

Solving capacity issues with Direct from Supplier

MetaPack have successfully managed Halfords' customer distribution for over 3 years, and have recently provided a streamlined solution for their Direct from Supplier requirements.

The Challenge

An order is placed with Halfords, and if the goods are not held in stock it is passed on to the supplier. The Achilles heel in the Direct from Supplier process was the lack of visibility. Once a shipment left a remote supplier, Halfords lost sight of the shipment. If a customer query was raised, Halfords customer services would have to contact the supplier, who would then ring the carrier and respond back to customer services to update the customer, thus impacting on the smooth level of customer service and generating unnecessary costs to the retailer. Another disadvantage, with no control over the despatch from the supplier, meant Halfords only offered very basic delivery options at the point of order.

The Solution

Halfords instigated a project to look at ways to rationalise their Direct from Supplier procedure. After investigating what systems were available, MetaPack became the obvious solution. There wasn't any need for major integration and it was accessible at short notice. Direct from Supplier is a key part of the MetaPack solution. The new Halfords process is as follows: every morning customer services use one button to import order data from SAP to MetaPack. When the suppliers log on to MetaPack through their web browser they see all of their Halfords orders

as pre-allocated consignments. MetaPack then prints the carrier labels for them and sends the carrier the collection notices. From this point onwards it becomes a "Halfords delivery" and their customer services team can gain full visibility, enabling Halfords to provide full customer care and proactively contact the customer should the need arise. This in turn reduces the number of inbound calls, making the whole process a lot more scaleable. Halfords are now able to extend their product range further without incurring any overheads, expand their delivery offers and increase flexibility and visibility when shipping from suppliers. All these factors contribute to an outstanding shopping experience.

The feedback from the supplier is extremely positive too, as they no longer have to manually enter each consignment into their system, or answer delivery enquiries, saving their time and resources too.

“ We've been using MetaPack for some time now and are extremely

happy with the service we receive. MetaPack were the obvious choice when looking at streamlining our dropship service. The system has allowed us to allocate our time more productively, reduce and manage costs, and provides us with a greater level of flexibility with our delivery options, but most importantly it has given a greater level of visibility which enables us to continue to provide a consistently high level of customer service.”

Jon Asbury, Multi-Channel Development Manager

