

ProShip Accelerates Business for Fifth Gear

Challenge

Freight management is an important cost center for all product manufacturers and distributors. But for a third-party ecommerce fulfillment provider like Fifth Gear, shipping is the lifeblood of the operation. Fifth Gear serves as a single-source provider for direct-to-consumer retailers' entire operations, including order fulfillment, customer care, and product personalization services, allowing its customers to focus on their core competencies – merchandising and marketing. Today, Fifth Gear ships more than 20,000 packages each day through its multi-carrier shipping network.

At the end of the day, it all comes down to getting the package delivered on time, to the right destination, and as cost-effectively as possible. It sounds simple enough, but anyone who has ever had any responsibility for order fulfillment understands the incredible complexity of the process.

“Our customers and their consumers trust that once the order is placed, the product will be delivered as promised.” said Jake Vogel, Vice President of Operations for Fifth Gear.



The ProShip Software Suite allows the magic to happen between order placement and delivery that allows us to continually earn our customers' trust.

Jake Vogel
Vice President of Operations
Fifth Gear

Prior to 2013, Fifth Gear was using the ProShip rate-shopping system, which selects the lowest-cost carrier for each package and generates the shipping label prior to order shipment. The ProShip rating engine sat behind a third-party interface, which controlled user integration with Fifth Gear's Order Management Software (OMS).

Carrier label compliancy changes and client shipping rules required Fifth Gear to work through a third-party software provider in order to update the system. “The process was not agile, introduced an additional touch point, and eventually the system was just not stable enough for our environment,” recalls Vogel.

Solution

Fifth Gear knew they needed to find a shipping solution that allowed them to respond in real

time to dynamically-changing labeling and shipping requirements. After evaluating several systems, Fifth Gear elected to migrate to ProShip's web-based enterprise-level solution.

“ProShip seemed to be the best solution for us in terms of its speed and ability to stay compliant with carrier regulations,” said Vogel. “And because we had already been using the ProShip rating system, we had developed in-house ProShip expertise, making it more cost-efficient to expand our utilization of ProShip than to consider another TMS.”

The ProShip team worked with Fifth Gear to scope, develop, and implement the ProShip system. ProShip went live in two of Fifth Gear's distribution facilities in late July 2013. During the ProShip implementation, Fifth Gear also was in the process of onboarding a new distribution center, which was brought onto the ProShip platform in October.



Results

Fifth Gear's goal was to have the system fully operational before their clients' holiday season peak in Q4, and, according to Vogel, they succeeded. "We learned a lot through the process about the complexity of carrier requirements," he said "There were a lot of moving parts. But we had a really good relationship with the ProShip team and they had a lot of good people involved."

Fifth Gear can now print multiple labels at the same time, right at the packing station. ProShip talks directly to Fifth Gear's OMS, so the system knows what goes into each box, what it weighs, and where it's going. "The ProShip Software Suite allows the magic to happen between order placement and delivery that allows us to continually earn our customers' trust," Vogel explains.



ProShip has been vital to Fifth Gear's ability to enhance its internal systems to manage freight. The company uses ProShip Velocity to manage exception-based order processing, such as handling a package if it is mislabeled or is too large to go on the conveyor system.



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ProShip writes directly to all of Fifth Gear's internal systems to manage backend administrative processes, including customer billing. The ProShip Software Development Kit (SDK) allows Fifth Gear to make tweaks to the software to better conform to its business environment, but according to Vogel, they usually work with the ProShip team for any needed modifications. "They are fast and responsive. They understand us. They know the difference between a production requirement and an enhancement and know how to prioritize our needs accordingly," he said.

Fifth Gear also uses the ProShip Input Logic Server (ILS), which Vogel calls the "heartbeat" of their operation. It supports rate shopping and label printing in real time, easily saving time on each package, allowing us to manage client same day shipping expectations.

ProShip gives Fifth Gear better efficiency, better bandwidth and the ability to quickly scale to meet the needs of its customers as they grow, such as adding new customers without business interruption.

"We put a high value on the relationships we build with our business partners," said Vogel. "We depend on them. The ProShip support team has been very involved. They understand our environment and are quick to react. They are a really good set of folks - they are honest and easy to work with."



ProShip, Inc. Overview

ProShip, Inc., a Neopost Company, presents specialized shipping solutions for businesses requiring a single, enterprise wide global software application for high volume shipping. The ProShip® Product Suite is an industry leading multi-carrier parcel/LTL shipping solution. ProShip supports a range of industries including consumer products, retail distribution, e-commerce, manufacturing and third-party logistics.

Fifth Gear Overview

Fifth Gear is a single-source provider of order fulfillment, customer care, and retail technology for some of retail's largest direct-to-consumer brands. As an 'invisible partner' to ecommerce merchants, Fifth Gear handles all aspects of the post-purchase experience, including pick and pack fulfillment, order shipment, returns processing, customer service, freight management, product personalization and site design. Learn more at inFIFTHGEAR.com.

Contact us today for more information or to schedule a demonstration!

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