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# Real Time Visibility and Collaboration Across Complex Supply Chains Delivers Benefits to RPC Containers

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***Complexities of Retail Supply Chains***

The retail trade covers a very large number of products in many different shapes and sizes and in a great variety of containers. The consumer products come from thousands of suppliers through many and complex supply chains. There is one company whose products appear in most of these supply chains but which is not a household name – while their products are probably in every household in Europe and the USA.

British company **RPC Containers** (<http://www.rpc-group.com>) are the leading European manufacturer of rigid plastic packaging with 13 manufacturing sites in the UK and production in a further ten European countries and the United States.

The following industries have one thing in common – they all pack products in containers from RPC: Food and drink; industrial; pharmaceuticals; household; garden care; automotive; personal care and cosmetics; agriculture; vending and catering.

Its customer base ranges from famous national businesses, including Boots and Dairy Crest, to renowned multinationals such as Heinz and L’Oreal.

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***Reliable and Efficient Logistics***

Hundreds of companies depend upon the RPC supply chain to keep their production lines and their own supply chains providing high levels of customer service. Mike Hyde, National Transport Manager at RPC, knows that his logistics operation must be reliable and efficient.

“All of our customers are in very challenging and often volatile demand situations. We have to be extremely flexible and gear up to enable them to meet their requirements,” Mr Hyde said. “Today that means having supply chain systems to enable us to be responsive, and that means real-time collaboration and visibility”.

RPC set out to introduce such systems with the brief to develop a coherent transport strategy for RPC UK, delivering significant long term cost efficiencies, whilst considerably improving customer service delivery performance. With the support of Malcolm Cossey, Director of specialist consultants S2F Supply Chain Ltd ([www.s2fsupplychain.co.uk](http://www.s2fsupplychain.co.uk)) RPC looked for a system that could handle all of their logistics needs and would be a future-proof system taking advantage of the most up-to-date Internet tools.

Mr Cossey said that the vision was coordinated transport planning across all RPC UK sites, with regional planning hubs supported by an integrated IT solution. This should provide increased visibility and improved service capability over the long term, by providing RPC with the tools to manage costs and optimise vehicle use. After considering several systems, RPC chose CarrierNet, the Cloud Computing supply chain solution from UK company Deltion ([www.deltion.co.uk](http://www.deltion.co.uk)).

***Best Practice, Visibility and Collaboration***

“We saw the opportunity of using CarrierNet to spread best practice from the manufacturing and distribution sites,” Mr Hyde said. “It also provided the opportunity to tidy up processes and give visibility of orders, planned manufacturing quantities and stock on one screen. This real time integration provides visibility for manufacturing, distribution, sales, accounts and our hauliers.

“Because CarrierNet provides visibility across all sites, this gives us standard units and costs allowing site, customer and haulier comparisons with the use of rate cards giving us weekly cost information. We can now achieve cross-site planning, backhaul management and improved utilisation. This ties into our RPC Sustainability Matters programme.”

CarrierNet reporting has been major benefit to logistics and general management and has helped in a greater understanding of the business. Its use has helped to identify those processes that have added no value and it made a major contribution to learning and understanding. It means that now there is real time information on order and customer status positions.

“The ability of CarrierNet to check warehouse stock and production schedules before processing transport orders has brought considerable benefits” Mr Hyde said. “If we have no warehouse stock, the system checks if the ordered items will be produced in time for despatch. If there is a potential problem, an immediate exception alert is raised and the problem managed with the customer”.

For Mr Hyde, there have been several benefits already. “It worked – there were no big issues on go-live and this was important to buy in across the sites. CarrierNet has enabled improved efficiency and customer service and provides visibility of additional work that we carry out. This has allowed us to free up resources across sites for other activities and everyone now has an accurate view of costs.

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***About RPC Containers***

RPC Group is Europe's leading rigid plastic packaging ([www.rpc-group.com](http://www.rpc-group.com)) and is unusual in that it is able to offer products made by all three conversion processes, blow moulding, injection moulding and thermoforming. It has 41 operations in 11 countries and employs just fewer than 6,000 people.

RPC services a comprehensive range of customers, from the largest European manufacturers of consumer products to the smallest national businesses. It has particularly strong positions in the beauty and personal care sector, the vending and drinking cup market, the margarine industry, and in multi-layer sheet and packs for oxygen sensitive food products.

***About Deltion and  
CarrierNet***

Deltion is a world leader in Cloud Computing and Software as a Service (SaaS) applications. CarrierNet was the first internet based logistics solution and has been recognised internationally as the leading web based application for supply chain, logistics and transport management.

The success of CarrierNet is based on more than 20 years of experience developing solutions for logistics and transport operations. Deltion's management team developed CarrierNet as the first web based SaaS solution in order to provide a world class real-time software service for manufacturers, retailers and logistics and transport companies - in fact any organisation with the need to manage and control both in-house, outsourced and sub-contracted logistics in real time.

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***About S2f Supply  
Chain***

S2f Supply Chain is an independent supply chain consultancy, providing support in strategy development and business and process improvement. The strength of service is built on the ability to work effectively at all levels of an organisation and taking responsibility for full implementation of any recommendations. The extensive experience of introducing change and implementing best practice has enabled the successful delivery of a variety of projects delivered across different market sectors with specific focus in manufacturing and process based industries.

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