

## Case study Foulger Transport



# After 70 years in business Foulger Transport has an enviable record of growth and diversification. Its latest move has been to invest in state of the art warehousing. What impact has it had on the business?

Founded in 1935, Foulger Transport has been a family-owned business for much of its life – and has always been based in Norfolk. The company started out as a removal business and then expanded into almost every area of haulage. Today Foulger runs a fleet of sixty trucks with distinctive battle grey livery, transporting a wide range of goods from pallets and furniture to the agricultural bulk haulage of sugar beet, grains and pulses.

Through its membership of the Palletline transport consortium Foulger also offers next day and 48 hour delivery of palletised goods throughout the UK and Europe, with access to over 4,000 vehicles and 3.5 million square feet of UK warehousing. Six years ago there was a management buyout of the company, following which Foulger's new executive team set their sights on storage as the driver for further business growth. "We started with a 5,000 square foot warehouse" company accountant Rob Allen recalls. "Then we started to rent more space. Early in 2004 we made the decision to build our own state of the art warehousing facility".

The company operates from a purpose-built site on the A11 at Snetterton, where it runs an 80,000 square foot warehouse, storing up to 10,000 pallets a week. Some ninety per cent of its customer relationships are direct (rather than third party), and around 20% of the business is currently pick and pack.

Foulger specialises in film that is used for a variety of wrapping applications, from pallets to food. Customers include Amcor, and Procter & Gamble, who demand a state of the art, clean environment. P&G do regular audits of the Foulger site. "They are rigorous but we have never scored less than 96%" Allen says.

Implementing strong warehouse technology has been a cornerstone of Foulger's growth strategy. The company's former warehouse management system was paper-based, using manual spreadsheets. "Following the company's expansion we now needed a best in class warehouse management system to run our state of the art warehouse operation" says Foulger Transport Director Barry Germany.



"Increasingly, we want to be viewed as a one-stop storage and distribution partner, so any technology we implemented had to integrate with our transport system", Germany adds.

Foulger was recommended to use DeltaWMS, the warehouse management system developed by Bolton, Lancs-based Delta Software. At this stage there were just three weeks to go before the planned warehouse system go-live.

"The lead time for Delta to get the system installed was extremely short, and they did the job" says Rob Allen. "They installed the software, quickly dealt with some minor teething problems and got the system up and running. They were very responsive". Delta is an established supplier in this field. Delta WMS is a single- or-multi-site system and can operate in paper-based, batchscanner or radio frequency (RF) modes. Foulger have opted for RF, believing that it will help to maximise warehouse efficiency.

"Our fork lift drivers and other warehouse staff say that Delta is a much easier system to use" says Rob Allen. "We believe in continuous improvement – and our warehouse operation is certainly more productive. I estimate that DeltaWMS will pay for itself in 18 months, thanks to new efficiencies and labour savings".

**DeltaWMS uses industry standard Microsoft Windows technology and is very graphical, allowing users to view and manage their warehouse on-screen through a logical warehouse map. In this environment locating specific stock, free-space or part pallets is a user-friendly process.**



The system is designed to improve stock location accuracy, reduce labour costs and enhance customer service levels. It enables full stock traceability, from point of receipt to point of despatch, for any item that moves through the warehouse, and allows pick and pack product definition regardless of shape, size, measure, quantity or type of storage area (ambient, frozen, chilled etc.).



DeltaWMS can integrate with core supply chain applications covering (for example) purchase orders, sales orders or stock balances – and has an industry standard interface that can be integrated with most transport systems. Its web browser module allows the user to directly manage stock and orders from anywhere in the world.

The system also has a reporting function that encompasses all aspects of warehouse operation. This has been a valuable tool for customer service, according to Foulger. "We wanted to give our customers more control, more feedback" Barry Germany explains. "With the new system we can email detailed stock and other warehouse management reports, in near real time, to give customers an accurate picture of the work we are doing for them. The industry is always talking about customer service. We can walk the talk".

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