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DATA & DEDICATION

How to select the best courier around the globe

Data-driven decisions drive efficiencies across the clinical trial supply chain

Data-driven decisions realize cost and performance improvements across the supply chain

Our client, one of the world’s leading biotechnology companies, conducts multiple clinical trials on a variety of products targeting auto-immune disorders. Historically, the Sponsor relied upon Thermo Fisher Scientific to support packaging and labeling requirements for its clinical trials while directly managing the distribution and logistics aspect of all trials. Over time, and as the Sponsor’s pipeline and global presence continued to grow, management of the supply chain presented challenges. The Sponsor was forecasting a significant increase in its clinical trial projects globally, with plans to extend out into less well developed and emerging markets. Additionally, cost pressures demanded a tighter supply chain with better control over inventory levels, and there was a need for increased temperature monitoring of clinical supplies in transit.

An integrated supply chain

The Thermo Fisher team approached the Sponsor with a holistic view of its entire supply chain, incorporating all of the services provided by the Patheon™ Fisher Clinical ServicesSM offering – packaging, labeling and now distribution. An initial analysis of its current distribution and logistics model was carried out by a dedicated team of logistics experts all over the globe. The objective of the team was to clearly show how cost efficiencies could be realized without compromising on performance in the global distribution strategy for all trials. Proposed adjustments could not impact on the ability to reach patient pools in remote locations. Furthermore, the Sponsor was keen to maintain total visibility of all clinical supplies across regions.

This dedicated team was given access to all of the data collated by the Thermo Fisher Global Logistics Helpdesk, i.e. data on the Sponsor’s shipments and on all other Thermo Fisher shipments for all clients. All shipments were analysed in great detail - routing, courier reliability, temperature excursions, and deviations. Cold chain capability was taken into consideration due to the nature of products being handled for the Sponsor’s clinical trials.

Proposed solution

Having reviewed the existing portfolio of shipments and geographic distribution patterns, extending out to developing and emerging markets, Thermo Fisher immediately identified that, historically, the sponsor had tended to route a very high percentage of shipments via a premium courier service. Thermo Fisher proposed a Total Transportation Management Service approach which would allow each trial to be broken down by region and by shipping route. Couriers would then be chosen based on their On Time In Full (OTIF) performance history, which included performance data for temperature sensitive material shipments.

Metrics measurement

The initial target was to reduce premium courier shipments to just 20% of total shipments. By utilizing Thermo Fisher's logistics network, the client was able to benefit from preferential standard and premium freight rates, preferential global facility and depot rates, fixed costs and fuel surcharges. Substantial savings were predicted as Thermo Fisher recommended reducing the number of shipments sent via the expensive premium courier route; reducing overall costs and mitigating risk. Thermo Fisher ability to act as Importer of Record maintained a secure chain of custody across the supply chain. OTIF delivery timelines were improved and the Sponsor maintained visibility and control from beginning to end.

The result

The Sponsor was able to reduce its premium courier shipments to just 6% of its total shipments, far exceeding all expectations, yet not compromising on delivery timelines.

In addition, the Sponsor continues to appreciate the cost savings and performance improvements across the supply chain. Thermo Fisher's Global Logistics Helpdesk issues monthly reports to the Sponsor, highlighting customized performance monitoring metrics. The Help Desk's state-of-the-art technology platform and proactive track, trace and intervention service provides enhanced end-to-end visibility across the clinical trial supply chain.

This leading biotech company can now focus on its high value innovative drug development initiatives with peace-of-mind that Thermo Fisher will continue to deliver clinical supplies to patients OTIF, maintaining quality standards, realizing cost and performance efficiencies and mitigating risk across the supply chain.