

Achieving Supply Chain Efficiency *Across Europe*



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the *sense* of logistics

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The supply chain management specialist has undergone massive changes in order to secure the best savings and service portfolio for its customers

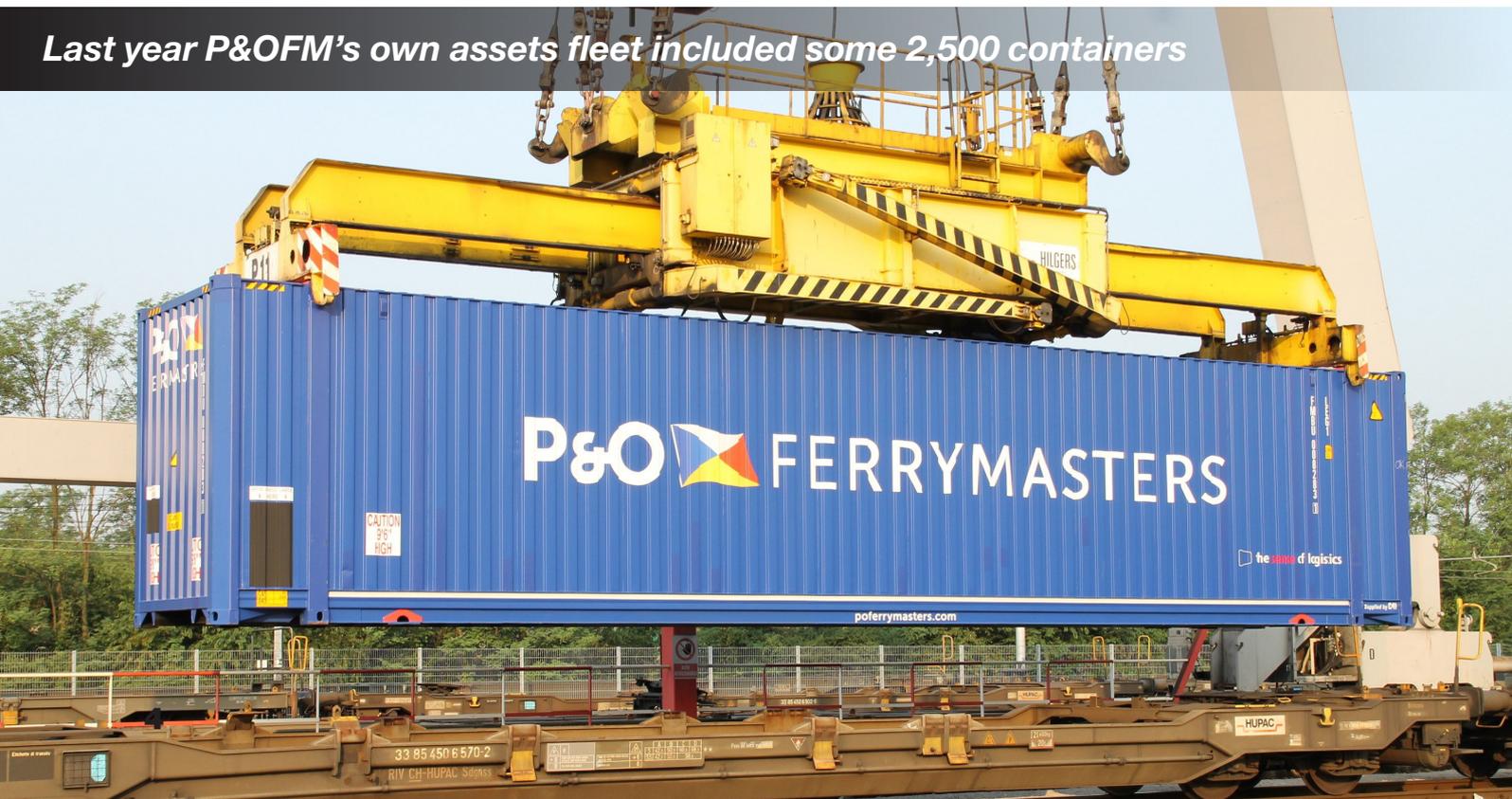
P&O Ferrymasters (P&OFM) has undergone a complete overhaul over the past few years through restructuring its divisional set up, consolidating operational activity and European offices, as well as rolling out an impressive array of in-house system tools to improve its service offering.

It is clear from these changes that steering the course of a company with annual revenues of some £400 million requires a unique balance of both risk awareness and fresh innovation while maintaining the service expectations of customers.

