

Customer Service & KPI Reporting in Retail Logistics



RSinteract



Microsoft®
SQL Server™

Collaboration between a global food manufacturer & UK's 2nd largest logistics company

A well known food manufacturer operates its state of the art high-bay National Distribution Centre (NDC) in Wigan, UK. A collaborative project with its Logistics provider, the NDC forms the keystone in the manufacturer's distribution network. The operation is managed by the logistics company who also provides immediate operational customer service response to the manufacturer's customers through a dedicated help desk at the Wigan NDC. It is because of this close relationship that the manufacturer needed a system to both ensure that customers were receiving outstanding service from the logistics company and also manage the ways in which its staff dealt with customer issues to allow stricter controls to be applied.

Disparate systems reduce customer service efficiency

As with any supply chain relationship, the manufacturer needed to ensure that each element was working to optimal efficiency. Total visibility across customer logistics functions was difficult with data existing in disparate systems. These systems were unable to provide adequate decision support information to both sets of management and as such an integrated view was needed. In order to achieve higher rates of operational efficiency whilst lowering the administrative burden, a means of communicating anticipated problems throughout the entire supply chain was also essential.

Management Information difficult to obtain

Issues were recorded in free text format in one of several databases, leaving little in the way of management information and communication audit / trails. As such National Account Managers were poorly informed prior to meetings and the manufacturer's Management had little suitable data upon which to base operational customer service decisions. They needed a solution that would give them the operational and management support they needed.

Challenge

Consolidate and secure distribution of isolated claim information for analysis by corporate customers via the internet.

Solution

SQL Server Data Warehouse built with Data Transformation Services (DTS), consolidating data from multiple disparate systems across the globe. netDrill / RSinteract browser-based front end for access and manipulation of information from Data Warehouse.

Benefits

Up to date Management Information. Consolidated Corporate Data. Powerful analysis and reporting capabilities. Browser based low cost deployment and fast implementation. Minimal maintenance overheads.



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Customer Service & KPI Reporting in Retail Logistics...Continued

The solution

ICS's expertise in the latest Microsoft .NET technologies and experience in the retail and logistics sectors meant that they were in an ideal position to supply a robust, scaleable and flexible solution to meet the manufacturer's needs. The ability to perform in an integrated systems environment was an essential pre-requisite, as was the ability to provide a flexible customisable off-the-shelf package to meet the requirement.

Early user participation to gather requirements

Working closely with operators and project managers from both the manufacturing and logistics businesses, ICS tailored its netCenter solution in a number of key areas. netCenter provides dynamic, secure access to extensive customer and contact information and allows direct issue logging against agreed service levels with associated task allocation and scheduling.

Flexible customisation and integration

netCenter's issue logging functionality was customised to allow accurate and relevant information to be rapidly recorded. In addition to this, the standard netCenter customer database was modified to present information in a way that matched both businesses' internal processes. This information is kept up to date with real time integration with the logistics' 'Freighter' load planning system, the manufacturer's Oracle data warehouse, and EDI / XML communications with customers. This ensures that essential operational data is available in a way that is useful for immediate operational and proactive customer service functions as well as periodic decision support.

Powerful KPI and MI reporting

netDrill / RSinteract, supplied with tranScape, offers intuitive web based regular and ad-hoc reporting for both management and customers. The netDrill / RSinteract reporting module draws data from both businesses' critical systems to enable fast data analysis for management. This has enabled the manufacturer to roll out a multi-site version of netCenter to three other distribution centres enabling full reporting visibility.

The integrated view offered by the system has made the customer service operation much more efficient. This has brought significant benefits to customers as well as the manufacturer's own operations. Customer service issues are dealt with much more quickly, and proactive decisions can be made to ensure service levels are met. Customers feel better treated and the logistics operation can run more smoothly, with less firefighting. In addition, according to the Logistics Systems Development Manager, at least one 'full time equivalent' (FTE) has been saved in the creation of KPI reports, with many more savings expected as the system rolls out to a wider user base.

ICS Framework Solutions

ICS provides a unique application solution service in Microsoft .NET technology - the Framework Solution - a radical alternative to commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) packages and bespoke developments.

Traditional Buy vs. Build Argument

COTS packages offer both benefits and problems: they are proven solutions, tested by the market, which improve as new features are released; but they often force an organisation into particular business processes that may not be entirely suitable, and they tie the customer into expensive maintenance charges from the original supplier. Bespoke developments, on the other hand, are more expensive to develop and improve, but they can be shaped to support business processes in the most efficient way and to give an organisation competitive advantage.

Framework Solutions - Buy AND Build

ICS takes the elements of COTS and bespoke packages to create its framework model of solution delivery. Our library of re-usable .NET components and SQL server stored procedures range from entire modules, such as Contact Management, to granular elements such as Calendar applets. In the same way that a construction project uses a mixture of assembly and bespoke building, our libraries of components form the fundamental building blocks of the applications we deliver. They can be arranged and customised according to specific business requirements, thereby enabling robust enterprise application packages to be delivered extremely rapidly.

Customer-Owned Source Code

Unlike our competitors we not only deliver the run time code for the application, but transfer ownership of the source code to the customer, allowing them to modify and develop the application further if they wish. This means the traditional long term tie-in to the supplier is removed, and the customer becomes truly self sufficient. Framework Solutions offer faster development and implementation combined with lower on-costs - a truly innovative customer-oriented approach from ICS.

ICS is BSI ISO 9001:2000 certified, a Unisys strategic partner, and a Microsoft® Gold Certified Partner.

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