

November 2007

AquiTec's supply chain solution delivers on time for 3PL provider Lloyd Fraser Group

AquiTec's SCM Warehouse™ is implemented within ten days at Rugby distribution centre

Lloyd Fraser provides quality third party logistics services to customers in the retail, food and bulk liquids industries, with 1,600 staff operating over one million square feet of warehouse space at 33 sites nationwide. In a highly-competitive market-place, Lloyd Fraser has built its success on building sustainable relationships with customers by offering a more innovative solution at a better cost than its competitors. This approach is helping the company win new business in key vertical markets with further significant growth expected in the near future.

When, as part of its growth strategy Lloyd Fraser acquired a new 70,000 sq ft distribution centre in Rugby, Staffordshire, England, the challenge was to introduce a Warehouse Management System that would provide total visibility of inventory, close management control and comprehensive reporting features – within an extremely tight timescale.

In addition, Lloyd Fraser wanted a solution that would help it to optimise the space in the multi-user warehouse environment that brings together strategically similar customers under one roof. Rapid deployment and fast ROI were also significant factors.

Les Corbett, Group Systems Manager explains, "Our whole proposition is about giving our customers a competitive edge through reduced costs, improved control, and faster movement of products. We needed a WMS that could quickly start to deliver commercial benefits immediately and pay for itself within a matter of months."

Finally, Lloyd Fraser needed to ensure the WMS system could be installed with minimal disruption to the warehouse operation. Les Corbett continues: "Our key requirements can be summed up in a few words - flexibility, functionality, speed and simplicity."

Rapid Configuration Warehouse Management System

After looking at the options available, Lloyd Fraser opted to become the first customer to install AquiTec's rapid configuration SCM Warehouse WMS, which is specifically designed to deliver a rapid Return on Investment for mid-market organisations with complex distribution operations.

SCM Warehouse incorporates the same rich functionality as AquiTec's SCM Manager solution, based on a thirty-year heritage of delivering supply chain solutions to the retail, wholesale and distribution industries. The browser-based solution is designed to help mid-market operations maintain visibility and control of stock levels, stock mix and availability and to deliver benefits including space optimisation and management information, as well as labour and transport planning.

"AquiTec has traditionally served large companies. When we decided to make our expertise and functionality available to the mid-tier market, we knew that speed of deployment and rapid ROI would be key requirements. That is why we felt IBM Express Runtime on Linux would be an ideal environment for our new SCM suite," explained Bruce Putman, General Manager of AquiTec.

SCM Warehouse runs on IBM Express Runtime, which combines IBM WebSphere Application Server – Express and IBM DB2 Universal Database Express Edition. A key design criterion of SCM Warehouse is SOA and the ease of integration and accessibility with other systems.

"IBM Express Runtime offers huge competitive advantage to the mid-market sector, bringing advanced functionality previously available only to large enterprises, within the reach of smaller companies by lowering the cost of ownership," added Putman.

Tight Timescales

Les Corbett takes up the story, "We asked some tough questions of AquiTec. We needed to be totally convinced they could meet a challenging requirement within an extremely tight timescale. In fact, the speed and smoothness of the implementation exceeded all our expectations. The new WMS went live in just ten days, enabling business as usual at the Rugby warehouse."

AquiTec was able to agree the terms of reference for the system using a proven and sophisticated road-map, developed using the experience gained by implementing WMS systems throughout the world. SCM Warehouse was configured off-site, and then installed as soon as the hardware became available. This was then followed up with user training, enabled by the system's browser-based format. The whole process was completed within ten days.

Bruce Putman explains: "IBM Runtime allows us to offer a solution that is much simpler to implement and administer than traditional WMS systems. This approach proved extremely compelling to a 3PL customer like Lloyd Fraser who can pass on these benefits to their own customers. And of course because less learning is involved they can be up and running in days, rather than weeks, or even months in the case of traditional WMS installations."

Closer collaboration with customers

Lloyd Fraser says the browser-based capabilities of AquiTec's solution will enable it to drive closer collaboration with its customers through the provision of mission-critical management information and business intelligence. Lloyd Fraser is able to review the system from remote locations and from any desktop within the business. The base product supports multiple interfaces for data upload and extraction and comes with a staggering depth of standard reports.

AquiTec has been Lloyd Fraser's preferred WMS technology provider since 2004. According to Les Corbett, Group Systems Manager, the new installation will consolidate a close partnership between the two companies:

"AquiTec continues to build on its 30-year heritage to deliver innovative solutions that meet the needs of today's market-place. We believe that SCM Warehouse is the most advanced web-based WMS system currently available, combining high end functionality with the ability to deliver real-time information across the enterprise, allowing us to increase supply chain visibility and build even closer collaboration with our customers. Our success is based on continuous investment in our IT capabilities to help our customers drive costs down and derive competitive advantage from their logistics operations. AquiTec is helping us deliver on that promise."

Bruce Putman, General Manager of AquiTec adds:

"The warehouse is playing an increasingly strategic role within the supply chain. In addition to improving efficiencies within the warehouse, companies need access to real-time management information and to integrate their Warehouse Management Systems with other systems within the enterprise to increase visibility and control throughout the supply chain. SCM Warehouse is designed to meet this need."

Ends

About AquiTec

AquiTec has a 30-year proven track record in providing supply chain management software. AquiTec's customers include many of the UK's leading high street and multiple retailers, such as B&Q, Focus DIY, Musgraves (Eire) and Woolworths. Its products help companies reduce supply chain costs and enhance customer satisfaction by improving the management and control of inventory throughout the supply chain. AquiTec provides global services and support from its offices in the UK, US and South Africa.

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