



## Case Study



**Icreon**

# An Online Freight Booking System

**Our client required an online freight booking system to be integrated into their existing website. Earlier functionality on this website was restricted to users only being able to place booking inquiries. For this purpose, they teamed with Icreon. We delivered a revamped web application that enables users to go beyond simple inquiries – customers can now obtain quotes and administrators of this application can manage the online booking system and undertake to process bookings placed by customers. As of December 2007, these services were rendered via a five-people dedicated team through the FTE engagement model.**

## Business Requirements

Our client, a US based freight company, had an existing website through which their customers could place enquires and obtain quotes on freight. The freight and carrier rates on the website were displayed directly from a website maintained by the central body for carrier rates in the US. Several problems arose because of this arrangement:

- Inability to display rates offered to them by carriers not registered with the central body.
- Inability to customize the display and layout of the website.

They wanted to revamp their website to overcome these problems and also to provide new value added features (such as an online freight booking system) to their customers. The administrators were to be provided the means to define and manage the details of the carriers being used by the company, the rates offered by them, contracts etc.

## A web based solution to offer freight booking services

Customers can use the website to obtain both quick and detailed quotes. Quick quotes can be obtained on the basis of the freight pickup and destination locations. We have integrated a zip-code lookup search that enables customers to identify the zip-code of any location with US and Canada.

For a detailed quote, customers can, in addition to the pickup and destination location, enter the details of the items that are to be shipped - including information such as total weight, type of packaging, quantity, dimensions, freight class (the freight class is determined on the basis of the item category and sub-category; the customer is provided with options to lookup the freight class in case it is not known) etc and the additional services that are required at the pickup/delivery locations.

Based on customer preferences, the system will identify and display the top five cheapest carriers available. The carriers are selected on the basis of the parameters entered by the user and the terms of the contract that the carriers have entered into with the client.

APIs provided by the central body have been integrated with the solution to display standardized carrier rates. Additionally, rates offered by carriers not registered with the central body or carriers who have entered into separate contracts with the client, can be displayed on the website.

Quotes can be placed by registered as well as unregistered customers. Unregistered customers can submit quote enquiries but cannot place online bookings. Registered customers have the option to place bookings directly via the website and also to save their quotes and book them at a later stage. Payments for the booking can be made online (via credit cards) or offline (customers can submit a request for an agent to get in touch with them offline). Once a booking has been placed, it can be tracked online. Customers are also provided with the option to download the bill of lading, and the invoices.

The administrator panel can be used to manage the web application and process bookings made by customers. The system automatically assigns the quote placed by a customer to an agent. In case of a first-time customer, the quote is flagged as 'Unassigned'. The administrator can assign the quote to a specific agent. Thereafter, all quotes placed by that customer will be assigned to the previously selected agent.

To provide for the online booking system and to enable the client to offer custom rates, several new modules were developed and integrated with the solution. These include:

- **Manage Carriers:** The administrators and other authorized users can store and manage details of all carriers used by the company to ship goods. The administrator has the option to turn comments 'on' for the carrier. In case this option has been turned on, customers can post details of their experience of having used this carrier.
- **Manage Commodities:** Administrators can create and manage a list of commodities/items that can be shipped. The commodities can be grouped into categories/sub categories in order to determine their freight class.
- **Manage Facilities:** A list of various loading/unloading facilities that are offered by the company can be created and managed.
- **Manage Accessorial:** For each facility available in the system, various accessorial can be offered to the customers. Accessorial are additional services that are available for each facility at the pickup/destination location. The administrator has the option to enter rates (in terms of a percentage or per hundred pounds and whether the rate is applicable to total freight charge or per item) for each accessorial.
- **Manage Contract:** Contracts entered into with various carriers can be created and managed. The administrator can define contract terms by specifying the contract mode, associating a rate table, specifying the discount (if any), defining the default accessorial offered by the carrier and their charges etc.
- **Manage Custom Rate Table:** Custom rate tables can be created by uploading the rates (contained in an Excel sheet) offered by various carriers into the system. The administrator can manage/update the rates that have been uploaded into the system.

**Technologies used in developing this application are:**

