Columbus Logistics
Now focusing on what they do best

maytech
GLOBAL DATA TRANSFER

Industry: Distribution Logistics

Before 2011, Columbus Logistics relied on an in-house FTP system
to log products moving through its warehouses in Northern Italy; switching
to Maytech freed up resources so they could focus on building the business.

COLUMBUS LOGISTICS

Speed Read

Columbus Logistics were suffering from server downtime and wasted resources from their in house FTP server. Trusting Maytech since 2011 has given them immediate benefits in an industry where resilience and uptime are essential for success.

Columbus is a family owned logistics business which has built up an impressive list of blue chip customers over the last 25 years including technology company Philips and food brands like Ricola, plus a range of clients in the pharmaceutical sector.

"We handle around 400,000 shipments every year and we use an FTP service to log batches arriving and leaving our distribution centres," says Andrea Bianconi, Chief Information Officer of Columbus Logistics. "So we need a system that can help us manage that activity in a clear and transparent way."

The business has eight warehouses in the north of Italy from which it processes and distributes orders on behalf of its clients. With so many global clients and hundreds of orders passing through, Columbus Logistics needs to have every component of the business running smoothly from its premises to its vehicles to its IT infrastructure.

An FTP service sits at the heart of the business's operations, with Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) running above it to pull order data from the server to process for distribution. "The files we send and receive are not huge, but using an FTP helps us to organise our work as we're dealing with a large number of files," explains Andrea.

Keeping operations running

Columbus made the switch to Maytech in 2011, before which it used a proprietary system that the in-house IT team had to maintain and manage. The system drew resources away from other more productive areas of the business and in doing so cost the firm time and money.

The system also lacked the cutting edge security demanded by many clients and it was also vulnerable to periods of downtime which was disastrous to operations as customers were unable to place orders and operations came to a halt.

"We needed a third-party service for many reasons. One was that the in-house server was costly to maintain; another was downtime – this region is good for many things but it doesn't have fibre optic broadband. This resulted in huge problems for our customers and downtime was very costly for us."

"The IT team could not devote all its time to the old system so it didn't run as well as it should, meaning even simple tasks were tricky, such as bringing on board new clients. Security was also a problem and our clients in the pharmaceutical sector were particularly sensitive to this."

DATA ON BOARD

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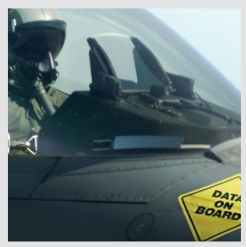Columbus Logistics - Case Study
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The benefits immediately became clear

So Columbus signed up to Maytech's FTP-Stream and the benefits immediately became clear.

The system is efficient, transparent, reliable and secure; plus new customers can be added in a matter of minutes.
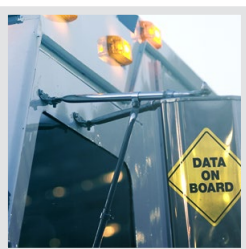
Switching to the new system – including creating the right configuration and setting up passwords – took half a day, according to Andrea, who describes the transition as "very easy". Each customer has a dedicated area with their own protected access codes, and we were able to add SFTP to our service almost instantly when a client demanded it.
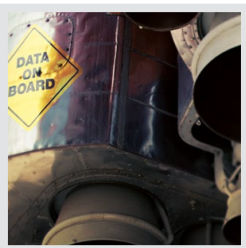
A more resilient service

"We can provide a better service to customers on several fronts: firstly through the high visibility of the server," says Andrea. "We don't have to manage upgrades, maintenance and security so internal costs are lower, plus we can deploy a new client area very quickly when we take on a new customer and don't have to worry about what happens if the server goes down."

Columbus Logistics now has guaranteed uptime, a robust system and more time to focus on its customers.

"It has also helped our company's brand because customers can see we have a robust system that is professional and that we can handle orders efficiently without presenting any major problems. It helps customer relations because each input is clear and we can see who sends orders when and each shipment is logged."

"The detailed activity log on FTP-Stream is very useful in preventing potential disagreements with clients, because it's all very clear and we can immediately tell when an order was uploaded to the server. It's good to know who did what and who is responsible."

Andrea is also a big fan of Maytech's customer service, which he describes as open, honest and helpful.

It helps him isolate and solve problems, he says, a breath of fresh air compared with other companies who prefer to "make excuses".

So all-in-all, would Andrea and his team recommend Maytech to friends and colleagues?

" Yes absolutely I would recommend Maytech. FTP-Stream has helped the business create efficiencies, do better work and be more transparent – something that our customers love."

Make your operations more resilient today, start your free trial of FTP-Stream now.

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