An Auto Manufacturer Gains Control of IT Assets

A Fortune 50 global manufacturer in the auto industry thought it had adequately planned for the disposal of its IT assets. It chose a vendor that would arrange for the pickup, shipping and disposal of its assets but the vendor didn't offer much visibility into the process, with no chain of custody for these assets. Then, the unthinkable happened: the CEO's laptop was among a pallet of material that went missing in transit. It was unwiped, and so it contained crucial internal information vital to the company and its competitive position in the market. This one mistake potentially could cost millions of dollars to clean up, and could do irreparable harm to their brand.

The Challenge

The client was relying on its ITAD vendor to perform end-of-life and asset redeployment services for its IT equipment, including the transportation of their assets. Like many companies, it had overlooked one of the biggest risks of IT asset management: bundling all disposition services in one provider. It thus had become hostage to a provider who treated reverse logistics like an afterthought, performing a service without building in basic best practices.

The CEO's lost laptop was never found but luckily the valuable information it contained was never disclosed. However, the incident did serve as a wakeup call to the company that it had to do a better job of transporting its IT assets in a more responsible, secure and accountable manner. It engaged Onepak for the task.

The Solution

Onepak launched an Online ReturnCenter, with business rules in place to trim unnecessary costs and limit risk. It enabled a tight integration between the

customer and Onepak, eliminating communication gaps and operational blind spots and delivering consistent, standardized service.

When just a few units had to be returned, regional internal users could log in to the system and order shipping kits with prepaid return labels. That allowed the IT asset manager to ensure every asset was securely packaged for shipment and to track every parcel online to know when it shipped and when it was delivered. It gave real control back to the manager responsible for this operation, giving them the ability to manage users in all U.S. locations. For the first time, users could now be assigned to data groups by corporate division, and the level of data access for each user could be centrally controlled.

For large pickups, regional users could upload a spreadsheet with detailed asset data. This became the checklist of expected assets for the onsite crew when it arrived to pick up the assets.

But the crews that scanned and packed assets were no ordinary movers. Only certified drivers with training in Onepak's standard method of packing IT assets and in using the company's asset tags and efficient handheld data capture application were approved by Onepak to provide onsite services.

The asset managers could now rely on consistent packing techniques and materials nationwide, asset-level tracking in transit, and a complete chain of custody for every shipment.

The Advantage

The Online ReturnCenter solution enabled this Fortune 50 company to:

- Reduce carbon footprint (truck miles) and control logistics costs by managing where and when IT assets are shipped

- Mitigate risks of data and asset loss through complete chain-of-custody visibility and tracking

- Keep ITAD vendors accountable with accurate asset-level tracking and reporting

- Document federal compliance through the entire ITAD logistics process

- Reduce hidden costs of ITAD equipment storage and depreciation by enabling remote sites to return assets quickly

- Manage IT asset pickups at multiple locations from a desktop, with no software to install

"The cost savings benefits of this solution for our company are literally in the millions," concludes the client's IT asset manager.

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