



CLIENT SUCCESS STORY

5.11 Tactical Improved Productivity through InfoShip®/Vx



About the Client:

Founded in 2003 by Dan Costa and based in Irvine, CA, 5.11 Tactical offers superior tactical apparel and gear for law enforcement, first responders, tactical operators and recreational enthusiasts.

Overcoming Inefficiency and Manual Data Entry

5.11 Tactical was using various free shipping software applications provided by their carriers to process their shipments every day. While this type of configuration can be adequate for smaller, low volume companies, once 5.11 Tactical started to ramp up their shipping to more than 500 packages per day they began to experience serious productivity and inflexibility issues.

5.11 Tactical started looking for a vendor that could solve these problems by providing a single solution that supported ALL their carriers. As well, they were looking for a system that had the ability to load their custom rates, allowing them to base the freight they charged to their clients on that data.

The company was referred to Creative Logistics Solutions (CLS) by others in the industry who had good experiences with CLS and their InfoShip/Vx shipping application. With over 20+ years of experience in successful implementations for high-volume shippers, CLS offered the technology and expertise that 5.11 Tactical was looking for.

In 2006, 5.11 Tactical reached out to CLS to begin working together on a solution that would address these challenges and allow the company to improve their productivity and efficiency. The collaborative nature of this partnership paved the way for 5.11 Tactical to implement InfoShip/Vx, a shipping solution that solved their problems and removed the roadblocks that they were facing with their current shipping processes.

The primary goal for 5.11 Tactical was to move away from the several individual applications supplied by the carriers and to bring everything together into a single source system. By bringing all carriers under a single software solution that interfaced to their existing WMS system, they increased productivity and output, reduced training time, improved accuracy, and promoted customer service levels. More importantly, InfoShip/Vx gave 5.11 Tactical the flexibility to grow and move into new markets.

Transitioning to a Single Shipping Solution

CLS worked with 5.11 Tactical to develop a single source solution that minimized the number of required applications and streamlined the workflow. They looked at the distribution center to identify steps that they could remove from the users, as well as ways to consolidate the carriers into a single solution.

CLS collected feedback to ensure that they understood the processes that worked,

the ones that needed to be changed, and improvements that could be made to help the users be more efficient. CLS and 5.11 Tactical worked together to design the InfoShip/Vx solution to meet the needs for their organization. Building off of InfoShip/Vx gives 5.11 Tactical a platform that's been extensively proven at over 200 customer shipping locations across the world.

It took approximately three months to create the project's functional and technical requirements document, configure InfoShip/Vx according to that document, test and deploy in a live Production environment. This was all seamlessly completed as a part of another even larger project. This timeline fit well within the expectation of 5.11 Tactical based on similar rollouts in their industry.

Increasing Productivity and Accuracy

"Creative Logistics Solutions is a great partner to our company. They worked with us to create a new interface to help meet our specific needs. Proving that they really are our one single source solution."

Kelly Hays, Director of Distribution, 5.11 Tactical

5.11 Tactical saw an immediate increase in productivity on the warehouse floor. The biggest change came from improved accuracy in shipping modes and delivery addresses. Since users no longer needed to input data manually, human error was drastically reduced.

Moving to InfoShip/Vx, as their single shipping solution, to help with all of their shipping needs put 5.11 Tactical in a position to scale up their operations based on demand. They won't be held back due to an inability to keep up their fulfillment rate. CLS' InfoShip/Vx is capable of processing 25,000 transactions every hour. These numbers would not be achievable by 5.11 Tactical if they had to rely on separate applications from each of their carriers.

Another advantage of this single system is that it's tied into their existing ERP system. The data for the shipment and the customer's address is pulled directly from the ERP's database, reducing or eliminating lost and returned packages. The integration makes it possible to include all of the details that sometimes get overlooked in manual entry.

The shipping methods and options can be adjusted as needed to provide customers with the delivery times that they request. Since 5.11 Tactical can now access shipping rates for carriers in a single software, it's easy to compare the available options and choose the one that meets the speed and cost requirements for that package. On-the-fly adjustments to change delivery requirements of a package in the system can be done while it's being packed or in transit to the shipping station eliminating the need for workers to track down packages themselves when shipping requirements change.

5.11 Tactical has partnered with CLS for twelve years and is pleased with the flexibility and adaptability InfoShip/Vx offers for their changing needs. As their shipping volume shifts and they bring in new shipment options, 5.11 Tactical can continue to use the system that they have relied upon for years.

This valued partnership was never more evident than in 2017 when 5.11 Tactical began a project to move to Microsoft Dynamics 365 as their new ERP. Once again the CLS and 5.11 Tactical teams worked together to define, implement, and successfully launch a new interface between Dynamics 365 and InfoShip/Vx.

The move to a new ERP system is a massive project with many moving parts and the 5.11 Tactical team realized that the interface between Dynamics 365 and InfoShip/Vx was a critical piece. However, as in any project of that magnitude, resources are at a premium. As a result of the strong partnership formed over the years working with the CLS team, 5.11 Tactical trusted CLS to work on the new interface directly with the consulting team that was implementing Dynamics. This allowed the 5.11 Tactical team to concentrate their resources in other areas helping to facilitate the successful go live with InfoShip/Vx and Dynamics 365 in early 2018.

The biggest long-term benefits that 5.11 Tactical sees from this partnership come from the labor savings and the ability to eliminate undeliverable shipments. This improvement leads to quality customer relationships that promote loyalty and encourages additional sales.

The customer service department handles a lower volume of customer "where is my order" calls. With accurate data pulled directly from the company's ERP system, customer service no longer needs to reconcile lost packages and related shipment problems. They have more time to focus on other customer issues, which is another way that the customer experience is better.

In Closing

The range of features available in InfoShip/Vx allows organizations to optimize their shipping processes as they grow their customer bases and expand into new markets. One type of shipping may work fine when they're smaller, but as they grow they could require a shift to a different process that works better for the new workflow and increased volume. This flexibility is essential for companies that want to stay on top of their shipping needs and continually improve their operations.

CLS assists clients, such as 5.11 Tactical, in overcoming the roadblocks that stand in their way to efficient, streamlined shipping processes.
