

Smooth, reliable standards!

Contargo uses EDI for data transfer

Mannheim, 14 December 2016 – An online survey conducted by the SKGV (German Promotion Centre for inter-modal transport) in November has found that digitalisation is one of the biggest challenges confronting combined transport in the next few years. Here, container logistics service provider Contargo has a dual strategy based on its own internally developed IT solutions – enabling it to react to individual customer requirements, market fluctuations and changing framework conditions – and on the use of standardised processes and software, for instance Electronic Data Interchange (EDI).



“We’re on a mission from EDI.”

(Photo: Contargo)

“On the one hand, logistics needs to become more flexible all the time, and on the other hand there is great cost pressure in the sector”, says Heinrich Kerstgens, Co-Managing Director of Contargo GmbH & Co. KG. “For this reason we have adopted a dual approach: wherever there is a constant need for adaptation, due to changing prices, laws or dates, we develop our own systems such as the tariff calculator IMTIS, the routing system IRIS, the online slot assignment app STAR and the Terminal Operating system (TOS). But in areas where business processes always stay the same, we use standard solutions.”

EDI is one of these standard systems, and has been used at Contargo for many years now to transmit business data to customers and partners.

“EDI has the advantage that it greatly speeds up business processes like order transmission, status feedback, invoicing and notification of container weight”,

// We’ve got 5,000 messages to send today, we’ve got a full battery, half a can of coffee, it’s dark outside and we’re wearing sunglasses. //
Hit it! //

Contact for the Press:

Medienbüro am Reichstag Heike Nicolaisen Reinhardtstraße 55 10117 Berlin
Tel.: +49 30 2061413029 Fax: +49 30 30872995 contargo@mar-berlin.de

says Harald Lange, Manager Support & Training, Contargo GmbH & Co. KG. "Data quality is improved because the information needs to be entered only once, meaning that there are fewer opportunities for errors to creep in. From our employees' viewpoint, it means that they don't have to spend so much time just entering data – and of course paperless processes are better for the environment."

EDI is a decentralised solution which can be adapted to numerous different interfaces. By using a Business Integration Server (BIS) Contargo is in a position to adapt to the requirements of EDI partners. The system supports all usual message standards and communication protocols, from the EDIFACT standard of the 1980s up to modern XML. Thus EDI enables Contargo to communicate seamlessly with customers and service providers.

Continuous monitoring

Contargo's EDI system is checked by an operating and monitoring system continuously 365 days a year. The system also includes web-based message tracking, which performs gapless control of the message traffic. "Many companies regard the incompatibility of the various IT systems in different companies and countries as a big obstacle in digitalisation – however, there's no need to reinvent the wheel", says Harald Lange. "There are several standards we can rely on. They are efficient and confidence-inspiring, and provide security."

On the way

At Contargo too, however, the bright new world of EDI is not without its trials. Two years ago, nine different IT systems had to be adapted so that they appeared the same for outgoing EDI connections. Today there are only four, but these include systems more than ten years old. This is not always easy and it does not succeed in every case. "We have to ask for patience, and make even stronger efforts to replace the old systems", Heinrich Kerstgens says. "Our target is to be working with no more than two IT systems at all our sites within the next two years. Then we will be networked at high speed with all partners throughout Europe in all aspects, from initial price information to invoicing."

About Contargo

With an annual transport volume of 2.3 million TEU, Contargo is one of the largest container logistics networks in Europe. Contargo integrates container transport between the western seaports, the German North Sea ports and the European hinterland. The enterprise has 25 container terminals at its disposal

Contact for the Press:

Medienbüro am Reichstag Heike Nicolaisen Reinhardtstraße 55 10117 Berlin
Tel.: +49 30 2061413029 Fax: +49 30 30872995 contargo@mar-berlin.de

in Germany, France, Switzerland and the Czech Republic and maintains offices at seven additional locations in Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium. Contargo also operates its own barge and rail lines. In 2015 the workforce of 868 employees achieved a turnover of 405 million Euro.

Contact at Contargo: Heinrich Kerstgens, Contargo GmbH & Co. KG, Rhein-
kaistrasse 2, 68159 Mannheim, Tel.: +49 621 59007 184,
hkerstgens@contargo.net