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SOFTWARE SYSTEMS



SMOOTH OPERATION



Using Ten-25's STRIP5 software, builders merchant North Yorkshire Timber has simplified its stock operations and inter-branch trading operations, resulting in greater efficiencies



The secret to operating a successful, multi-branch builders merchant is knowing stock availability at different locations and keeping an accurate account of the movement of materials between branches.

Above all, the company needs to know what materials are dispatched, where they are taken from and where they are received, with company records updated immediately to safeguard the integrity of stock information at the point of sale.

Sixteen years ago, North Yorkshire Timber (NYT) decided to expand from a single site to become a multi-branch timber and light-side builders merchant. Then, around four years ago, the business decided to restructure to provide centralised distribution. Today, the company has six thriving branches.

Automated inter-branch trading

NYT realised it needed a new system that would automate inter-branch trading, save time and reduce the amount of paper transactions to achieve this; for example, eliminating the need for inter-branch orders when creating orders for the customers. The future system would need to be highly flexible and scalable since the company is actively seeking more sites. The ability to transfer goods and track deliveries while simultaneously updating the ledgers was the priority. Strip5 Trading, from Ten-25 Software, provided the ideal solution. NYT chose Ten-25 because of its "deep knowledge" of the timber merchants' sector, as well as offering a system that provided significant advances.

STRIP5 automatically tracks and reports the movement and cost of goods between branches. Before, due to centralised distribution, if a delivery were made from a branch, the branch would need to raise a separate delivery note for

inter-branch transfer after creating a customer order. The re-keying of the documents was vulnerable to accounting errors – one side of the transaction might work and the other might not, making it difficult to reconcile the figures.

With STRIP5, any branch can arrange delivery from another stock holding branch where the order is automatically created and this allows for the transfer of cost. The automated process reduces time, effort and mistakes. The improved process also allows more accurate analysis of transactions to help the company respond to business trends and plan ahead and respond to changing needs.

Purchase orders are automatically produced when sales orders are raised for 'direct' and 'back-to-back' deliveries for non-stocked items (specials). The Windows front end of Strip5 means accurately relating these details to credit and non-credit customers is also much easier and more reliable than before.

Other benefits

STRIP5 enables NYT to benefit from other streamlining capabilities. For example, each member of the sales team is responsible for setting up and maintaining price schedules for customers. Now, a further development, UniFILE, is in the pipeline and will allow the input of price schedules from Excel spreadsheets to reduce input time even further. Whereas, previously,

this was the preserve of a few skillful people, now anyone can do it. Intelligent search capability also reduces time by making it easier and faster for staff to search supplier product descriptions, codes and quantities.

Simplifying a complex business

NYT has to manage a diverse range of products in terms of timber types and dimensional specifications. During the process of business, these specifications change with bewildering regularity. By adding value to timber with on-site timber treatment, stress grading and machining processes, NYT adds to the challenge of managing a complex distribution operation.

Now, for the first time, the company can accurately account for the value of materials being transferred to and from branches as the company meets customer demand across the county. Alan Gulliver, financial director, said: "We are able to see the current situation, as dispatch and receipt of goods is reported in real time. The Enterprise system links the general ledger, purchase ledger and sales ledger and is a very powerful tool. It makes the accounts so much easier to manage now, as reflected by the rapid production of management accounts information."

With STRIP5, NYT has streamlined its inter-branch trading processes with integrated ledgers, improved accounting accuracy and has assisted in reducing stock holding by 20%.