

## Overview

Customer: Distributor of fine quality, crafted natural stone and ceramic tiles to domestic building and refurbishment projects and to specialist design and home décor retailers within the UK. Often architect-specified to prestige developments, the company promotes a luxury brand and prides itself on attention to detail and exceptional customer service.

## Requirement

A robust and reliable network delivery solution, from collection of palletised product from site to safe delivery, principally to domestic addresses, on time and in full every time. Fully tracked delivery, with systems capable of text or email status updates and rapid exception reporting alerting the team to any delay or other issue during transit.

Additional levels of care when loading or moving product to protect pallets from damage. Consistently high service KPIs, transparency and continuous improvement. A partner who embraces all the benefits of technological improvements to ensure excellent communication and enhanced customer service levels.

## Challenges

Willmotts secured this contract in 2020 due to our robust network capability and ability to provide a fully tracked, barcoded service which would enhance the customer's level of service to their own customer base. The distribution profile was ideally suited to delivery via a pallet network, given that most deliveries are small pallet quantities of varying sizes from just a few cases to 1000kg pallets of stone, and delivered on a Just In Time basis to meet the exacting schedules of contractors on site.

With 50 – 100 pallets being dispatched daily, we needed to be constantly aware of the status of each pallet as it moved through the network and provide prompt and efficient consignment monitoring, communication and collaboration.

# Approach

Hub and spoke delivery networks now form an integral part of a logistics company's delivery solution. Originally designed to operate on a similar framework as parcel networks, each member depot collects and delivers pallets within their own local postcode area, trunking every night to central hubs, where the freight is exchanged.

Ideal for 1 – 4 pallet consignments, there are options for quarter, half and full pallets and a range of timescales including next day, economy and timed delivery options.

With delivery to domestic addresses, a tail lift service is also frequently required. The network offers contactless and paperless delivery, powering live tracking and providing a wide range of delivery notifications. Our teams produced Standard Operating Procedures to ensure we had a full understanding of the operation, and both companies worked in close collaboration to implement and communicate procedures on freight presentation and labelling.

Understanding the importance of a positive customer experience, we wanted to use the network technological capability to back up our operational offering and provide the visibility and communication they were seeking. Our onboarding process included training and product familiarisation with employees, combined with regular implementation meetings with our customer.

## Solution

To make the process totally seamless, our customer has an API link direct from their own operating systems covering both sites and directly transmitting into our network system. There is therefore no need for data input, reducing administration and the risk of error.

Collections are from two sites in Wiltshire, co-ordinated from our Pallet Network office to ensure the timings meet requirements and the customer is able to print their own barcoded labels with equipment supplied by Willmotts. As customer service is an important issue, full traceability from dispatch to delivery via barcoded labelling was a key part of our offer. Additionally, the introduction of 'pallet selfies' - photographic images taken with a forklift-mounted camera as the pallet transits the central hub, and with the image available through the online portal, added an additional element of visibility.

All pallets are on an Economy Booked service, meaning that they are delivered on a specific date to match the customer's availability to receive the goods. A further enhancement has been the introduction of a text/email messaging service, triggered as the barcoded labels are scanned through the system so the customer can receive real time, event driven notification updates throughout the delivery process. Once delivered, Proof of Delivery is automatically emailed to the selected recipients, again in real time. For any larger deliveries, we have the flexibility to offer a dedicated delivery through the Willmotts Transport fleet.

## Conclusion

Our customer's distribution profile is well matched to the capabilities and expertise of Willmotts Transport. Network delivery forms a central part of our commercial offering, alongside our own fleet for larger deliveries. For this contract there are additional levels of care and attention to detail required to ensure that the physical product is always delivered to its destination on time and in excellent condition, combined with a higher degree of visibility and communication to enhance our customer's own reputation for customer care.

The contract has been renewed with Willmotts and we continue to ensure that future technological developments are available to our customer so they can be confident that we can excel at existing levels of business, and also provide ancillary services such as own fleet distribution and warehousing, giving our customer scalability and flexibility into the future.