



Welspun improves stock control and order picking performance



Welspun is one of the UK's oldest and biggest suppliers of towels, linen and soft-furnishing products. Following relocation to a new 14,000m² distribution centre in Manchester the company introduced the Empirica WMS from Chess with full RF module. Resulting stock accuracy increased to over 99 per cent and gave managers real-time visibility to help them allocate resources more effectively.

Challenge

- Welspun manufactures its products at factories in the UK and overseas and these are consolidated into the distribution centre before delivery to customers.
- Expansion led the company to relocate to a new 14,000m² distribution centre in Openshaw, Manchester.
- The previous warehouse had simple low bay storage, but the new facility was more complex, equipped with eight metre high racking providing 5,000 bulk locations and 5,000 pick faces.
- Welspun recognised the importance of adopting a more advanced WMS to provide a number of business and operational benefits longer term.

Solution

- Core objectives included the delivery of real-time control and visibility of stock management, goods in, order picking and other key warehouse processes with greater accuracy across all routes to market, including a web-based operation.
- The company looked at various potential solutions before the Empirica WMS from Chess emerged as the preferred option based on its ability to provide a total solution.

- Chess proposed an implementation of Empirica with full RF barcode scan facilities and managed the overall deployment, including selecting an RF hardware partner, migrating old system data and integrating with Welspun's specialist Texpro software.

Benefits

- Stock accuracy improved from around 94 to over 99 per cent, which led to an increase in overall efficiency in the warehouse with far fewer mistakes being made.
- Accurate real-time stock visibility provides Welspun with a better overall view of its operations and means that the company can manage incoming suppliers more effectively and respond more quickly to its customers' requirements.
- The Empirica WMS also provides Welspun with better task visibility for managers to see work schedules in real-time, improving allocation of resources to meet delivery commitments.
- Metrics show individual operatives' pick performance allowing managers to identify process improvement opportunities, such as changing pick face layouts to optimise pick-paths.

At A Glance

Key company facts:

Industry: Consumer & Retail.

Location: Openshaw, Manchester, UK.

Application: Empirica WMS with hand held RF terminals.

Benefits:

- Stock accuracy increased to over 99 per cent.
- Real-time visibility and total control over task scheduling.
- Efficient allocation of resources to meet delivery commitments.
- Effective support of all routes to market for a 360-degree view of the operation.
- Detailed management reporting gives opportunities to improve process and procedures.



With brands including the world-famous Christy range, Welspun is one of the UK's oldest and biggest suppliers of towels, linen and soft-furnishing products. In addition to its own ranges the company supplies branded items to many well-known retailers.

Welspun relocated to its new 150,000ft² (14,000m²) distribution centre in Openshaw, Manchester where the company receives products from its factories in the UK and overseas. The previous warehouse had simple low bay storage but the new facility was more complex with racking up to eight metres high providing 5,000 bulk bin locations and 5,000 pick faces.

The company looked at various potential WMS solutions before Empirica emerged as the preferred option based on its ability to provide a total solution. Chess proposed an implementation of Empirica that included full RF facilities with barcode scanners. This aimed to deliver real-time control and visibility of stock management, goods in, order picking and other key warehouse processes with much greater accuracy.

Graham Naismith, Supply Chain Operations Executive at Welspun, takes up the story:

"We liked the Chess approach and they spent a lot of time with us to understand the operation. As such they showed that they understood our business model and had the scope to meet our requirements."

Chess managed the overall implementation, selected the hardware partner for the RF equipment, transferred data from the old system and integrated the application with Welspun's specialist Texpro software.

The application delivered a number of benefits to Welspun. Stock accuracy improved from around 94 to over 99 per cent, and led to increased overall efficiency in the warehouse. Accurate real-time stock visibility provides Welspun with a better overall view of its operations which means it can manage incoming supplies more effectively and respond more quickly to customer requirements.

Empirica also provides Welspun with better task visibility. Managers can see tasks and work schedules in real-time so that resources can be allocated flexibly to meet delivery commitments more easily. An on-screen traffic light system shows which tasks are on or behind schedule.

In addition, Empirica provides a wide range of performance information. For example, metrics showing individual operatives' pick rates allow managers to identify areas where underlying issues may offer opportunities for process improvements such as changing the layout of the pick faces to optimise pick-paths.

"Because of this visibility we can move resources for optimum efficiency and performance," says Graham Naismith.

The Empirica WMS supports all routes to market for the business from its traditional delivery operation through to a growing web-based presence. The business currently picks around 2,000 orders each month with a total of 500,000 items.

"We didn't have a lot of training but the system is easy to navigate and use," says Graham Naismith. "We have found ways of working for ourselves to improve performance in the warehouse and there have been no issues with speed or capacity since the new system went live."



The system has delivered everything Chess promised and we have seen lots of benefits. From my point of view it has been the most successful implementation we have had in this business and it's delivered the efficiency we wanted.

Graham Naismith, Supply Chain Operations Executive at Welspun

