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Lacoste's Devanlay finds perfect fit with Purolator



Benefits:

- Process to sort merchandise from containers drops from two to five days, to six to 12 hours.
- Lacoste apparel arrives in boutiques across Canada faster, which means more sales and the potential for new orders to be placed so that Lacoste stock is always available to consumers.
- With Real Time Tracking, customers know exactly when their Lacoste shipment arrived and when it was shipped to stores.
- Lacoste stores can easily schedule pick-ups online and receive deliveries by courier drivers daily.
- Lacoste apparel arrives on shelves on the first possible day of the season.

Company name:

**Devanlay
Canada Inc.**

Location:

Montreal, QC

Industry sector:

**Distribution
& Retail**

Company profile:

A subsidiary of Devanlay S.A. in France, which has the worldwide manufacturing and distribution license for Lacoste apparel, Devanlay Canada Inc. owns and operates 12 corporate Lacoste stores in Canada, an outlet store in Toronto and distributes Lacoste clothing to 230 retail buyers for high-end boutiques across the country.

Business situation:

Fashion has a short shelf life and to compete in the luxury apparel market, Lacoste clothing needs to be on shelves when consumers start shopping for the new season. Working with an international freight forwarder, to import goods, and another courier to deliver their goods, Lacoste's gear was arriving in stores late. In addition, the company was losing track of their merchandise from the time containers arrived in the Montreal Port by air and by ocean until the packages were scanned at the courier's distribution hub. This meant Devanlay could only tell customers that the Lacoste apparel they ordered was somewhere between France and the store.

Solution:

Purolator accepts the containers arriving from France, and separates out packages pre-labeled for each customer. From the same Purolator distribution facility in Montreal, packages are scanned and routed to the trucks heading to each province. All this happens within six to 12 hours of the container's arrival at the Purolator distribution hub in Montreal. Since the package enters Purolator's online tracking system the minute it is scanned, Devanlay's customer service representatives can now tell customers precisely when their Lacoste fashions will be arriving.

And, since the new distribution process was working so well, Lacoste corporate stores use Purolator's E-Ship Online for employees to easily ship merchandise between stores.

Summary

Weeklong delays in the distribution cycle caused Lacoste apparel to arrive on Canadian shelves after their high-end apparel competitors. Lacoste distributor for Canada, Devanlay Canada Inc., found a solution to get its luxury fashions to stores quicker by handing its sorting and distribution to Purolator. In addition, with Purolator's Real Time Tracking Devanlay had better visibility into the location of their orders, which provides peace of mind.

Company profile:

Since 1933, when founder Rene Lacoste revolutionized men's sportswear by replacing the long sleeved, starched shirts with what is now recognized worldwide as the classic polo, Lacoste is recognized for providing high quality, luxury fashions. With a range of products including shirts, pants, polos, dresses and accessories, Lacoste's alligator is widely viewed as a symbol of the Lacoste lifestyle which embodies elegance, refinement and comfort.

In Canada, Lacoste products are brought to retailers by Devanlay Canada Inc, a subsidiary of Devanlay S.A. in France, which holds the worldwide manufacturing and distribution



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rights for Lacoste apparel. The Canadian subsidiary also operates 12 corporate Lacoste stores in Quebec, Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia.

As the only Lacoste apparel distributor in Canada, Devanlay needs to ensure Lacoste fashions are on store shelves when the spring and fall seasons hit. They have 230 retailers buying for boutiques all across Canada and are depending on Devanlay to get their orders on the shelf in time for peak selling seasons.

The fast turn around in the distribution hub by Purolator means the new Lacoste line gets on store shelves on the first possible day of a new season, instead of being later than the competition.

Challenges & Solutions

In the past, Devanlay was using a freight forwarder to handle containers arriving by air and ocean. They separated out each store order and transferred the goods from their facility to a national courier for distribution to stores.

Yanick Turgeon, CFO, Devanlay Canada Inc, says it took almost a week to get goods unloaded from the containers and en-route to the stores.

"Our old process was very time consuming. It took anywhere from two to five days for the international forwarder to unload containers and have another courier pick up the packages," he says.

Time lost in transit translates to sales lost for Lacoste, especially in the boutique stores where shoppers could choose Lacoste apparel or fashions from a competitor. Consumers often start shopping for a new

season many months ahead of time and so boutiques have to be ready with the hottest fashions or the sale is lost.

"When shoppers go into a store carrying Lacoste products and our latest fashion is not available, they might buy from another brand. It is very important to have things either at the same time as competitors or before," Turgeon says.

