



# GLOBAL TRADE PLATFORM

# TODAY, WE HELPED THE CANADA POST GROUP OF COMPANIES WIN NEW INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

The Global Trade Platform is helping Canada Post, Purolator, and Purolator International land international retail customers that were previously out of reach.



Cross-border shipping offers the Canada Post Group of Companies an unprecedented opportunity for growth. According to research from Accenture and AliResearch, business-to-consumer global cross-border e-commerce is forecast to increase from \$230 billion in 2014 to \$1 trillion by 2020<sup>1</sup>.

That's why Innovapost—the Information Technology Shared Services provider for the Canada Post Group of Companies—developed the Global Trade Platform. This shared solution helps Canada Post, Purolator, and Purolator International meet the shipping needs of new international retail customers and compete with full service integrators.

"Canadian shoppers are ordering goods directly from foreign merchants in higher numbers than ever before," explains Mike Ogletree, Director Enterprise Architecture at Innovapost. "In many cases, these

merchants choose commercial shipping services over traditional postal offerings to take advantage of faster border clearance and better shipment tracking to and from Canada. We call this the 'Alternate Channel.' Until Innovapost developed the Global Trade Platform, we didn't have a standard platform to support Group of Company Alternate Channel requirements."

## COLLABORATING FOR SUCCESS

Working directly with subject-matter experts from Canada Post, Purolator, and Purolator International, Innovapost built, tested, and launched the Global Trade Platform in a matter of months. This platform quickly helped the Group of Companies win the business of two large American retailers in time for the 2016 Christmas season. Leveraging the Global Trade Platform, these two retailers

shipped more than 250,000 packages to Canada during the holiday season. That volume translated into millions of dollars in additional revenue for the Group of Companies.

"Before the Global Trade Platform, we weren't in a position to win that class of customer," explains John Currah, Technical Product Manager at Canada Post. "Now, we're able to offer retailers the tools they need for faster integration, improved duty and tax pre-payment, and better return solutions. Today, a large retailer with multiple American hubs and hundreds of retail stores in Canada can ship a customer's order quickly and seamlessly—regardless of whether it needs to be shipped in multiple packages to the buyer's home from a distribution centre or from a retail store. The platform opens up a whole new classification of potential customers, including top tier retailers from Asia and Europe."

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.retailnews.asia/cross-border-ecommerce-to-hit-1-trillion-in-2020/>



## BEING AGILE

Working in an agile fashion, Innovapost created a flexible platform made up of two modules: a Group of Company shipping module focused on the preparation of shipments and label printing, and a Global Trade Module focused on the operational aspects of cross-border shipping.

The agile approach used by Innovapost allowed the Group of Companies to deliver small, iterative releases of the platform to demonstrate value quickly to customers, win their business, and meet tight customer timelines.

"Because we used a modular development approach, each component of the platform is a building block that can be re-used," says Chris Snyder, Director Architecture at Innovapost. "Since the platform is open and flexible, we won't need to build a different solution for every contract and it will support third-party integrations and operations across the globe."

## CHALLENGING THE STATUS QUO

The project also highlighted the ability of Innovapost employees to innovate and solve complex challenges.

"At Innovapost, we pride ourselves on being innovative," says Ogletree. "This

project was an example of challenging the norm and doing what was right for the business at every turn. We never used a 'cookie-cutter' approach, and often had to challenge existing assumptions and ways of working. Not only did this approach deliver a better solution, it also made it an extremely rewarding project to work on for all involved."

Innovapost employees were also able to work closely with their colleagues at Canada Post, Purolator, and Purolator International.

"As with many of our projects, the success of the Global Trade Platform hinged on close collaboration and knowledge-sharing with our large sister companies," adds Ogletree. "The Canada Post Group of Companies operates the largest retail network and the biggest transportation fleet in Canada. Our employees often have the opportunity to work on large and important projects that impact Canadians across the country. As a result, they gain deep knowledge of the business opportunities and challenges that face our colleagues, and are uniquely positioned to solve big problems and make a difference."

"If we weren't in complete and total lock step across the Group of Companies, this project wouldn't have been possible," adds Bruce Dimler, Director, IT at Purolator Inc.

"Everyone understood their particular role and respected what each different team was doing. Purolator International was integral in outlining the desired functionality from cradle to grave, Canada Post provided the vision and funding that made the project possible, and Innovapost used its deep understanding of the alternate channel business to create a reliable, flexible platform that allows us to pivot and do what we need to do at our choosing."

## MOVING FORWARD

Within a matter of months, the Global Trade Platform made the alternate channel the second-largest source of large parcel mail volume for Canada Post. Parcel volumes will continue to grow as the Group onboards additional international customers in the years to come.

"It was incredibly satisfying to see our work make an impact so quickly," concludes Ogletree. "And it was only possible because of the amazing people that work here and the groundwork that had been laid from previous projects. Everyone was eager to take on this challenge and use their particular knowledge and skills to solve an important business problem."



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