Service

Last year P&OFM carried in excess of 518,000 loads, utilising 3,500 transport assets (of which about 2,500 are containers) spread across its 22 European facilities. The company offers solutions to customers seeking to manage their supply chains and logistics both efficiently and

Last year P&OFM's own assets fleet included some 2,500 containers



transparently. The company directly employs just over 500 people who all help to provide customers with value added services, supply chain solutions and IT support, as well as various road and intermodal services.

Coordinating such a vast network of operations has never been an easy task; the company has shaken up its commercial, operational and IT functions so that it can become increasingly streamlined, to the extent that its customers are also reaping the benefits.

Managing Director Bas Belder said: “The business has now been consolidated into three main divisions; assets (trailers and intermodal), freight management and contract logistics. The key benefit of this has been improved support and earlier access to resources.”

Wim Blomme, Director of P&O Ferrymasters’ Intermodal Division added: “The process has enabled us to have greater control and transparency, which ultimately benefits the customer through improved synergy, increased interaction and through speeding up internal processes.”

Across every aspect of the business it is clear that focusing on the needs of the customer has not only become a practical, profitable approach, but also a source of innovative thinking. Having a knowledgeable team with diverse skills including operational excellence, project management and commercial acumen supports this new approach.

Mike Shannon, General Manager of the

Key Personnel



Mike Shannon

General Manager
Contract Logistics

Mike joined the company in 2001 gaining experience in various operational and commercial roles, and was appointed as General Manager Contract Logistics in January 2014. Previously he was in the Royal Air Force working in warehousing and distribution. Mike has a BSc in Transport and Information Management, and an MBA from Canterbury Christ Church University.



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“We know our fleet is well looked after.”

Bas Belder
Managing Director P&O Ferrymasters



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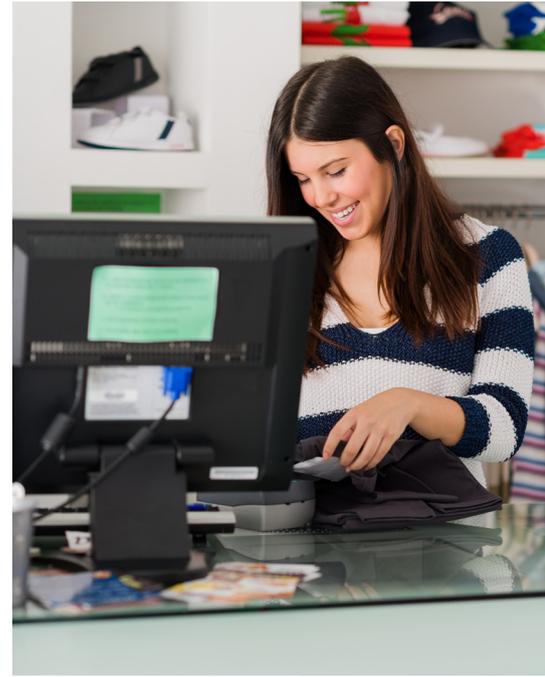
Contract Logistics Division said: “I hold regular internal reviews with my team so that we can truly understand what any new challenges are and then plan how to deliver them successfully. Furthermore, by working closer with our customers, the other two P&OFM Divisions and our IT department, we are able to appreciate and act upon our customers’ needs much more effectively.”

This approach is exemplified through the company’s partnership with Tata Steel, whose European Director of Outbound Logistics and Supply Chain Pieter van Tongeren said: “Within our sourcing strategy we aim to work with P&OFM on a partnership basis developing network and supply chain synergy together. To point out a mutual showcase, P&OFM has done great work in further improving our processes with the meet and greet project.

“This project resulted in securing a standardised control of the flows to and from our warehouses, streamlining the IT systems and effectively using the onsite shipping capacity to meet our customer demands.”

Having secured both reputational and operational effectiveness, the company as a whole decided to further improve the customer experience through placing greater emphasis on commercial excellence.

Processes were mapped out, utilising the expertise of an outside company that exploits organisational psychology to improve working



Streamlining IT systems has helped to meet customer demands

practices and drive increases in sales. Bas Belder said: “What we learned from the scan is that we have the skillset available across our teams but do not always use the best tools to aid our relationships with customers. Since then our focus has been more about opportunity management and how to achieve it.

