



Flexibility and Client-Centric thinking Deliver Roland Supply Chain Success

About Roland

World-leading designer, Roland Corporation, manufacturer and distribute musical instruments and pro AV equipment through their global supply chain. Roland products include pianos, keyboards and synthesizers, guitar products, electronic percussion kits, digital recording equipment, amplifiers and audio processing devices.

Roland established itself as a manufacturer of electronic musical instruments in Osaka, Japan in 1972. In recent years, the company has expanded its business to include video and audio, with a specific focus on live video production.

For the past 20 years, the company's Australian division, Roland Corporation Australia has partnered with AXIMA as their preferred customs broker, freight forwarder and supply chain partner.



When I need something, I know they are going to find a solution. Working with AXIMA gives me confidence.



Liam French, Supply Chain and Operations Manager, Roland

The evolution of a solid supply chain partnership

Liam French, Roland Australia Supply Chain and Operations Manager, says the nature of AXIMA's logistics services for the company has evolved in response to changes within the company's wider business.

One of the core services that AXIMA has provided over the duration of the relationship has been customs clearance and customs consultancy. Over time, the relationship has grown to include additional logistics services including regulatory advice, freight forwarding and the proactive identification of supply chain efficiencies allowing Roland to benefit through cost savings.

A core requirement of Roland Australia is flexibility in terms of ports, freight forwarding trade lanes, timeframes and associated logistics matters. AXIMA provides Liam with options that help him achieve the timeframes and landed costs that the company requires. AXIMA has also assisted Roland in achieving a fast-turnaround time with LCLs. Both of these have delivered Roland with measured benefits.



Situation

World-leading designer, manufacturer and distributor of musical instruments and pro AV equipment required a freight forwarder and customs broker that was flexible, reliable and passionate about their success.

Services Provided

- International freight forwarding
- Customs clearance and consultancy
- Domestic transport
- Specialised logistics advice
- Other logistics services as required

Result

- Improved freight forwarding solutions
- Reduced shrinkage and damage
- Ongoing cost reductions and efficiencies
- Improved flexibility and communication
- Increased trust and confidence

How AXIMA assists with meeting KPIs

Liam says his key KPIs focus heavily on reducing shipment delays, minimising shrinkage and damage, keeping freight forwarding and logistics costs as low as possible and ensuring responsive and reliable communications around shipments and freight forwarding.

Shrinkage and damage are both common in the sector due to the high value and sensitive nature of the products, especially with LCL shipments. AXIMA reduces the risk of shrinkage and damage for Roland by packing their LCL shipments into AXIMA controlled containers wherever possible. This means Liam has improved visibility of where his freight is in the supply chain. This also ensures Roland gets their cargo faster as these AXIMA controlled containers are delivered to AXIMA bonded warehouses as soon as they are available from the wharf. Once arriving in the AXIMA warehouse, the AXIMA team unpack the container and deliver the next day.



We work proactively with Roland to identify shipments prior to arrival that require additional certification to benefit under one of the many free trade agreements we have with other countries.



Gary Brasher, National Customs Manager, AXIMA Logistics

Liam says the visibility he gains through working with AXIMA means that when an issue such as damage, shrinkage or another problem arises, he is in a position to do something about it.

AXIMA also speaks directly to Roland's other 3PL suppliers when required, to ensure a smoother supply chain process.



There is also a dedication to continuous improvement and the optimisation of costs and efficiencies.



Liam French, Supply Chain and Operations Manager, Roland

Why the partnership works so well

"The size of AXIMA and the open communication with their team members works well for us. We don't feel like a number with them," Liam says. "With some global freight forwarding and 3PL providers, both communication and company scale are challenging."

Another aspect of AXIMA he values is its ability to proactively generate better outcomes.

"AXIMA has been finding better logistics solutions for us. These solutions were not available with other global freight forwarding and 3PL service providers," Liam explains.

One incident in particular is a case in point.

"There was an incident where another freight forwarding service provider told us the ship we requested was a closed book, and there was no way to get our cargo where it needed to be when it needed to be there," he says. "AXIMA listened to our needs and developed a customised solution. The AXIMA solution included moving the shipment to another port via road where the freight could then be loaded onto a direct sea freight service from Indonesia to Sydney, which would avoid delays in Singapore."

The proposal not only worked to meet Liam's deadline, but cut between seven and ten days off the expected freight timeframe allowing Roland to meet the pending Christmas deadline.

"AXIMA was focused on what we needed as their client and was able to deliver a solution. There was a lot less flexibility with the other global freight forwarding provider." Liam says the solution was the "aha!" moment that led him to decide to shift more of the company's freight forwarding and logistics requirements to AXIMA.

**AXIMA will do everything to make sure there are no delays.
Where there is an issue, AXIMA is proactive in their communication with us.**

Liam French, Supply Chain and Operations Manager, Roland



The benefits

He says AXIMA is a good "cultural fit". "AXIMA is the right-sized logistics provider for Roland Australia. Their team is proactive, caring and knowledgeable about our business and our freight forwarding and customs needs. We're not just a number to AXIMA. We can place a phone call and get an answer pretty much straight away. We are not put in a pile, and we are not put in the too-hard basket."

"People answer my calls, and I am able to talk to the person I need to in a short time." AXIMA's people "pay more than lip service" to his needs, he explains. "When I need something, I know they are going to find a solution. Working with AXIMA gives me confidence."

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Liam French, Supply Chain and Operations Manager, Roland



How teamwork delivers success

The partnership with AXIMA delivers Roland with supply chain success based on the focus of ensuring the right product is in the right place at the right time to the right customer.

"AXIMA will do everything to make sure there are no delays," says Liam. "Where there is an issue, AXIMA is proactive in their communication with us."

One of the most positive aspects of AXIMA for Liam is how its team handles issues. "You learn a lot about a company when things go wrong or a mistake is made," he says. The AXIMA team take ownership of glitches, and formulate a way to fix them, addressing them "head-on".

"There is also a dedication to continuous improvement and the optimisation of costs and efficiencies," says Liam.

Gary Brasher, AXIMA's National Customs Manager, is "continuously looking for ways we can reduce costs on duty and the like," Liam says.

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Navigating Customs duty

Gary says that because Roland is a technical client, in terms of Customs classification, its Customs Broker needs to hold a full understanding of the products and their use within the music industry and the wider market.

"Many products do not have a classification that is specific to that product as a piano or a drum would. It is only through deep investigation using explanatory material, overseas tariff decisions and experience that we come up with the correct classification," he explains.

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The result of taking such a forensic approach is that in many instances, the effort is rewarded with a free rate of duty for Roland.

AXIMA retains a full database of every product Roland has imported. "Our database of current shipments imported over the last 12 months is almost 500 SKUs," Gary says. Because many brokers will present clearances to Customs based on a guess at the classification when it is not an obvious one, shippers can end up overpaying or underpaying on duty. AXIMA never guesses.

"We work proactively with Roland to identify shipments prior to arrival that require additional certification to benefit under one of the many free trade agreements we have with other countries," continues Gary. By working in partnership with Roland, the use of free trade agreements has resulted in significant savings.

Tariff concessions are another area where AXIMA's up-to-the-minute knowledge of the regulatory sphere has resulted in substantial savings on duty. "Concessions must be used with extreme care and with full knowledge of the product to ensure applicability," says Gary. "This knowledge and care is applied to all AXIMA clients," Gary says.

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