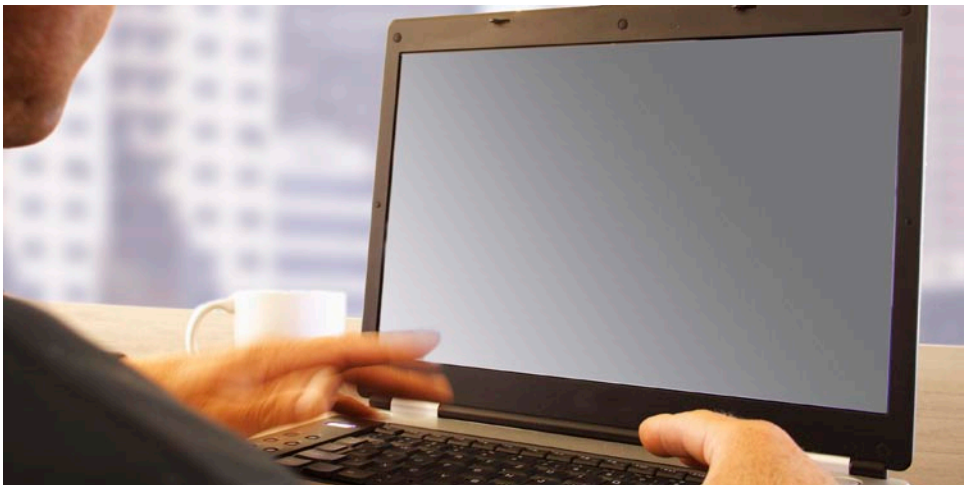


XMA

"RedPrairie provides a complete solution for warehouse management from a single, integrated suite. It significantly improves efficiency through real-time event management and enables us to tailor our service to meet any customer requirement."

Chris Byrne,
Group Logistics Manager, XMA

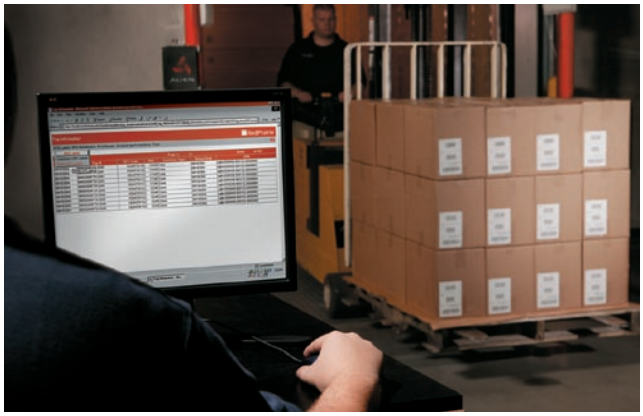
The Customer

XMA operates as a specialist IT company, providing computer equipment, supplies and services to businesses, the public sector and schools and colleges. With more than 20 years experience, the company offers a wide range of solutions that are tailor-made to meet any customer requirement. XMA's philosophy is to solve its customers IT needs, support all customers to a consistently high standard and excel in everything it does to maintain its reputation as the IT partner of choice.

The Challenge

XMA was seeking an automated, scalable, RF technology controlled warehouse management solution capable of running a multi-site, multi-customer, real-time environment. The company needed to address the following challenges:

- Functional limitations and high costs of its largely paper-based, labour-intensive legacy warehouse management system.
- Lack of real-time stock visibility or business overview.
- Difficulty of monitoring staff productivity and identifying which processes were slowing down performance.
- Inability of its existing solution to scale to meet growth averaging 10% per annum.
- No integration between warehouse management processes and Sage Tetra, its ERP system.
- Need to close warehouse for two days each year for annual stock take.



Using Warehouse Management gives XMA a real-time view of the 100,000 transactions that take place every day at its warehouses.

The Solution

RedPrairie worked with XMA's IT team to deliver a roadmap for project roll-out using its addeptTM methodology that identifies the lowest risk implementation, taking into account timescales, business needs and client resources. Following a pilot implementation of Warehouse Management carried out by RedPrairie, XMA's own team completed roll-out at its first warehouse in just four and a half months. Warehouse Management went live at XMA's second site one year later.

