



UNITED SUGARS

“Just-In-Time delivery is a big responsibility for us, but with RedPrairie’s Transportation Management, we’re a lot more confident that we’ll deliver.”

Roger Perala,
Business Systems Manager, United Sugars

The Customer

When United Sugars Corporation, the largest marketer of beet sugar and second largest overall marketer of sugar in the United States, needed a sophisticated transportation management system, it selected RedPrairie's Transportation Management.

United Sugars ships beet sugar from nine sites in the Red River Valley of North Dakota and Minnesota and cane sugar out of Clewiston, Florida. United Sugars' customers are world leaders in the candy, baking, cereal, dairy, and beverage industries.

The Challenge

United Sugars needed a transportation system to help it manage multiple shipping sites, two primary means of transportation, and hundreds of shipments per day—all while accommodating customer needs for just-in-time delivery.

"We were running 430 to 470 truckloads a day, scrambling just to get the no-brainer stuff out the door," said Roger Perala, United Sugars business systems manager, recalling the struggles the company faced dealing with diverse logistics needs.

The company uses the R/3 enterprise resource planning (ERP) system from SAP to manage its business operations. Previously, United Sugars relied on textual information when processing orders—a slow process that made it hard to keep up with customer requirements.



Once installed, TMS delivered immediate results. The system automates distribution functions, and has permitted 75% of United Sugars' business to be processed without human involvement.

"We've got production lines counting on us to deliver sugar into their manufacturing processes. If we don't deliver on time, we could shut down a plant."

Roger Perala
Business Systems Manager, United Sugars

Customer inquiries were also difficult to handle. "If a carrier called for a load out of Minneapolis, we didn't always know if we had any or not," stated Rocky Wagendorf, business analyst for United Sugars. "And if we did, how many?"

The Solution

To address these challenges, United Sugars searched for a transportation management system (TMS) with sophisticated planning and execution capabilities that would work well with SAP. Perala found an excellent complement in RedPrairie's Transportation Management, an integrated solution for end-to-end logistics management.

RedPrairie's Transportation Management has a special interface that is certified by SAP and provides seamless integration between the systems. The interface enables Transportation Management to provide real-time information to SAP such as freight pricing and transit times. It also uploads shipment documentation and communicates rail routing and tariff authority information to SAP and to carriers.

In addition to system connectivity, Perala said what made RedPrairie's solution attractive was its flexible modelling options. With 70 percent of its product being distributed by rail and the rest by truck, United Sugars needed rating engines for two modes of transport. "That was a feature no one else had but RedPrairie," noted Perala.

Once installed, Transportation Management delivered immediate results. The system automates distribution functions, such as carrier assignment and load tendering, and has permitted 75 percent of United Sugars' business to be processed without human involvement. Planners are only required to handle exceptions and are alerted to these automatically.

"The system allows users to work proactively to resolve issues almost instantly," said Perala. As a result, United Sugars' has reduced labor requirements and is able to handle rush orders more readily.

Communicating with carriers was another challenge, but the EDI notices provided by the system eliminated miscommunication problems. In fact, the company's on-time shipping rate leapt from 88 percent to 99 percent within four months.

The bottom line is that using the system enables United Sugars to improve customer service within its diverse logistics environment. "Just-In-Time delivery is a big responsibility for us and because of Transportation Management, we're a lot more confident that we'll deliver," concluded Perala.

The Results

RedPrairie provided Transportation Management, a comprehensive logistics solution that manages all aspects of the transportation cycle.

Key Benefits include:

- Improved customer service - on-time shipping has risen to 99%, allowing United Sugars to support customers' just-in-time deliveries.
- Reduced labor - 75% of their business is now processed without human involvement.
- Automated distribution functions - including carrier assignment and load tendering.
- Flexible modeling - system handles rail or truck shipping.
- Positioned for tomorrow - power to redefine parameters on the fly, control its own destiny, and accommodate growth.

For more information

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