



Princes Case Study

BACKGROUND

Operating across 40 countries, Princes is the UK's leading importer of canned food and one of the country's largest soft drinks manufacturers. Princes brand names include the well-known Princes label, Napolina Italian foods and Shippams spreads, Aqua-Pura natural mineral water and Crisp 'n Dry cooking oil. Princes manufactures across nine production sites in the UK, supplying own brand juices, drinks and oils to many of the country's leading supermarkets.



Princes wanted a simpler solution; one which could be triggered by warehouse staff as they scanned the physical goods movements and loading, directly from their barcode devices.

The warehouse principally serves the Manchester manufacturing plant which produces fruit juice products

The core processes carried out by the warehouse are:

- Receipt and storage of raw material (packaging) materials
- Shipment of bulk packaging materials to the manufacturing plant
- Receipt of unused (part rolls) of packaging material from the plant
- Receipt of bulk finished goods from the manufacturing plant
- Picking and distribution to customers (supermarkets) throughout the UK

THE SOLUTION

Princes realised that the warehouse management solution template from iQlink was a good fit for their needs. All other solutions that they considered were more complex, requiring skilled resources (mainly ABAP programmers) and more time to implement. The iQlink solution also reduced the risk and the costs of support, and avoided the need for any additional middleware.

iQlink has enabled warehouse staff to scan stock / pallet labels and confirm transactions. The solution automates the 5 SAP transactions above, saving staff time and reducing errors.

Embedded within the solution is an interface management cockpit which enables the monitoring and reporting of problems associated with the automation of the linked transactions

In this way, any issues can be captured, data analysed and any problems rectified by the shift supervisors.

As well as some standard inventory movement / warehouse management transactions, Princes also wanted to use the SAP Stock Transport Order process to control the supply of raw materials to the plant. This process had already been successfully deployed in its pilot project, so was simple to implement at the DHL warehouse.

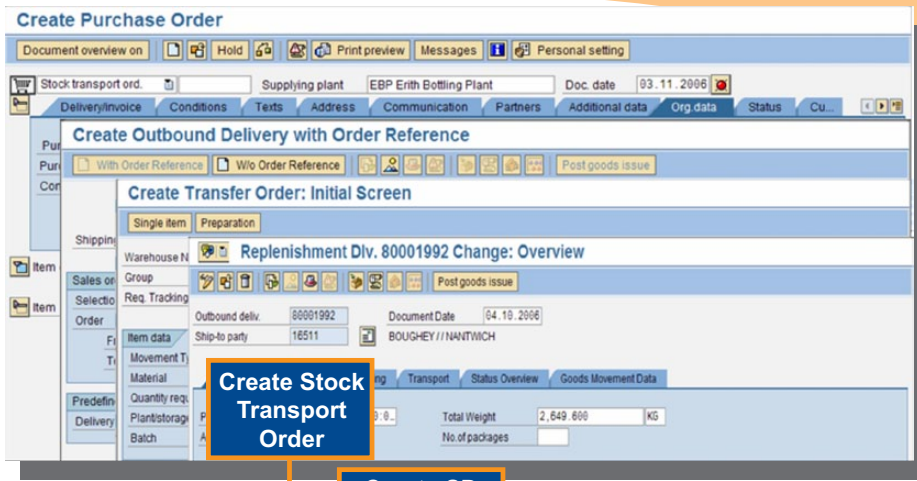
THE BUSINESS REQUIREMENT

In September 2006, Princes required a certified SAP solution to link SAP to RF bar code readers, equipping 18 people on 3 shifts with 6 devices at one of their small manufacturing plants in East London. Following this successful initial project, Princes has now implemented this solution at one of its main distribution warehouses in Trafford Park, Manchester, run and operated by third party logistics company DHL.

The warehouse has migrated from a legacy system to SAP WM (warehouse management) to bring the warehouse in line with their other operations. As part of the WM implementation, the objective was to streamline processes and automate high volume distribution and goods movements in SAP. Princes was keen to automate the warehouse and link stock and distribution information to its SAP system through the use of RF bar code readers which would help avoid errors, improve the efficiency of the warehouse and provide essential information to the rest of the business. Previously, Princes had been using a third party WMS, with an IDOC interface into SAP.

Princes uses SAP WM to manage the warehouse operation, but the SAP processes it wanted to replicate would have required several transactions, via screen entry, in order to dispatch goods.





Create SD Delivery

From this....

....to this

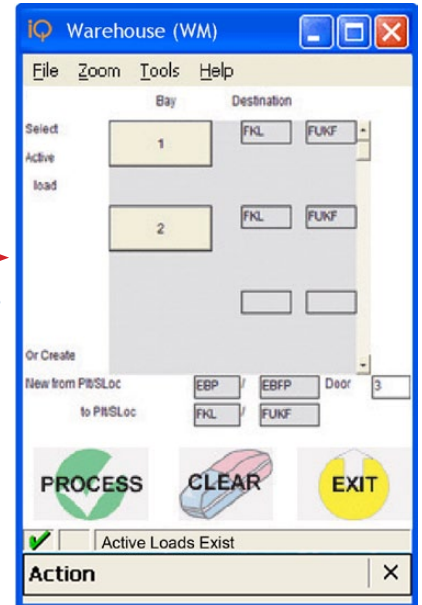
Create Transfer Order

Confirm Picking

Issue Stock

"It has simplified the warehouse process, improved stock accuracy, and empowered the users so that they no longer have to return to the office to report errors. Most importantly it is easy to use".

Rod Curtis - Stock First Line Manager at the warehouse.



The standard SAP stock transport order process would have involved the following transactions in SAP:

- Creation of a stock transport (Purchase order) from the Production Plant to Production Plant (PP)
- Creation of an SD delivery in the Production plant
- Creation of a Transfer Order in Warehouse Management
- Confirmation of the Transfer Order
- Confirmation of the "Post Goods Issue" in SD (sales and distribution)

By using the solutions from iQlink, Princes was able to initiate this process from the handheld scanner using simple to use screens. Triggered by an instruction sent from the device, the integration monitoring workbench was able to create and control the necessary SAP transactions, and ensure successful completion.

THE RESULTS AND BENEFITS

Princes has tailored iQlink's template solution to its requirements. Specific needs were easy to include in the implementation; for example adding a case label to scan at the end of each line, helping warehouse staff to scan the product with the correct product label and warn / prevent incorrect data entry.

In another process, transfer orders required for the replenishment of the pick face are pushed to the RF device to wait for the next user to action ensuring that replenishment takes place as soon as possible.

The implementation went smoothly, was delivered on time and on budget.

THE MAIN BENEFITS RECOGNISED BY PRINCES INCLUDE:

- The iQlink solution reduced Princes' overall costs, met its go-live timescales and minimised project risk
- Rapid application deployment
- User-friendly screens enhance the user experience, speeds processing and reduces errors
- Processes are automated and simplified; and the number of SAP screens are reduced helps to reduce errors and saves data entry time
- The solution is not too big for a small IT department to manage
- The framework will help Princes to save significant amounts of money as it implements similar solutions at its other warehouses; the solution is flexible enough to cater for changing business needs and requires little future investment

"I am so pleased with the implementation that it is my intention to roll more iQlink solutions out across the UK within the next year. The cost-benefit analysis is simple to calculate, I am expecting a rapid return on our investment"

Julian Bolton, Business Systems Manager, Princes.

THE FUTURE

Princes intends to implement the solution in its other warehouses across the group. Princes is also considering other solutions from iQlink, including electronic weigh-scale integration, materials handling and mobile workflow approvals.



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