

Logistics service supplier UTi aims to offer its customers integrated solutions that go beyond merely organising transport or setting up a warehouse. Therefore, it decided to train its entire global sales team in S&OP – a process which logistics service providers would not normally bother with. The training method used: The Fresh Connection.

UTi PUTS ITSELF IN ITS CUSTOMERS' SHOES

Is it not strange for a logistics service provider to let its sales managers play a business game in which processes such as forecasting, production planning and inventory management play such a prominent role? Carlo Lepore from UTi does not think so. "This game has enabled us to better appreciate the challenges that our customers face in those areas. It has given us insights into the different business interests that purchasers, operations managers and sales managers have." Jens Moeller adds: "This game is a good way of creating awareness of how companies view – or ought to view – their supply chains." In The Fresh Connection, four-person teams try to maximise a fictitious fruit-juice manufacturer's profit. Each member of the team takes on a particular role: purchasing manager, operations manager, supply chain manager or commercial manager. Lepore fulfilled the role of purchaser. The key thing he learned was to choose a common strategy, as a team. "Whether you are striving for respon-

siveness or cost leadership has a considerable impact on the decisions you make." For Moeller, it became clear that supply chain optimisation happens one step at a time: "You must not want to push through decisions too hastily." Thanks to The Fresh Connection, UTi's sales managers have become better sparring partners for their customers. "I'm responsible for contract logistics in Canada. Now, in addition to talking to clients about the warehouses we run for them, I also talk about other parts of the supply chain and their impact on the warehouses." Moeller is mainly involved with customers in the automotive industry. "We really need to tell them about The Fresh Connection, and maybe even play the game with them. Many companies in that sector are still working with sub-optimal supply chains. This game would be a great eye-opener for them."

'WE NOW FIND IT EASIER TO TALK TO CLIENTS ABOUT THEIR SUPPLY CHAINS'

Carlo Lepore, Vice-President Client Solutions, Canada

'MAYBE WE SHOULD PLAY THIS GAME WITH OUR CUSTOMERS'

Jens Moeller, Senior Vice-President Automotive, Germany

INTEGRATED SOLUTIONS

UTi believes that it can maximise its customers' success by offering them integrated solutions that cover several parts of the supply chain. "By providing solutions which have an impact on stock levels and result in a healthier bottom line, we can add much more value to our clients' supply chains," states Bas Wouters, Global Director Product Marketing at UTi. In order to offer them a better understanding of these integrated solutions, the logistics service provider arranged for 200 of its key sales managers to spend a week playing The

Fresh Connection. Employees played the game for 90 minutes every morning during the company's annual global sales meeting, which was held in Cannes, France. "This is a fantastic way of giving our sales managers greater insight into the supply chain. The game has a competitive element to it as well as an element of fun, practicality and a role-play aspect. Compared to traditional training methods, this is extremely effective," says Wouters. UTi divided its top 200 sales managers into eight sub-groups. In each sub-group were three instructors from UTi who had been trained by Involvation, the business game's

creators. "This enabled us to create an intimate atmosphere in which each team received professional feedback." Participants' reactions have been very positive. "This is our second time playing The Fresh Connection and we've put it on the agenda again due to popular demand," comments Wouters. "It is an innovative, new way of learning."



THE FRESH CONNECTION
the ultimate value chain experience

