



The Royal Treatment

Acclaimed distributor and wholesaler of discounted household goods, Regal Wholesale has successfully expanded its product range, improved operational efficiency and ventured into international markets; all thanks to a partnership spanning more than a decade with IT solution provider, Sanderson. The company is now thriving in the world of online ordering and enjoying annual growth of 18 per cent.

Visibility of stock at the click of a button, improved order management, sophisticated business intelligence to monitor and respond to customer behaviour, and an expansion in online sales; the Sanderson delivered wholesale IT solution, Swords, is helping Regal go from strength to strength.

Established in 1984 as a small family business specialising in the distribution of toilet roll seconds to retailers in the Merseyside area, Regal Wholesale has expanded its operations substantially. Regal has become a nationally renowned wholesaler and distributor of a wide range of discount branded household products, including toiletries, groceries, confectionery and soft drinks and has recently seen

a growth in international trade, with customers in 38 countries worldwide.

This is a robust business and in 30 years of trading the company has focused on sustainable growth rather than rapid expansion. Success is born out of prudent decision-making, as Project Manager, Alison James, explains. "We have a streamlined product range (currently 1,300) and people now come to Regal Wholesale because we have a reputation for stocking particular branded goods at the best prices."

The company expanded its warehouse capacity in 1991 and 1997, in response to growing demand and an increasing product range. Using an old DOS-based system, Regal Wholesale was struggling to

Case study at a glance

About Regal Wholesale

Nationally renowned wholesaler of discounted and branded goods.

Challenges

- Implement system to support warehouse expansion and business growth
- Increase visibility of stock
- Improve order management and customer service
- Reduce inefficient and costly manual processes
- Grow online sales

Solutions

- Swords Wholesale Distribution System
- Online Ordering
- Radio Frequency (RF) System
- Business Intelligence
- Zone Picking

Benefits

- Costly stock control errors reduced by 90 per cent
- 10 per cent online sales growth inside three months
- Increased profit margin
- National and international trading strengthened with 24/7 online ordering



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Project Manager

get the information it needed to run the business. “We had a limited system for stock control, and sales and purchase ledgers, plus we required a system which could grow with the business. We chose Swords because it provided everything we needed from a fully integrated system,” says Alison. As soon as the company implemented the Sanderson solution, things changed dramatically.

Instant visibility

The company had instant visibility of its operations and efficiency was massively improved as a result: “From the moment you put an order into Swords, to the moment it’s dispatched, being able to see its progress up and down the chain eradicates any guesswork,” says Alison. “It makes everything much slicker and saves huge amounts of time. Before, we didn’t even know if an order was being picked.”

The implementation itself was controlled and streamlined. “It was hard work but pretty much trouble free,” says Alison, which she attributes to a combination of careful planning and the quality of support from Sanderson. “Because it was a big project, we specified the detail of what we needed in advance. The key thing was the training Sanderson gave; it made the process far easier,” she recalls.

Warehouse efficiency

The wholesaler recently relocated to a purpose built warehouse facility, increasing floor space from 28,000 to 45,000 square feet and adding 1.5 metres to the 7.5 metre height of its former premises. To coincide with the move, Regal added zone picking to its Sword’s functionality, complementing the RF scanning introduced some years earlier, and bringing significant improvements in warehouse efficiency, stock control and customer service.

Handheld RF devices mean warehouse staff are instantly updated with tasks, transmitted in location

order to help speed up picking time: “For goods inwards we are able to scan deliveries straight off the truck, adding to the efficiency of new dock loading bays which has reduced unloading time from 3 hours to just 20 minutes since the move,” explains Alison. “And zone picking is helping us manage orders much better.” The Swords system is configured so that any orders that equate to more than 75 per cent of the pick face are taken directly from the bulk location. It halves the time spent picking the order, plus we don’t have people waiting around to drop stock. That makes a massive difference.” To increase efficiency further still, Regal makes the use of direct order entry for full vehicle load orders, which can be sent straight from the manufacturer.

International export orders have propelled Regal into a higher level of wholesale trading but because these orders can be large as well as ad-hoc, they have potential to impact Regal’s traditional business. With the



Sanderson system in place, Regal is able to maintain its reputation for exemplary service among existing customers at the same time as managing export orders. "We have a commitment to regular daily orders. Swords provides a picking monitor program, so if we get a surprise order from an export customer that's going to take 23 hours to pick, it lets us know the estimated time and we can then make arrangements within the business to ensure we meet the needs of all customers on time."

Picking errors eliminated

As well as eliminating picking errors, the RF devices also provide traceability of 'sensitive' (high value) items such as razors, as well as food and toiletries with 'best before' dates. But one of the biggest gains for the company since the introduction of RF functionality has been the annual stock take. This activity had proved incredibly time consuming, taking weeks of preparation and mistakes could take some time to rectify.

Now, the Swords system allows stock levels to be monitored continuously through controlled warehouse management with in-built integrity checks, completely removing the need for an annual stock take, as well as the pain and cost that goes with it. "Using Swords we've reduced stock take discrepancies by 90 per cent because it's much easier and quicker to identify the errors now, even though the amount of stock we carry has increased massively."

The system continues to deliver for Regal and the introduction of Swords Business Intelligence 10 years ago has completely reshaped the company's business strategy. Customer & supplier profiling allows the company to market products to individuals more effectively, as buying habits are monitored. "It's incredibly user friendly and we can forecast and target promotions in a way that benefits both the customers and the business itself," says Alison.

And what of the future? Regal is currently evaluating voice order

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picking to gain further productivity improvements in the warehouse. It is also trialling the Swords mobile barcode scanner; this allows customers to scan product barcodes and upload orders to the online system directly, resulting in even more time saving as well as helping build a more cohesive picture of customer demand. The biggest focus for Regal is online trading and the Swords online ordering functionality is proving instrumental in helping the company access new markets.

Growing online sales

"Our efforts this year have been on improving the website and growing online sales and the web is becoming increasingly fundamental to our business," says Alison.

Indeed, online orders now represent 25 per cent of sales and the figure is growing rapidly following a recent upgrade to the website: the site now

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boasts improved product information, with enhanced images and an advanced search tool. "We've seen a 10 per cent increase in web sales inside three months, since we introduced Swords' improved online ordering functionality," says Alison.

This 24/7 access is making a big difference to international sales and there are benefits closer to home too, as Alison explains: "The web is making us a truly global company but it's also making us more efficient with our local and national accounts. The sales team is spending more time on trading rather than admin because customers can now go online to see what's in stock rather than calling us on the phone to check, plus it means we can focus on the larger, more profitable customers."

The Swords wholesale solution from Sanderson has underpinned Regal Wholesale's growth for more than a decade, from physical expansion to online trading. It's a partnership that continues to deliver impressive results: "Swords has provided the framework to facilitate growth that could not have otherwise been achieved. Visibility, efficiency, improved communication and an expanding online business presence have all helped open up new lines of opportunity. It really adds value to our business," concludes Alison.

About Regal Wholesale



Regal Wholesale is a family run business located in Wirral, Merseyside. A leading wholesaler and distributor, Regal Wholesale has been in the industry for 30 years and specialises in providing a wide range of branded household products such as toiletries, groceries and cleaning products at discount prices. Trading locally, nationally and in over 38 countries worldwide, Regal Wholesale is a trusted name when it comes to branded items sold at reasonable prices.



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