



# A HOLISTIC APPROACH IS KEY TO IMPROVING BUSINESS EFFICIENCIES IN THE SUPPLY CHAIN

**Josh Makan, CEO - WCS & Ian Maughan, Managing Director - Supply Chain Network**

In today's highly competitive, multi-channel, marketplace the primary focus of most businesses will be making improvements to the quality of their customer service. To achieve this, many organisations are introducing wide-ranging process improvement initiatives.

Where business maturity results in an increase in supply chain activity, a point is reached whereby the adoption of suitable technologies, including automated warehousing and sophisticated execution systems, becomes a pre-requisite to efficient and cost-effective operating.

The most comprehensive way to deliver long term cost savings, whilst delivering strong customer service and quality improvements, is through the adoption of the right technologies positioned to deliver capacity for growth into the long term.

## A WMS IS ONLY PART OF THE PICTURE

Implementation of a WMS is often seen as the all-encompassing answer to delivering total efficiency in the warehouse. This is somewhat true, but is only part of the picture. WCS have recently partnered with

UK consulting practice Supply Chain Network, to deliver a more holistic approach to delivering operational efficiency and optimisation.

Taking a look at the types of businesses that often look to make step changes through the adoption of advanced technologies, they generally fall into these categories:

- Tier one businesses who have advanced supply chains and systems but want to take further advantage of new technologies - which may include automation, robots, VR and drone technology to name a few.
- Mid / low tier businesses that have reached a point in their organic growth where change is necessary to create an operating model that can sustain continued growth. Operations have grown through necessity but have never been fully evaluated or professionally designed to best support the customer delivery aspirations.
- Any business that faces significant growth through acquisition or significant up-scaling into new markets or territories.

When considering a holistic approach to delivering change in all of these circumstances, our approach is considered over these 3 areas:

- **Concept Design** – What is the right solution to meet the specific customer needs?
- **Execution** – How is the change best executed and opportunities leveraged to deliver earliest investment return?
- **Delivery** – How is the operation positioned to deliver the benefits, including positioning of the most effective execution systems and processes?

Before engaging any discussions around specific systems and technologies, it is necessary to fully 'discover' the needs of the business in the immediate, medium and long term. To fully understand this, our discovery journey is designed to understand the key operational components:

- **Product** – What does the product look like, from a volumetric perspective but also in how the product is serviced to the customer in terms of the customer journey and service promise?
- **Property** – Is the physical building, fit-out, organisation and technologies a best-fit solution for the product and its market?
- **Process** – Do operational and system processes and solutions represent best practice operating to service the product and the customer delivery requirement?
- **People** – Are resources fully optimised, measured and analysed in a way that provides insight for effective future operational planning and how well does the operation react to change? Are automated technologies appropriate to streamline or optimise traditionally manual operating practices?

Following a very detailed discovery phase, and armed with a very thorough understanding of the day in the life of the business, we can begin to think about optimal solutions design. Businesses can then choose to leverage sophisticated design, modelling and simulation capabilities to create an 'optimal' solution for its operation.

Where advanced automation technologies are appropriate, modelling and simulating the expected results and projected return on investment is a pre-requisite which allows businesses to make very informed decisions based on detailed outputs and capacity analysis. Once the optimal warehouse design is understood, the focus should then be on providing the best execution systems, tailored and configured in line with the solution.

Best of breed execution and WMS systems are highly configurable and have the capability to deliver interaction with advanced automation technologies, whilst having a pedigree of best of breed core warehousing functions, measurement and reporting.

In a cautionary conclusion, delivering a best of breed WMS solution aligned to a fully evaluated concept design can deliver fully 'optimal' solutions. Approached in this order the business can drive the details of the solution however, when this holistic approach is missed, very often operations end up constrained by solutions not fully optimised or aligned to the business need.

## ABOUT WCS & SUPPLY CHAIN NETWORK

WCS work with Supply Chain Network to travel the 'customer journey' together and ensure that the customer receives the best solution possible from end to end. We have worked together with a number of clients to prepare their operations ahead of installing WMS, or to evaluate appropriate new technologies to current clients who want to stay ahead of their competition by adopting fully optimised solutions. A holistic approach, we conclude, is the key to a successful and robust technology implementation.



**Talk to Josh today during the networking breaks or contact the company via: [sales@wwchain.com](mailto:sales@wwchain.com)**