

Transforming HII: Supply Chain Response to COVID-19

[Music playing throughout]

Voice of Mike Petters, HII president and CEO

And beyond supporting our employees and supporting our neighborhoods and our regions and states, we're also going to be supporting the thousands of suppliers that we have and the people that they have who are supporting their neighborhoods and their regions and their states and our nation as we go through this.

Bryan Caccavale, vice president, material, manufacturing and facilities, Newport News Shipbuilding

In the early days of COVID, one of the first things we did as a company was reach out to our supplier partners across the country and, frankly, overseas as well to talk about how things were going with them, to set up formal communication channels that would allow for us to rapidly understand what they need to keep operating safely and keep product flowing and ultimately to the shipyard. What we found was almost every supplier was in a little bit of a different situation in terms of their ability to get folks safely back to work, get the materials they needed from their suppliers to keep work flowing. And so we worked with them immediately to see if there were say financial needs, safety needs, PP&E, things they needed to safely operate.

Scott Weldon, vice president, supply chain management, Ingalls Shipbuilding

Along the lines of transformation collaboration, that really enabled us to respond to COVID. Already having those bridges of communications with Newport News, having the buying community already staged to work together, we were able to understand what are their demands and meeting their immediate needs for their yard. We were able to share our demands for our yard. And then also that collaborative voice that we had to the supply base.

Kelley Tucker, manager, strategic sourcing, Ingalls Shipbuilding

Strategic sourcing has team members here at Ingalls and also at Newport News. We work closely together with each other and the buying communities in order to look at ways to improve our current processes as we buy material, as we buy services, just looking at things differently and making sure that these ways are transformative.

Gwen Wilkerson, director, procurement support, Ingalls Shipbuilding

All of our files for purchase orders were paper, so when we started talking about getting everyone offsite we were like, "Hey, what do we do if we can't work without our paper?" So we got together,

drew it out on the board to try to figure out how can we make this work. We knew that we needed to do something different.

Glenn Lynd, chief procurement officer/director, material acquisition, Ingalls Shipbuilding

Because in the old environment it was paperwork that we had to walk through for the various signatures and approvals. So now how do you do that working remote? So we had a team assigned quickly that got together and set up what we called an electronic file cabinet where we now can go download all that documentation within electronic file cabinet, send it through the normal routings that we need to for all the appropriate signatures, and maintain that information for an audit. That has been very successful, and in fact it's been so successful that if and when we do come back and work onsite with our employees, we will continue that process.

Scott Weldon

We just can't do business as we did for the last 40 years and be successful.

Bryan Caccavale

In the supply chain management arena we've been focused on our transformation for some time now. One of the main areas that we've focused on is speed and agility. When COVID hit, we had to rapidly adapt – and I'd say accelerate – that transformation. Really, a lot of it is a transformation in mindset and culture, how we get orders placed, how to get requirements established in a way that allows a smooth procurement path. They are things that will be a part of us going forward. I'd also say that a lot of the efforts on collaboration, both with Ingalls and with our Navy shipbuilding partners, was leveraged to a great extent as we came through some of these rapid decisions we had to make as not just Newport News but as a shipbuilding enterprise. So it really built on what we were working on in the form of transformation anyway, and I think a lot of it'll be here to stay.

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