TITAN
C O N S U L T I N G

YOUR SAP WAREHOUSE MANAGEMENT (WM) AUTOMATION PROJECT!

The CFO was nervous! Operations were panicking! How big was this inventory write-off going to be?

Year-end bonuses were in jeopardy and stakeholder's jobs could be lost!

Paul was brought in to fix the Warehouse Automation Project. He was the leader they needed for this project: he should have led the project in the first place! He was bright, fair, respected, and had worked in the company for 20 years – management and operations trusted his judgment.

The inventory shortage problem surfaced when they started doing their quarterly cycle-counts at their Southwest warehouses. The smallest differences were around 10%, with some locations having as much as a 30% gap: the quantities in the bins did not agree with their SAP system.

What happened?

The warehouse automation project started a few years ago when the manufacturing company wanted to automate their North American warehouses. The solution was to harmonize and automate the primary warehouse processes:
- Receiving and Putaway;
- Inventory, Bin and Location Methodology;
- Pick, Pack, and Ship;
- Internal Warehouse Movements and Processes.

A team was formed to evaluate the warehouse locations, current practices, and finally choose a WM Automation software package.
It was like opening Pandora's Box. No two locations had the same layout, work practices, and procedures.

The project team chose a bolt-on package, and the investment was less than they had expected. The team elected to move forward and customize the mobile software rather than harmonize the SAP WM process. The emphasis was on laying out the screens on the mobile platform in a WYSIWYG format. The problem, you can't harmonize business processes just through a common screen layout – Mistake #1.

The software did what it was supposed to do, build a flexible, easy-to-use front-end, but the software companies consultants didn't know SAP. But they gave their best effort to integrate the data. Mistake #2!

When items were taken out of inventory to fulfill a Sales Order, it was done manually. The inventory was relieved from stock after the truck had left. The updates were only performed periodically throughout the day. No one trusted the numbers in the system. Mistake #3.

When the next order that selected those items couldn't find them, the warehouse handlers fulfilled the orders from other bins and locations. It was with good intention, but with horrible results. The warehouse teams chalked it up to business as usual, but no one could begin to imagine the snowball effect on the inventory counts.

Paul and his new team brought in a partner with expertise on mobile applications and SAP. They had tough choices to make. Where would they start? The immediate goal was put trust back into the process, or their problems would continue to mount. Their priorities:
1. Harmonize the warehouse processes so that the system reflected the physical
2. Automate the good processes they had
3. Integrate the front end mobile app with back-end SAP.

During their investigation, the SAP WM system, while not optimal, was performing as designed and configured. The primary culprit was the mobile software. It did not send correct information back to WM.

Paul had to rip the bandage off and start all over! No one liked the decision, but when the steering committee evaluated the alternatives, this made the most sense.

The key takeaway and lesson learned from this experience – UI/UX is important, but only one part of the solution. A pretty screen without tight integration is a recipe for lost bonuses and jobs as well as late nights and overbudget projects.

Titan Consulting and their Titan Software's Warehouse Management solution, easyShip® addresses all the checkboxes for your mobile warehouse environment on SAP.

- Updates back-end integration and synchronization with Warehouse and Inventory Management View real-time integration
- View real-time stock in the warehouse by product and by bin.
- Perform transfer order picking with quantity updates.
- Perform transfer order putaways with bin confirmation.
- And more features that streamline operations and control inventory.

What you'll find in the easyShip® Management app:
- HTML5 technology to design the ultimate UI/UX work experience.
- Warehouse Cockpit: Review the workflow for the day.
- Shipping Calendar: Assists you in scheduling time and resources.
- Full Device Integration: Lets you get the most out of your device.

Paul and his team have many months of work to do before they can untangle their Warehouse Automation Project, but they now have a clear path to the right solution.

We will continue updating you with Paul's progress with this project in the next few months. If in the meantime, you have challenges in your Warehouse Automation Project or you are planning a new project and need assistance, Titan Consulting is here to advise and guide you on the right mobile and warehouse automation strategy for your company. Contact Warren Norris, warren@titanconsulting.net; 972-679-5183, or contact your Titan Sales Director.