher product our customers are asking for.”

AH-HA MOMENT

The initial retail consolidation program aimed to meet a specific retailer’s requirements, but West Liberty Foods saw an opportunity to improve their overall service. So they proactively applied the program to all retail customers.

This approach helps West Liberty Foods stay ahead of changing retailer requirements; and just as importantly, established their reputation as a company that delivers on time in full, reliably.

OUTCOME

Thanks to a continuously improving retail consolidation program, West Liberty Foods routinely delivers on time to the retail customer that started it all 98% of the time and averages 94-96% on time delivery rates for the rest of their customers. But that’s just for now, Jerrod’s team hopes to improve on time rates to 98-99% across the board.

This is only imaginable because of the proactive nature of the retail consolidation program. Today, West Liberty Foods operates in a true just in time (JIT) environment—one that wouldn't have been possible if they still relied on multistop truckload service.

Now, West Liberty Foods purchases raw materials using forecast data and order trends. They only create a production schedule once customer orders are received, which drastically reduces the amount of food needed in inventory. Customers are happy that orders are ready faster and fresher than ever before.

But West Liberty Foods isn't stopping there. The logistics team continually looks for ways to improve their retail supply chain and their established relationship with C.H. Robinson helps them reach the goals they set.

"We trust our relationship with our C.H. Robinson team, because they always do what's best for us," explained Jerrod, "That's a huge differentiator. It means we'll be ready for whatever changes retailers have for us next."

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



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