

# The human factor

The use of sophisticated technology is a given in the successful transportation of pharmaceutical products, but the best air cargo services providers argue that there is no substitute for professional, dedicated personnel.

What are the success factors for air cargo companies in providing satisfactory transport solutions to the pharmaceutical industry? For pharmaceutical manufacturers, transportation is considered the weakest link in the supply chain. The high value of pharmaceutical products means that it is crucial to choose a trustworthy transportation company. It is not just the speed of the transportation that is essential, the goods also need to be expertly handled and kept at their ideal temperature throughout their journey. Moreover, seamless security measures are important.

Technology plays a crucial role in the transportation of pharmaceuticals. The market offers a wide choice of sophisticated containers that can handle temperatures between -20 and 20°C. Cutting-edge tracking systems, as well as state-of-the-art alarming devices, are also available. These pinpoint the status of shipments in real time and allow proactive action to be taken in case of emergency.

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Nevertheless, there is still a lot to do in ensuring the cool chain demanded by pharmaceutical manufacturers when transportation is involved. So far, real added value has proved to be the 'human factor'. Only with dedicated, well-trained personnel can air cargo companies ensure that the shipment is under control from acceptance to delivery.

For instance, how is the required temperature maintained in the container units? Taking into account that ambient temperatures can vary from -50°C to 50°C, and that a temperature variation exceeding ±2°C can cause damage to the products, it is by no means easy to catch up with the manufacturer's cool chain needs. Given that containers are mainly kept refrigerated with dry ice and battery feeding, it goes without saying that only proper re-icing and prompt battery exchange operated by the staff can ensure the right cool air ventilation to maintain a stable temperature.

In addition, whereas there are no special regulations for road transport, the air cargo industry must stick to the strict handling requirements established by the IATA. Air cargo services providers must therefore be able to handle such regulatory issues and assist the customer in making sure that all required documentation and permits are

### A summary of Swiss WorldCargo's transport solutions for pharmaceutical products:

#### Swiss Perishables

- An uninterrupted cold chain from shipper to consignee
- Temperature-controlled transport from -20°C to 20°C
- Refrigerated containers provided by Envirotainer, the market leader
- Refrigerated container handling by specially trained personnel
- Advantageous agreements for regular transport on selected flights
- Short acceptance, transfer and delivery times
- Acceptance and loading priority
- Cost savings by reducing the packaging required for consignments
- Constant shipment monitoring (via Match)
- Globally consistent handling and quality standards (Cargo 2000)
- Seamless integration into the customer's supply chain

#### Swiss Argus

- Enhanced anti-theft protection
- Sophisticated storage, supervision and loading processes
- Pre-departure and post-landing security checks
- Confidentiality and discretion
- 'Match' integrated online consignment tracking system
- Enhanced quality and handling standards
- Seamless incorporation into the customer's supply chain
- Competent contacts all over the world
- Greater booking tolerances

in place. When it comes to anti-theft measures, such as sophisticated storage in secure airport premises, constant supervision, application of loading processes and procedures including sealed containers and security checks, proactive human intervention can make the difference.

For Swiss WorldCargo, the air freight division of Swiss International Air Lines, this is what underlies its dedicated and specialised transport solutions for pharmaceutical products: Swiss Perishables and Swiss Argus. ■