



Warrens Warehousing & Distribution

UK specialist in storage, despatch and delivery of baker products, for major retailers including Tesco and Sainsbury's

Warrens handles substantial volumes of time-sensitive bakery products for the major retailers, including Tesco, Sainsbury's, Waitrose and Morrisons. The company is responsible for the collection, reception, storage, consolidation and delivery of 96% of Tesco's cakes and bakery products, as well as the supermarket chain's 'Free From' range of products.

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Antony Glenn
 IT Manager

The Challenges

Warrens acts as the vital link between its supermarket clients and their bakery suppliers. It uses its own haulage fleet to collect products from the bakery companies and deliver to its depots, and then consolidates and arranges deliveries to order, to the supermarkets' regional distribution centres. The company is handling goods that have a very short shelf life – there is no room for delays or mistakes with such fast-moving products. A large amount of what it handles comes into its depots and almost immediately goes out again on another trailer.

Until 2008, Warrens warehouse management processes were entirely based on fax, email and large old stock books. "We had got to the point where the growth was more than we could handle; we needed something to take over

from those big stock books," says Antony Glenn. "Also at around that time, Tesco announced that it would be requiring electronic information from its logistics providers, so from both sides we knew that the old procedures were no longer going to work for us and we had to do something. So we really took a massive leap from the dark ages into one of technology."

After a lengthy period of analysis and discussion lasting many months, Warrens took the decision to implement Access Delta. The system was in place and up and running by the end of 2008.

"The system we are now working with doesn't look much like what we started with," says Antony Glenn. "We have added elements along the way. It is a case of working out what we want – the Access Delta team will spec it out and tell us how much development and testing would be

Industry	Distribution
Geographic	HQ in London, main operations centre in Rugby
Employees	365
Turnover	circa £27 million
Solution	Access Delta RF Barcoding Warehouse map EDI

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required, and then we move forward. We have been incredibly demanding on some of the projects and thrown some really big curve balls at them. The result has put us in a great position in the market we operate in.”

A major issue was the clients’ requirement for Advance Notification – where the client requires a package of information before the load actually arrives. “We couldn’t find anyone else that could set that up for us. Access Delta said they would make it happen – and they did. We are now the only haulier delivering into Tesco and Sainsbury’s, consolidating orders, that can make this Advance Notification work. Other hauliers may make it work for full pallets of one product but not for multiple products and purchase orders to one pallet. That makes us trail-blazers in the sector.”

Warrens has four sites at Rugby and others at Bolton and Sheffield, and a haulage fleet of 130 vehicles and 170 trailers. The entire operation is based on Access Delta and bespoke systems developed by the Access team. “And it is absolutely fantastic,” says Antony. “Warrens Order Manager is entirely bespoke to us, as is the Advance Notification system.”

Tesco requires the use of the Serialised Shipping Container Code (SSCC) system for identifying pallets and their loads. This system identifies exactly what is on every pallet; Warrens achieves this by using laser scanning guns and bar coding, so that the quantity, details and ‘best before’ dates of every

product loaded onto any given pallet is all provided.

“We follow every item from receipt into our depots to when it is palletised and sent out,” says Antony.

A key advantage is that if a product needs to be recalled, Warrens can track exactly where each case has been delivered, providing retailers with the ability to identify which stores those products ultimately went to. “Without Access Delta, we would not be able to do SSCC,” he says. “It is seamless – it just happens in the background. When we create a pallet, we start adding products to it – and at the end, we print a label with the bar codes and product numbers, and attach it to the pallet.”

This system can also iron out any disputes about where, when or if a specific delivery was made. If there is a disagreement between supplier and supermarket, Warrens can demonstrate exactly where a product was and at what time, by tracking back through Access Delta, in tandem with its network of CCTV monitors.

“Previously, we might have had to accept liability for a product – but we don’t have to do that anymore because we are able to prove we have sent it,” explains Antony.

Return on Investment

Warrens has not been ‘sitting back’, but constantly evolving, in terms of throughput and its use of Access Delta.

“What is clear is that we have had growth of 10% per annum over the past four years,” says Antony Glenn. “We have seen massive growth – and that would never have been possible without Access Delta in place.

“Once the dust settles, we will be in a position to look back and see where our investment has taken us – but we have certainly paid back the investment by now!”

Tesco has been so impressed with Warrens’ performance and systems that it has even brought visitors from the United States to take a look at the operation.

Looking back on the process

“Our investment in Access Delta has been well worth it,” says Antony. “This was definitely a ‘leap of faith’ – we didn’t really know where we needed to go, but the guidance was always there.

“The Access Delta team could give their advice and steer us in the right direction. We were quite stubborn about quite a few things they suggested we take on – but they have always been spot on. Access Delta allowed us to implement things that no one else had tried in our niche market. Now, when we sit in meetings with others that do what we do, it is nice to know that we don’t have the problems they are talking about.”

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About Access

We are a software author with over 20 years’ experience of providing warehouse management solutions for standalone environments or as part of an integrated ERP solution including; powerful financials and project management, advanced production and intuitive HR and payroll. As suppliers to over 150 warehouse operations in the UK, we know how to optimise your space, improve your On-Time In-Full customer commitments AND update your finance team immediately for faster, more accurate billing.