

'It's all about thinking holistically'

No current thinking in the area of supply chain management is complete without considering the flow of the electronic data associated with the physical goods, says Core Freight Systems' Glenn Lawson.

"But in order to optimise this element the data-flow should be considered both within the functionality delivered by individual organisations in the chain, and between the organisations that collectively contribute to the overall supply chain," he said.

The role of a clearing agent in South Africa is a case in point, he added, particularly in view of the fact that they may never actually handle the physical cargo and yet are integral to the (legitimate) movement of the goods across the Republic's borders.

"Firstly, the efficiency of their role in the internal

collection and processing of the data to produce a bill of entry (BoE) is a direct function of the electronic systems they employ, as this impacts the logic of the work-flow, ease of use by operators, and monitoring of the operation by management.

'Visibility vital to the insight of all players in a modern supply chain.'

"Secondly, the subsequent transfer of such data in the form of a BoE to the Customs authority is enabled through Electronic Data Interchange (EDI), and EDI, as implied by the name, is clearly a function of electronic processing."

But the benefits of an electronic solution are obviously not restricted to the production of a BoE

by a clearing agent, says Lawson.

"Another example would be the provision of 'visibility' through publication of tracking steps around the status of documentation processing and the physical location of the cargo, both of which are vital to the insight of all players in a modern supply chain. And the effectiveness of this is a direct consequence of the electronic solutions in use by the parties involved."

Core Freight Systems takes a holistic approach to the area of the supply chain, says Lawson. "We do not believe that a single IT application makes a total electronic solution. We are, however, determined to provide the best electronic components for use within our area of operation, providing integrated functionality where pertinent and effective



Glenn Lawson ... providing integrated functionality.

interface with other IT applications as deemed appropriate.

"Through this we hope to contribute to the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the electronic solution servicing all stakeholders – importers, exporters, agents and any other intermediaries in between – in the South African supply chain."