

WMS SPECIFICATION & IMPLEMENTATION

CLIENT BACKGROUND

Following a strategic review, our client, the largest independent drinks distributor in the UK, made the decision to implement a Warehouse Management System (WMS) to replace their manual, paper-based system. Their objectives were fourfold: to improve customer service, increase picking and stock accuracy and maintain parity with the competition.

With a product portfolio of 4,500 items and around 20,000 customers generating 3,000 transactions per day, from single bottles to full pallets, they were looking for a sophisticated but robust solution to implement across their ten depot network.

PROCUREMENT

In conjunction with the client, HWP drew up a clear User Requirements Specification (URS) setting out the



functional requirements of the WMS. This was the basis upon which potential suppliers were judged in the pre-tender phase.

Shortlisted tenderers were invited to submit a fully-costed response, including a detailed breakdown of modifications required to meet the URS. After a thorough evaluation the final selection followed supplier presentations and reference site visits.

The preferred solution was RedPrairie's DLx WMS and following contract negotiations detailed implementation planning commenced.

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation followed the structured RedPrairie ATOM methodology; Assess, Transform, Own and Measure.

In order to mitigate risk it was decided that the WMS would be implemented initially in a pilot depot, to prove the benefits and resolve any technical or implementation issues, prior to rollout.

The implementation team was a mix of client users, from both the pilot and other depots, client IT staff and RedPrairie consultants. In addition the client took the decision to appoint an HWP project manager; both to maintain continuity throughout the whole process and to ease the workload on depot staff.

During the procurement process it had been acknowledged that voice picking could be of benefit in the future, particularly for bottle picking. It became apparent during the implementation process that not only was voice a sensible option for the pilot but also that it offered increased risk mitigation - by implementing a partial voice solution prior to the full go live.

RESULTS

The successful pilot implementation, with its two-phase approach, provided the template for the subsequent depot rollout.

It demonstrated that within a very short

period of full go live, improved picking efficiencies of up to 20% were achievable. Stock accuracy showed even greater improvement with stock losses down 66%.

In addition training time for new pickers was slashed; a major bonus during the peak trading period.

Less tangible but no less important was the impact on customer service; primarily increased pick accuracy and improved presentation of bottle-pick cases.

Harold Whitehead & Partners

Founded in 1929, Harold Whitehead & Partners are the longest established, independent, professional management consulting firm in the UK.

Naturally, the profile of clients and consulting activities has changed over those years. However, a few things remain constant such as our commitment to harnessing expertise, achieving client focused results and applying acknowledged standards. As Harold Whitehead himself put it in 1923, focused professionalism and the positive qualities of "service and constructive suggestion" still hold true for us today.

Another of his principles that has stood us in good stead is to never pre-judge or assume. Every business is unique and the decisions they face are specific to their particular situation. This precept is central to our approach and, based on it, we have delivered benefits worth many millions to our clients and provided annual savings many times in excess of project costs.

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