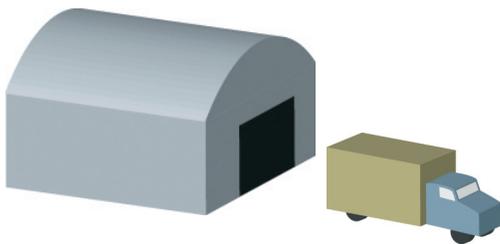


Warehousing

The momentum of globalization and the increasingly lean economies that come with it have created a hyper-competitive retail marketplace where only the efficient survive. Survival depends on your ability to efficiently respond to consumer demands. Independent retail chain operators can meet this challenge by optimizing process efficiencies while reducing overhead across the enterprise. ECRS Multistore Demand Fulfillment (MDF) provides retailers with a powerful enterprise automation component that centralizes and synchronizes the vital processes in the demand fulfillment infrastructure. Whether you have ten stores or hundreds of stores, one warehouse or many, ECRS MDF leverages modern web technology and proven EDI standards to allow independent chain retailers to reduce labor overhead and operational complexities while simultaneously optimizing warehouse inventories and streamlining demand-related processes across the enterprise.

Centralized and De-Centralized Purchase Orders

On the purchasing side, MDF can leverage the power of the ECRS Supplier Integration Server (SIS), which communicates directly with vendors via modern, bi-directional EDI protocol to facilitate POs, Invoicing, PO/Shipping Acknowledgements, Vendor Catalog Updates, and Promotions. When headquarters issues a centralized PO, the order is transmitted securely via SIS directly to the vendor, who then ships the merchandise to the pre-determined warehouse location. As soon as the warehouse receives the shipment, the associated Store Delivery mechanisms at that warehouse are automatically updated in real-time, at which time the warehouse staff picks the items and ships them directly to the store. MDF also accommodates de-centralized POs for Direct Store Delivery (DSD). DSD allows the warehouse step to be by-passed for specific orders, which saves significant time, labor, and expense for the enterprise.



ECRS | Warehousing

Warehouse Inventory Optimization

In order to reduce overstock scenarios among warehouse locations, MDF automatically checks warehouses first for items requested by stores. MDF always uses existing unallocated warehouse stock to fulfill store requests first, and then procures the remaining inventory from the appropriate vendors. This process, facilitated and controlled by MDF, is essential in the reduction of overstock at warehouses resulting from power-buys. MDF gives buyers and owners a strategic safety net for capitalizing on power-buys with the full assurance that the inventory will be distributed to stores on a prioritized, on-demand basis.

Warehouse Intelligence: Bin Management and Auto-Routing

A demand fulfillment solution is only as good as its ability to enable customized bin/shelf organization and to generate optimized picking routes. ECRS MDF facilitates a simple, but powerful warehouse environment designed for heavy lifters, not IT staff. Using a wireless hand held terminal (HHT), warehouse employees can quickly and easily attach bin/shelf ID codes to items on the fly. If an employee can't find the correct bin for a given item, he can simply place the item in a convenient location and make an on-the-fly association via HHT, then move on to other productive tasks because the system now knows where this "misplaced" inventory resides. When a Store Delivery worksheet is ready to be fulfilled, the ECRS MDF automatically generates a bin/shelf picking sequence outlining the quickest route for processing the order.

Powerful Situational Awareness

Today's retail environment is often complex and confusing at best. MDF's powerful Situational Awareness provides order and control for all parties involved in supply chain processes. Buyers see not only what each store is requesting, but also have at their fingertips objectively calculated forecast data for each item by store. A host of other critical supply chain data is just a few mouse clicks away, including historical data, on-hand quantities at each store, warehouse inventories, and delivery truck data. MDF gives buyers the objective data they need to make intelligent and profitable purchasing decisions. Store managers can accurately track their requests through all points of the fulfillment process, as well as view and prepare for pending deliveries of items pushed down from buyers. In conjunction with the ECRS SIS (Supplier Integration Server), MDF alerts buyers and/or store management when vendor orders have been accepted and shipped. MDF's Situational Awareness empowers formerly disparate parties to work together as a cohesive team to increase efficiency, reduce overhead, and drive profitability across the supply chain.