

Innovating Supply Chains Amid a Global Pandemic

Covid-19 heavily affecting existing supply chains on a local and global basis



Ever since the global Covid-19 pandemic started at the beginning of 2020, it has heavily affected the global and local transport routes which form the base of today's globalised economy. All over the world, borders closed, flights and shipments were cancelled, which led to massive shortages in space. Operations at air and seaports were experiencing limitations or even came to a halt, causing severe delays in existing supply chains. When faced with this adversity, the entire logistics industry had to find solutions to help their customers' supply chains literally from one day to another.

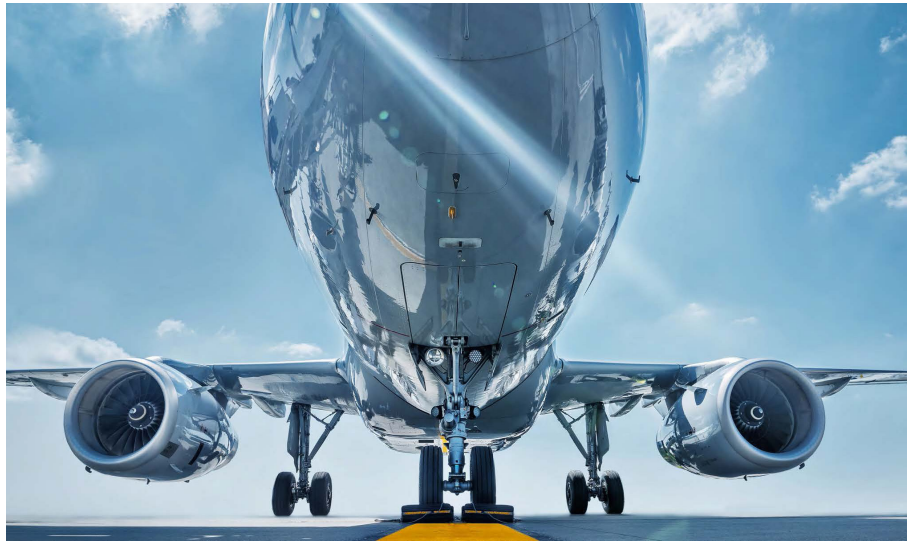
"In my 25 years in the industry, I have never experienced a decline in air freight capacity as we have experienced in March, April and May", shares Thomas Hansen, CEO of Röhlig Australia & New Zealand.



Finding new ways to keep customers' businesses running

To assist clients with bringing their products to the market, Röhlig had to innovate and come up with new products and consistently adjust, given the frequent change in the external environment. Being 'smaller' and therefore more agile, Röhlig was able to quickly react and adapt to new market demands and develop services that supported many customers during these times.

"The main challenge has been to find solutions that cater to various industries in Australia and abroad, driven by the speed of delivery and the cost of the solution.



Fortunately, Röhlig has a dedicated team who has been working on single and multi-product solutions, then package this up in record time, to ensure product and schedule integrity that will allow our clients and their customers to rely on our service offerings as an integral part of their supply chain", continues Thomas Hansen.

Unique services to support customers in Australia

When commercial airlines ceased operating scheduled flights from Europe to Australia and New Zealand, companies who rely on air freight in their supply chain were faced with disruptions as 90% of capacity was removed from the global market. Subsequently, Röhlig's

longstanding service of consolidating shipments to Australia and New Zealand at the company's European airfreight gateway in Frankfurt, Germany, was affected.

As a solution, Röhlig launched its new Air-Sea Service from Europe to Australia and New Zealand in the middle of April. Under regular circumstances, this service would be useful for companies who could not await long transit times in sea freight, however air freight was too expensive.

Now, under the challenging conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic, combining two services made this product very attractive and competitive in the market. Röhlig received instant and positive feedback from Industries in Australia.