While Turgeon does not have specific data on sales lost, he knows the delay in getting orders on the shelves was hurting the business. He was being told by his customers that Lacoste inventory was among the last to arrive which, he says, is bad for business. Ultimately, goods won't be ordered if they miss the selling window.

"It is very important for us to get items in stores as early as possible to secure more sales."

In addition to late arrivals, Devanlay was frustrated because they couldn't track their orders until they were transferred to the courier network. Turgeon added that when the previous courier handed off the delivery to a smaller carrier in order to reach a rural location, he would lose track of the shipment until it arrived at his customer's store.

"In our previous process, we didn't know where orders were. Were they being sorted? Had they been given to the courier? Where they en-route to the hub? We could only advise our buyers that it was somewhere between France and their stores," Turgeon said, adding "we would lose track of inventory for almost a week. Further more, when the carrier subcontracted a delivery to a smaller courier servicing outlying areas, we would once again lose track of our inventory."

Turgeon noted that his previous process resulted in poor customer service since goods were frequently arriving late for a new season. They had no way of knowing where the orders were in the distribution cycle.



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Turgeon was certain there was a better solution. He tried Purolator and found a perfect fit.

Faster transfers from container to courier

By moving to Purolator Courier, Lacoste apparel is now unloaded from containers arriving by air or ocean carriers and into Purolator's national courier network within six to 12 hours. This translates into savings of between two and five days over their previous solution, which resulted in Lacoste apparel getting into store later than competitors.

"The Purolator account team has committed to me that a container would be taken, emptied, separated and sent in the right trucks within a span of six to 12 hours. Right away we were saving a tremendous amount of time," Turgeon says.

"Customers like that we are using Purolator since many of their other suppliers are using Purolator as well. They already know the driver, their goods arrive at the same time and it is easier for them to do business with us."

Lacoste cargo visible through entire distribution chain

Turgeon is also pleased that he can now see exactly where his orders are, at all times.

In the past, shipments were invisible to Devanlay who felt their packages were lost while they were being transferred from the container to courier, and courier to smaller carriers in rural locations. Thanks to Purolator's Real Time Tracking capabilities, and the company's extensive coast to coast network, Devanlay knows where every stitch of clothing is, at all times.

"Purolator is tracking our packages more efficiently than our previous carriers. We can see exactly where a customer's order is from the time it is scanned off the container and resorted for each store," says Turgeon, noting that this is good for business, and customer relations. Instead of telling customers their order is somewhere between France and their store, they can now tell them exactly where it is in the distribution chain.

"Now we can say specifically where it is, and when Purolator will be delivering it to their door. Purolator is good about keeping time commitments for delivery," he adds.

Corporate couriers move to Purolator

With a positive response using Purolator to empty ocean and air containers and get their orders to stores, the company moved all its internal shipping to Purolator.

"Since we had such a good experience, we are now setting up all Lacoste corporate stores with Purolator E-Ship Online for

Thanks to Purolator's Real Time Tracking capabilities, and the company's extensive coast to coast network, Devanlay knows where every stitch of clothing is, at all times.

They often had customers calling to ask where their orders were ... especially when a competitor's shipments had already arrived. With the time saved by switching to Purolator, Lacoste fashions are now arriving in stores sooner than ever and right on time to capture early season shoppers.

The fast turn around in the distribution hub by Purolator means the new Lacoste line gets on store shelves on the first possible day of a new season, instead of being later than the competition. This early arrival could translate into more sales as stores who run out of inventory early in a season are more inclined to place a another order to keep fashions fresh and in stock.



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internal shipments," says Turgeon. "Store managers find this new system great, easy to use, quick to schedule pick ups, and the courier is on time to pick up boxes."

There's no looking back for Devanlay, who relies on Purolator's ease to use, improved tracking and visibility to get orders filled quickly.

"In our corporate Lacoste stores, managers say the move to Purolator is a good one. The online shipping is very easy to use, web tracking makes it easy to see where our packages are, and courteous drivers come in a timely manner at the same time every day. Everything is working well."

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The future

Turgeon is so happy with how their new distribution cycle is working, he's looking at creating a new central warehouse facility and using Purolator to distribute packages from that centralized location. This will reduce the amount of stock any one store has to warehouse, while providing just-in-time inventory management using Purolator's extensive and fast delivery network.

"This will mean more orders going out the doors and the need for a reliable courier company to handle those orders," says Turgeon, adding "If a customer places an order for a specific item, it needs to arrive within a short period of time or they could change their mind."

With Purolator's speedy order delivery, Real Time Tracking capabilities and Purolator E-Ship Online, Devanlay has sewn up significant advantages.



For more information about how Purolator can partner with your organization to exceed your customer's expectations, call a Purolator Representative today at **1-888-529-9777**

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