CUSTOMER SUCCESS

CENTREPORT

At the heart of New Zealand's Supply Chain

THE CUSTOMER

CentrePort in Wellington, New Zealand is a modern port and logistics business serving the needs of central Aotearoa New Zealand. It is a vital connection for the freight and transport system of central New Zealand, bringing trade, people and economic value to the region. Its multi-modal transport network called CentreConnect is creating a more resilient and sustainable supply chain, connecting cargo owners to CentrePort via regional freight hubs.

Andrew Locke, GM Commercial said: "Modelling in LINQ gave us the confidence to move forward with our process changes. Knowing in advance that we were going to have a positive impact allowed us to focus on delivering even more value to our customers."

A COMPLEX OPERATION

CentreConnect is a CentrePort owned and managed daily service, which links key trade areas in the lower North Island and upper South Island to port by road, rail, and sea. This multi-modal approach gives CentreConnect the flexibility and resilience to adapt to changes in demand and disruptions that can affect supply chains. It's a cost-effective freight system that gives shippers more certainty and helps businesses and regional economies to be more competitive.



While the physical logistics between the North and South Island are well managed, the financial transactions behind the scenes were creating a demand which detracted from the teams' core focus – customer service and business development.

Every container movement triggered a charge from Port of Marlborough to CentrePort, which was then on-charged to customers - importers, exporters, and shipping companies. Given the high volume of transactions and the manual nature of the invoicing process, a new way was needed.

KEY CHALLENGES

Manual Invoice Processing and Validation

Invoices from Port of Marlborough were manually reviewed by CentrePort's commercial team. Due to the lack of a fixed structure in the invoices and the manual nature of data entry, errors were unavoidable. The team relied on its expert knowledge to identify mistakes and reconcile discrepancies - often making manual adjustments based on experience rather than automated validation.

Micro-Transactions, Macro Problems

Each invoice contained multiple line items, reflecting individual container movements. While each charge was relatively small (a few hundred dollars), they added up quickly - both in terms of cost and time spent processing them.

Time-Consuming, High-Value Work

Ensuring accurate invoicing was critical for CentrePort's financial operations, but the process was resource-intensive. The commercial team was not large, yet they needed to process these invoices while also focusing on strategic growth initiatives. Expanding CentreConnect's freight volumes without automation meant adding headcount - an expensive solution.

Scalability and Security Concerns

The process relied heavily on spreadsheets for tracking invoice data, raising data security and accessibility concerns. As CentrePort worked on its digital transformation strategy, it became clear that a more robust, structured solution was needed.

THE LINQ SOLUTION

Recognising the critical nature of this process, CentrePort looked at the issue from a perspective of how could we do this better, so it takes less time, reduces the monotonous process of checking and reconciling every line of every invoice, impacts our teams less and creates an opportunity for those people to do more valuable work? CentrePort partnered with LINQ to digitally map, analyse and improve its invoice reconciliation workflow.

Creating a Digital Twin of the Process

In workshops with process owners, taking only 6 hours, LINQ helped CentrePort visualise the entire invoicing workflow, breaking down each step to a micro-transaction level from container movement to invoice reconciliation. This provided a clear, data-backed understanding of where inefficiencies existed and how they impacted cost, time and resources.

Quantifying the Pain Points

By linking activities to time and cost data, CentrePort could quickly see and quantify the hidden cost of manual reconciliation. The insights revealed how much time was being spent on adjustments, highlighting areas ripe for automation.

Identifying Process Standardisation and Automation Opportunities

Through scenario modelling, CentrePort explored ways to standardise and automate invoice validation, ensuring that errors could be flagged automatically rather than requiring manual review.

Enhancing Data Security and Operational Resilience

Moving away from spreadsheets to a structured process aligned with CentrePort's broader digital strategy. The new approach ensured better data governance, security and accessibility.

Measurable Impact:

- **Reduced manual processing time**, freeing up the commercial team for higher-value work
    - *Processing an invoice has gone from 25 minutes to just 23 seconds!*
- **Improved invoice accuracy**, reducing financial discrepancies and the risk of overpayments
- **Laid the groundwork for automation**, increasing scalability without adding staff
- **Enhanced security and data integrity**, aligning with CentrePort's digital strategy

Tanya Dednam, Head of Digital said: "We knew our process worked, but we lacked insight into the time and effort it consumed. LINQ was the catalyst and provided evidence to identify high-impact changes and gave us the clarity needed to deliver data-driven improvements."

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WHAT'S NEXT?

With the current state model in place, CentrePort is now exploring automation options to further streamline invoice reconciliation. The insights gained through LINQ are also being applied to other high-impact commercial processes, reinforcing CentrePort's commitment to efficiency, scalability and continuous improvement.

Tanya Dednam, Head of Digital said:

"Using LINQ has been the most effective tool for driving change decision-making that I have encountered. Unlike other process mapping activities, where consultants conduct lengthy workshops and deliver PDFs weeks later, LINQ provides instant visibility of processes.

It only takes 1-2 sessions to capture processes and quantify effort, allowing stakeholders to immediately understand the complexity, effort, and value of the outcomes. This clarity makes it straightforward for the business to recognise the need for change. The LINQ team has seamlessly integrated with the CentrePort team, facilitating business buy-in.

The Digital Twin of the Organisation we are creating with LINQ is being embedded into our organisation. Before undertaking any projects, we ensure that the current state is understood, along with the upstream and downstream impacts of change.

I envisage that LINQ will become a central tool to drive process improvement, and the information captured will factor into our Carbon reporting, aligning with our commitment to be Carbon Net Zero by 2040."

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

For more information on this case study, please get in touch with Neil:

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