Another unique service that Röhlig Australia was able to leverage during the Covid-19 pandemic, was a freighter blocked space agreement ex Europe and the US. Thanks to this agreement, Röhlig did not rely on passenger aircraft and was able to satisfy customers' demand for space while it was close to impossible to get in the market. Hence, Röhlig's customers could benefit from almost uninterrupted deliveries despite the global situation.

Servicing New Zealand during its full lockdown

From March 26th New Zealand went into full lockdown, which made it almost impossible to move and deliver any cargo. Röhlig was able to continue servicing New Zealand customers and essential services via Australia offering trans-shipment solutions through Sydney. The cooperation between our international teams and support from all departments globally made it possible to keep the business running and not shut down completely. We also provided warehousing services to our customers who required unpacks and/or storage during the level-4 lockdown.

Warehousing services continued

In the field of contract logistics, Röhlig was able to keep its warehouses in Australia up and running. "Our warehouses remained open during the COVID-19 pandemic under the strictest health and safety guidelines, supporting our customers and fulfilling our agreements", commented Mat Vermeulen, Chief Sales Officer, Röhlig Australia & New Zealand. "It was very encouraging to see our freight forwarding warehouse go above and beyond expectations during such a severe interruption to our operations."

Digitisation picks up speed: Covid-19 fosters innovation

Röhlig has a strong focus on digitisation and innovation, and it was this strong IT

emphasis that became a big advantage during the Coronavirus situation. Within a very short timeframe, Röhlig's in-house IT company made it possible to work from home for all employees around the globe. With this fast and smooth transition to home office work remotely, Röhlig was able to ensure continuous services for its customers and to stay in close contact without any interruptions.

New reporting tool for customers

At the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis, the global Röhlig teams witnessed an increased demand from customers for information. Hence, they combined forces with the Röhlig IT experts, who developed a new digital tool, which was unique in the market by the time of the launch. The result was the Röhlig Global Situation Report, which provides Röhlig customers with real-time updates on conditions in air and sea freight, warehousing and land transport from around the world. Röhlig received feedback as an "Outstanding Report and Customer communication service" from existing clients worldwide. Please take a look at the Röhlig Global Situation Report <https://coronareport.rohlig.com/>

Improving customer experience

"During the Covid-19 slowdown, we were actually able to fast track some projects we were working on", said Mat Vermeulen, Chief Sales Officer, Röhlig Australia & New Zealand. "Initially, we were going to introduce them by the end of 2020, however, the entire situation gave us the opportunity to focus more on them and speed up the development which ultimately helps us delivering a better customer experience". As such, Röhlig implemented its new warehouse management system across all sites in Australia and New Zealand, a new transport management system in NZ, plus enhancements to our customer platform Röhlig Real Time.

Ensuring the health and safety of Röhlig staff

"In the age of the coronavirus pandemic, our top priority is the safety of our employees worldwide", emphasizes Thomas Hansen. As Röhlig is an owner-operated and family-driven company, it attaches utmost importance to the wellbeing of their staff members. "As the lockdown started, all worldwide Röhlig members were given access to our systems to work from home within a very short period of time." States Mr Hansen. Subsequently, supervisors and HR managers have remained in close contact with their employees to provide guidance to them under the challenging conditions of social distancing. And things are working out fine: just recently, all staff members were invited to assess their current working conditions in a global survey, which led to very positive results.

Written by Maria Astakhova, Röhlig Australia

ABOUT RÖHLIG LOGISTICS

Röhlig is an owner-operated logistics company that offers its customers services in the areas of sea freight, air freight, project logistics, and contract logistics. The family-owned company was founded in 1852 in Bremen, Germany. Today, it employs nearly 2,400 staff members in more than 30 countries. Röhlig has been a long time member of the AHK in Australia and operated with own subsidiary in Australia since 1973.

Servicing Australian Market for nearly 50 years Röhlig now has 6 offices in Australia and 3 in New Zealand with more than 250 employees across both countries.

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