

Supply Chain Optimization

How a Leading Clothing Retailer Took Their Supply Chain from Good to Great

As a supply chain consulting firm, Bricz has the unique opportunity to hear our clients of all sizes and industries discuss the pains and gains of their supply chain operations. Regardless of the company, the message is the same: "Improving our supply chain is just too big of an investment."

This thought couldn't be further from the truth. With the robust functionality offered by Manhattan WMOS, it doesn't always take a costly software upgrade or a complete operational overhaul to bring positive change to your supply chain.

For one of Bricz's clients, a leading clothing and accessory retailer, all it took was the foresight to recognize that things could be better by taking action. With the vision of easier, quicker, and cheaper processes at the front of their minds, the retailer took the first step towards optimizing their supply chain and hasn't turned back since.

Objectives

- Produce a sustainable way for operations leadership to understand the data around their business processes
- Perform a current state analysis to uncover pain points
- Tackle small process improvement projects
- Use base configuration to handle new business requirements

Systems

- Manhattan WMOS v. 2017
- IBM Cognos Supply Chain Intelligence (SCI)

Results

- 90% reduction in time spent pulling data
- 75% reduction in DC floor travel time
- 52% increase in picks per hour
- 54% increase in optimally routed shipments
- 2.5 day reduction in coast-to-coast delivery time for similar cost
- 12 new features added, 3 channels expanded, and 1 new market explored with 0 custom code changes.



Operationalizing your Supply Chain Improvements

Step 1: Understand System Data

After recognizing that operations are not working at peak efficiency, the next step is to understand why. Lacking the adequate data creation architecture to understand the numbers behind your processes presents a number of serious challenges:

- Incomplete understanding of operational bottlenecks
- Slow response to critical issues due to time-intensive data calculations
- Ineffective resource prioritization and planning because decision makers do not have the right information

Step 2: Tackle Small Process Improvement Projects

As your business grows and your team becomes more comfortable with the system, inefficiencies become more visible and impactful. Business needs evolve and assumptions made during the design process no longer hold true. As your business changes, your processes and systems should too. Check out the example project below to learn how identifying and confronting 1 simple problem was able to increase picks per hour by 52%.

Project Spotlight: Travel Efficiency

Problem: Tasks are created in small groups leading to half-empty pick carts and unnecessary travel to drop off and pick up new carts

Objectives: Minimize number of tasks, increase the number of details on each cart, and reduce travel time

Solution: Establish optimal task capacities and adjust system task creation rules to minimize number of tasks

Impact: Minimized number of pick carts by having more tasks on each cart, reducing unnecessary travel time by 75%

Step 3: Take On New Business Requirements

There is a common misconception that major new business requirements necessitate a custom code change. While this may be true for some requirements, a practiced partner can help you navigate around costly customizations by capitalizing on the flexibility that already exists in the base code of your system.

In the case of the clothing retailer, a new business requirement was to pilot an expansion into a foreign market by segregating products for the new market and handling orders differently for the new foreign branch. The client was concerned that the base configuration would not be able to handle their needs, and in turn would lead to a custom change that would be expensive for a temporary program.

Using only base configuration, the Bricz team was able to set up a process to allocate and ship inventory correctly while putting safeguards in place to ensure that SKUs for different markets were not mixed. This not only met the need for a foreign market pilot program but also empowered client leadership to confidently take on new business requirements knowing that their WMS can keep up.

What's Next?

These are all great steps towards streamlined operations, but optimization is not a one-time exercise. There is always room for improvements to meet shifting business requirements and ensure your technology evolves with your operations.

Going through these steps with the goal of continuous improvement in mind will increase operational efficiency and empower your system to take on new initiatives, big or small.

Interested in learning more? Email us at info@bricz.com