



What Becomes a Legend Most? The On-Time Delivery of a Music Superstar's Holiday Box Set for Fans

The Situation

A legendary music artist needed to manufacture 10 million CDs, package them into a million box sets, and deliver them all in time for the busy holiday season.

The Solution

A turnkey logistics operation under an exclusive deal with TGL to manufacture and package the 10-CD box set; then deliver the finished product – plus more than 2000 assembled displays – to nearly 60 distribution centers.

The Client

The client is a Nashville-based record label – started by one of country music's biggest stars and best-selling artists – which began releasing projects domestically without the help of a major label partner.

As with any label, new product launches almost always face logistics challenges, especially when they're high-volume deliveries with strict deadlines. And even more so when they happen during the busiest time of year, when capacity can reach the breaking point.

That was the situation when this legendary artist's imprint – going it alone for the first time without a major label partner in the U.S. – needed to manufacture, package and ship millions of CDs to hit store shelves in time for the busy holiday season.

The Situation

Ten million CDs had to be replicated and packaged into one million box sets; then delivered – along with fully loaded, assembled displays – to a major retailer's numerous distribution centers across the United States. And it all had to be done within a few months so that they'd be on store shelves in time for the holidays.

Early delays, added twists, and the capacity constraints typical of the logistics industry's third and fourth quarters all conspired to impede the delivery schedule.

The Story

The musician contracted with TGL well before any parameters had been set, including the number of CDs, other components, and type of package to be used.

"The only thing we knew is that he wanted to have a premium set-up box in his hands that had some meat and potatoes to it," says Bill Hecksteden, Senior Vice President of North American Media and Logistic Sales for Technicolor.

The artist and his team decided on a high-end, set-up box of 10 CDs and a 48-page booklet. That was in early June, and ten master CDs would have to be in hand by September. Then all would need to be delivered to the retailer's distribution centers by the last day of October.

TGL set to work on a logistics plan. Collaboration with colleagues in Technicolor's Olyphant, PA, and Guadalajara, Mexico, plants began in earnest to understand exactly what the throughput would be.

"We also began working with the individual printers because, keep in mind, this was a turn-key project. We were ordering print, cover wraps, and jewel cases. We were manufacturing the CDs," says Hecksteden. "And the label provided us with one purchase order for the finished goods. They weren't dealing with anybody else except Technicolor to make this happen for them."

The Solution

Fortunately, the artist tapped Technicolor Global Logistics (TGL) in an exclusive deal to manufacture, package and ship the special 10-CD box set, a retrospective collection that also included a new album. After manufacturing and packaging all of the CDs, TGL moved the finished product – and more than 2000 large, assembled displays – to nearly 60 distribution centers, hitting every delivery date on time. The turnkey logistics operation involved multiple parties, a third-party vendor of record, a third-party partner in Indiana, and Technicolor's facilities in California, Pennsylvania, and Mexico.

The Obstacles (Overcome)

Delays are common with creative endeavors – especially when a brand-new album is in the mix. But even as interim deadlines shifted, the final delivery date was moved up by four days. That's when Technicolor was asked to step in and assemble, fill and ship the in-store displays for the box sets.

"Changes were being made to the CD sources, the cover wraps, and to the disc art. By mid-September we still didn't have assets in hand," recalls Hecksteden. "We also learned from the retailer that there was a display component that needed to be assembled, and shipped to the retailer's distribution centers, in addition to the finished goods."

As deadlines shifted, so did the logistics plan. To keep things on track, communication was paramount.

"Drop-dead dates come and go all the time. But in this scenario, we knew what our capacity levels were within the time frame. In October, we're running at 90-95% capacity. And it was getting the people – the account managers and production people within the facilities – engaged as early as possible, and taking ownership," says Hecksteden.

The TGL Difference

With decades of experience optimizing supply chains for major Hollywood studios, Technicolor offers its suite of distribution, transportation management, and analytics services to companies across all industries, including music, gaming, technology, electronics, and high-value goods.

Hecksteden says that consistent communications and precise delivery plans that account for any obstacles and workarounds that may come up are critical to any operation's success.

"The more information you have, the more you know – given that your deliverables are going to continue to change, they always do – and the more forward-pointing logistics that you have at your disposal, the better off everybody is going to be," he says. "Place your inventory close to your delivery destinations as quickly as possible and you've got a good shot of making it happen."

The Results

After manufacturing ten million CDs and assembling one million finished goods, TGL shipped the finished goods from three locations – Technicolor's Olyphant, PA, and Calexico, CA, facilities and a third-party provider's facility in Indianapolis, IN – fanning out to 28 of the retailer's distribution centers, all by the October delivery date.

Technicolor also assembled and loaded all of the retailer's displays, shipping them from Mexicali, Mexico and Calexico, CA facilities to an additional 28 retailer distribution centers.

The Bottom Line

"It was a massive undertaking," says Hecksteden, "but we were able to get 100 percent on-time delivery."

About TGL

TGL is an established logistics partner to some of the most prominent names in consumer products – handling complexities and challenges like the ones related here every day. As a leader in retail logistics, TGL has diverse experience in managing time-sensitive, high value, and high-velocity supply chains, including products that require end-to-end handling, from import to time-definite transportation to retail locations numbering over 10,000. TGL's commitment and experience in navigating and solving multifaceted supply chain challenges continues to make them a preferred partner for many high-volume and high-demand customers.



Technicolor Global Logistics

3233 Mission Oaks Boulevard
Camarillo, CA 93012

technicolor.com/global-logistics