

## Empirica WMS supports business innovation at Winterbotham Darby



Winterbotham Darby is an award-winning supplier of high quality continental foods to the retail and food service sectors. The company originally implemented Empirica WMS from Chess in 2008 at its main warehouse in Redhill, with voice-enabled order picking added in 2012. It has continued to innovate with recent enhancements including pick-for-store order processing for major retailers and refinement of voice-enabled picking to improve productivity.

### Challenge

- Winterbotham Darby wanted to continue to enhance the Empirica WMS solution installed in 2008 to further improve supply chain operations.
- A key requirement was to enhance the voice directed solution by streamlining the voice dialogue and reduce the time needed for conveying and confirming actions.
- The company also wanted to introduce innovative operational methods to simplify operations and support enhanced customer service.
- A further objective was to integrate two new remote businesses and extend the use of Empirica to manage these operations.

### Solution

- Chess undertook detailed work with Winterbotham Darby to understand how information is captured and the format in which it is transmitted and interpreted by their customers.
- Empirica is integrated with Winterbotham Darby's core business applications, including Lake View ERP and FuturMaster Supply Chain Management.
- Data from all applications was used to reconfigure the warehouse layout so that frequently picked items were located nearer the marshalling area.

- Chess has also implemented Empirica at Winterbotham Darby's Deli Solutions and Alatoni businesses with a common platform operating across all sites.

### Benefits

- The enhancements made have led to incremental improvements in picking rates with no reduction in accuracy.
- The latest wireless headsets have highly efficient noise-reduction capability that eliminates many misunderstood instructions, again leading to small gains in performance.
- Pick-for-store order processing with integration of advance shipping notices have simplified fulfilment processes and shortened lead times.
- Refinement of voice-enabled picking has resulted in improved productivity.
- Pick-paths are optimised so that, on average, operatives walk shorter distances between picks, thus reducing the time to pick a full order.
- The ability to fulfill orders consistently, quickly and predictably was a critical business objective and has been achieved.

### At A Glance

#### Key company facts:

**Industry:** Food & Food Service.

**Location:** Redhill, UK.

**Application:** Empirica WMS with voice enabled order picking.

#### Benefits:

- Improved picking rates with no reduction in accuracy.
- Simplified fulfilment processes and shortened lead times.
- Improved productivity including optimised pick-paths.
- Detailed reporting has delivered a more versatile operation.
- Common platform operating across multiple businesses.
- Improved stock visibility and improved availability for customers.



Winterbotham Darby originally implemented the Empirica WMS from Chess in 2008 at its main warehouse in Redhill, with voice-enabled order picking added in 2012.

“Many of our processes are based around the warehouse and the WMS is pivotal because it gives us the ability to control stock on a real time basis,” says Ian Render, operations manager at Winterbotham Darby. “We integrated Empirica to ensure those processes are supported by a robust structure that works well.”

“Voice picking has been hugely beneficial,” adds David Bettison, group WMS manager at Winterbotham Darby. “Our labour resource has remained static for the last 18 months, during which time we have seen volume growth which has been achievable due to the voice picking solution that has continued to provide productivity improvements and operational efficiencies.

“Empirica provides a number of reports, including full allocations and short orders, and supports back picking which makes our operation more versatile. Picking later in the day is possible, which enhances our ability to fulfil orders quickly. Empirica also reports on labour and productivity so we can identify who does what, when and where. With these tools we can manage expectations.”

Winterbotham Darby has also been using Empirica to support innovations focused on enhanced customer service. With one of its major multiple customers, for example, it now picks orders directly into roll cages destined for each store in the retailer’s network. These cages are despatched to the customer’s regional distribution centres where they are cross-docked into delivery vehicles. This simplifies the operation by removing the need for the distribution centres to process orders and double-handle items, thereby reducing potential receipting errors and product damage.

Orders received and processed by Lake View ERP are automatically forwarded to Empirica, which schedules and allocates tasks to ensure items are picked in time for despatch. Once an order is completed the WMS generates an Advance Shipping Notice (ASN) that is automatically sent to the customer. The system is so accurate that the customer has no need for further checks as the cages arrive at its RDC.

“We did a lot of work with Chess to understand how information is captured, the format in which it is transmitted and then interpreted by our customer,” says David Bettison. “With this particular customer we know a cage is correct and we only need to do one scan. The customer receives the ASN and can quickly see if any data is wrong. We told Chess what we wanted and they set up the interfaces.”

Winterbotham Darby also plans to use Empirica to track and monitor IBCs at its Deli Solutions business. The IBCs will be given RFID barcodes which will work with Empirica to record when containers arrive or leave, are diverted to maintenance, and how many times they have been used.

Looking to the future, Winterbotham Darby is investigating new ways of using Empirica WMS to support business innovation. These include, for example, voice-enabling more processes, picking at separate sites from a common dataset, and new fulfilment services for retailers to support smaller, complementary suppliers.

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We are always looking for the WMS to support our requirements whatever they may be. Chess can accommodate our ways of working and have offered us the flexibility and adaptability to meet our customers’ requirements.

Ian Render, Operations Manager at Winterbotham Darby

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Chess Logistics Technology Limited has provided software for logistics and distribution applications for nearly 30 years and is recognised as a specialist in its field. The company has an extensive client list of national and international companies.

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