

Goes Down Smooth



Faster customs clearance through electronic filing

Challenge Summary

How does a leading US importer enhance customer service and bring additional consistency to the company's import process?

Services & Technologies Used

- Process Analysis and Improvement
- Import Logistics /Technology Consulting
- Core Customs Clearance through Multiple Ports of Entry
- Centralized E-Filing Capabilities Using US Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) Remote Location Filing (RLF)
- Electronic Data Interchange (EDI)
- Data Sharing with Customs, Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF)

The Challenge

Heineken's goal was to make their import process as efficient as possible. At the company's USA headquarters in White Plains, New York, a significant step was taken that benefits not only customers and Heineken's operations but the company's bottom-line, too.

The Solution

Working in close collaboration with BDP, the world's premium beverage-maker began utilizing centralized e-filing capabilities when the technology was introduced a few years ago. Now it covers every port to which the company ships, including Heineken's primary ports of Baltimore, Charleston, Houston, Jacksonville, Port of Long Beach, Miami Port Everglades and Savannah.

Thanks to BDP's national permit from US Customs and Border Patrol (CBP), importers' cargo can be cleared electronically for multiple ports of entry from a

location within the United States other than the port of arrival or location of examination.

"This makes sense for large importers such as ourselves," states Heineken USA's Transportation Planning Manager. "We were consolidating our vendor base, in particular our ocean carrier and brokerage operations. This is part of our focus to continue to increase customer service with our distributors, our customers, and build business partnerships with our larger resources, such as BDP."

CBP made the process for electronic filing smooth and painless for shippers and brokers: the national permit allows the entry documents to be sent from one "centralized" location for clearance at US ports of entry.

"In fact, the entire filing procedure takes only four hours," states BDP's Director of Regulatory Compliance.

"We've found the filing process with BDP faster and more efficient, thanks to their strong Customs knowledge and staff training."



-USA Transportation Planning Manager,
Heineken USA, Inc.

“We’re pleased to see our clients’ paperwork for entries dramatically reduced, or even eliminated.” BDP processes over 400 entries per month for Heineken. Also, e-filing removes the time element, so West Coast vs. East Coast time difference is not a problem.”

No Substitution for Expertise

Familiarization and experience with all government regulations is vital to ensure the process runs smoothly. Since everything has to be done electronically, it is important that data for government agencies – those that are fully functioning electronically as well as those that are not – must be processed within the system, which means the importer or broker must provide what is acceptable to each government agency. For Heineken, this means not only do the shipments have to clear Customs, but also the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and they must be registered with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF).

According to Heineken, as a frontrunner, who also worked with US Customs in the implementation of the e-filing program, “BDP is the broker we rely on for EDI consulting and Customs issues.”

Cost Savings

Following the implementation of the system, Heineken stated, “Using centralized electronic filing enables us to go with a large international broker like BDP, which has second-to-none brokerage services and Customs knowledge. We’ve found the filing process with BDP faster and more efficient, thanks to their strong Customs knowledge and staff training. And we can help our customer, the distributor, reduce costs, which is important when you consider the volume of our imports.”

Another customer service provided by e-filing is the shipment tracking capability, which enables local distributors to contact Heineken or BDP for information. “We have been very happy with the quality of personnel at BDP and the followup,” Heineken’s Transportation Manager said. “Because transportation and logistics are very detail oriented, BDP personnel are well trained and there is a consistency of knowledge there which makes clearance of shipments a lot easier.

“In the past, we used to get individual broker bills for every single shipment. Now we’ve moved to statement billing with BDP – this is a big day-to-day advantage when you realize we were handling between 25 and 50 individual brokers’ bills.”

BDP has shown a very strong commitment to working with us. Their communication, both with Heineken and our distributors, is excellent – their organization’s reaction to problem-solving during the consolidation has been very strong.” According to BDP, “By working with BDP, Heineken distributors around the nation

Customer Benefits

- Customs filing and approval reduced from days to hours
- Reduced costs for Heineken distributor network
- Shipment tracking visibility for Heineken distributor network
- Scores of Customs brokerage bills consolidated into one statement
- Reduction in paperwork and internal handling
- Greater accuracy and Customs compliance
- Better communications with Heineken and distributors
- Significant cost savings

are clearing inbound shipments more quickly, and providing the accuracy and compliance US Customs is demanding from importers these days. We can service the client at highest degree.”

“Those are some of the big advantages of going with a company like BDP,” Heineken points out. “BDP handles 100 percent of our shipments. The centralized e-filing process is cutting edge, so at the moment you see only the large national brokers such as BDP doing it. However, use of e-filing will definitely increase because of its convenience.”

“By working with BDP, Heineken distributors around the nation are clearing inbound shipments more quickly, and providing the accuracy and compliance US Customs is demanding from importers...”

-BDP Director of Regulatory Compliance