“The new tools make sure that we have a unified approach to customers which means that instead of working in fragmented cells we actively share opportunities with our teams. It means that we can gather expertise from other team members in specific domains; we make sure that we all speak the same language, have the same approach and that team members can contribute more actively throughout the organisation.” With the better-quality processes P&OFM is

Investment in TMS has increased efficiency in supply chain management





P&OFM's new tools ensure a unified approach to customers

now able to improve both external and internal communication, seek to surpass expectations and focus on continual improvement strategies with clients and towards the supply chain market in general.

Systems

The company's contract logistics concept aims to further integrate with customers' IT systems in order to maximise commercial and operational performance. The order process is based on full Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) connection, allowing data to become available as soon as the customer places an order.

P&OFM has invested heavily in its in-house Transportation Management System (TMS),

The company's contract logistics concept aims to further integrate with customers' IT systems in order to maximise commercial and operational performance.

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TMS leaves operations personnel free focus on any exceptions and irregularities

which enables orders to flow from receipt to carrier allocation without human intervention and leaves operations personnel free to focus on any exceptions and irregularities. This allows optimum agility in the supply chain, so that transport operations can be planned and executed using the most efficient and most environmentally-friendly mode possible within the delivery requirements.

Based on decades of experience, the TMS system was designed and developed in-house. It is now widely deployed not only within the P&OFM business but also in bespoke versions that manage a customer's supply chain in every respect, from load building to

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timeslot management and delivery tracking.

P&OFM IT Director Steve Walters explained how this customer-centred approach had led to improvements in his own department. He said: “It’s no use inventing things that you think customers are going to like when you’re shut up in an IT department; you have to talk to users, customers and suppliers. You can’t tell the supplier what they are going to do. In practice you get a much better response if you ask them what you think the best way to do it will be. We find it really enjoyable!”

By approaching continuous improvements from the customer side, P&OFM has ensured that technological implementations are not just something that take place in the back office or in certain niche areas. By simultaneously developing both a Supplier and Customer portal, the company was able to adopt a more holistic structure.

Steve Walters explained that the Customer Portal enabled its users to dictate their own level of involvement: “The experience is different for every customer. There are a number of standard reports available but we can tailor it specifically to their requirements; customers can even do their own reporting. We have a very simple-to-use drag and drop query tool which we have trained a number of customers to use.

“Some of our account teams will ask us to set it up for a customer in a particular way; we’ve even linked our web portal to the customer’s



TMS can manage a customer’s supply chain from load building to timeslot management, and delivery tracking





“As part of its business plan P&OFM launched a dedicated train from Zeebrugge into Curtici, serving the serving Hungarian and Bulgarian markets in conjunction with partner Transmec”

*- Wim Blomme,
Intermodal Director*

own web portal so that when their customers make a query on our customer’s website it displays the information directly from us.”

He added: “Although we knew what we were going to do, even for the IT guys it was a surprise to see that by the time our staff arrived in the office in the morning the system had taken the jobs from the customer, calculated who the best supplier was and sent them the job. We were impressed and we wrote it!”

These recent IT investments have now seen enquiries about the TMS itself from outside the business. As a result, P&OFM is currently reviewing its options with the IT systems and where the next opportunity lies.

Solutions

As part of its business plan P&OFM launched a

dedicated train from Zeebrugge into Curtici, serving the serving Hungarian and Bulgarian markets in conjunction with its partner Transmec. Wim Blomme said this innovative service had been established last year in order to develop into the Balkan area and to expand into new markets. This new service is complimentary to the weekly dedicated company trains running into Italy from Belgium. It completes the intermodal coverage into Southern Europe since the company also has a large footprint in Iberia with regular high frequency services.

From January 2016, P&OFM will be operating new dedicated company trains from The Netherlands into Italy. These trains will carry both intermodal containers and 'crane-able' trailers (Huckepack). Investment over the past 12 months into 450 Huckepack trailers enables the business to serve Polish, Italian and Balkan markets as well as driving a modal shift from road to rail.

It is impressive to see the changes that P&O Ferrymasters has undergone in recent years and it is certainly to the credit of its staff and management team that these have taken place so seamlessly.

Having risen to become one of the leading logisticians in Europe, the company could have easily continued business as usual and remained profitable. Deviating from the beaten track was certainly a risk, but one that has proven to be beneficial for both its customers and the company itself. ■

Company Information

INDUSTRY

Supply Chain

HEADQUARTERS

United Kingdom,
Ipswich

FOUNDED

1953

EMPLOYEES

500

REVENUE

£400 million

PRODUCTS/ SERVICES

Logistics & Transport





P&O FERRYMASTERS

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