Upon arrival at XMA's depot, each pallet's barcode is scanned using a truck-mounted RDT scanner, which receives it in to the Warehouse Management system. Instructions appear on the screen, directing the warehouse operative to store the items at the closest available location to the pick-face. Warehouse Management's intelligent storage calculation capabilities mean that most pallets are transported directly to their storage destination in a single movement. Putaway has been speeded up considerably by limiting movements in the warehouse.

Warehouse Management is easily configured to meet specific operational requirements. XMA has used the RDT screen editor to redesign the standard display, making the commands most frequently needed visible on the first page. Eliminating the need for pickers to tab down the display to view the next instruction has saved an average of 10 seconds per pick and increased picker productivity by 20%. In certain picking zones productivity has increased by 300%.

Warehouse Management's flexible picking options enable orders to be load picked, wave picked or order picked, to ensure that the most urgent shipments are completed first, while minimising forklift truck movements in the depot. Some of XMA's customers make use of its express delivery service that allows them to place orders by 18.30 and receive the goods by 21.30 the same evening. Warehouse Management prioritises picking to

ensure that orders are picked according to their urgency and destination. Orders for Scotland or Northern Ireland are automatically picked first while orders destined for customers in and around Nottingham are completed last.

Using Warehouse Management gives XMA a real-time view of the 100,000 transactions that take place every day at its warehouses. As well as optimising efficiency and cutting operational costs by 33%, the company has cut order errors by 85%. The number of unfulfilled orders has also been virtually eliminated.

The legacy system gave XMA an accurate tally of all items in the warehouse only once a year following its annual stock take. Warehouse Management ensures the company has a complete, realtime picture of the items stored at each of its 10,000 locations, and updates it each time a transaction takes place. In addition, Warehouse Management enables XMA's two stock controllers to count all the items in each depot every 17 days.

XMA uses the user-friendly reporting and analysis tools in Reporter to analyse and report on performance in every part of the warehouse. User-driven reports are easily configured, produced and distributed to all users as required. Reporter has become an integral part of XMA's day-today management and longer term strategy planning. It is used to drill down into business processes and slice and dice data to deliver realtime information on any aspect of the business. Managers can analyse picks per hour, per picker or per location, identify busiest and slowest periods by day, week, month or year, pull off data on priority replenishments completed per hour and analyse any other business statistics they need.

Seamless interfacing between Warehouse Management and Sage Tetra has enabled XMA to create an integrated technology infrastructure for building end-to-end business processes and sharing data across the company. This reduced the need to re-enter data and helps lower administration costs.

XMA carries out its own first-line support for all users of Warehouse Management during the daytime. Problems that occur during the night shift are referred directly to RedPrairie's help desk for resolution.

XMA evaluated solutions from three leading vendors. According to XMA, RedPrairie was chosen for its comprehensive functionality and the successful track record of Warehouse Management among other distributors of computer hardware and services in Europe. Additionally, RedPrairie's consultants demonstrated extensive experience developing solutions for IT companies and an in-depth understanding of XMA's business and its needs. All products in the Warehouse Management suite integrate seamlessly with Sage Tetra, XMA's ERP system, eliminating the need to build and maintain multiple interfaces. XMA plans to extend its use of Warehouse Management's core capabilities to streamline and enhance depot processes still further. Volumetric clustering is being introduced to enable picking tasks to be grouped intelligently, according to the volume and weight of the goods and the packing boxes. Greater use will be made of the complier module to create labels and documentation. XMA also plans to use the vehicle loading and yard manager capabilities of Warehouse Management to integrate transport and warehouse management within a single platform.

The Results

- Implementation 25% faster using RedPrairie consultants.
- Staff productivity increased in certain areas by up to 300%.
- Warehouse operational costs reduced by 33%.
- 100% on-time despatch for all orders.
- 20% faster picking.
- Order errors down by 85%.
- Full stock count every 17 days instead of once a year.
- Seamless integration with Sage Tetra ERP system.

For more information

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