Industrial News

@logistics Reply: Here to help you

When was the company established?
@logistics Reply is one of 43 businesses operating under The Reply Group, which was founded in 1996 and headquartered in Turin, Italy. The UK side of the business is still very much in start-up mode; @logistics Reply UK was set up just last spring.

Where are you based – is this your only location?
Our UK office is in Baker Street, Central London. However, the majority of our time is spent on-site with customers. The three consultants in the UK are backed by 120 consultants in the Milan office, Italy.

What is the main role of the company? What services do you provide?
We specialise in improving the efficiency of supply chain execution systems. Our UK focus is the supply chain into retail. Recognising the UK as having one of the world’s most competitive retail sectors, ultimately our role is to develop solutions that help suppliers work more efficiently with retailers and vice versa, which enables retailers to supply consumers more competitively.

We provide flexible warehouse management solutions, which we see as key market differentiator. Rather than push a fixed “off-the-shelf” product set, we take a consultancy approach and work with our customers to understand their operational needs at that point in their development and customise the solution to fit. Depending on their business requirements, our customers also have the option to deploy a traditional – on-premise, licensed – WMS, called Click, and more recently, our WMS on-demand, called SideUp. Our product suite includes WM analytics, transportation management, co-managed inventory and proof of delivery (POD).

Who are your main clients/customers?
In the UK, Kenwood and Fiat use our on-premise WMS. Fiat was one of our first Click customers and continues to work with us globally, as well as in the UK and Italy. One of our major projects at the moment has been with a leading UK food group that supplies the major supermarkets; it is currently rolling out SideUp across all of its sites. In Europe, Geodis Wilson, a freight forwarding company and Italsimpone, an international logistics company are also using SideUp to run their wholesale operations.

Are there any specific new products/services you wish to talk about?
As a recent entry to the UK market, we believe SideUp presents a new paradigm for the supply chain industry. Today’s retail market presents an extremely complex and challenging environment for logistics and distribution.

SLAs and consumer expectations.

As a result, supply chain businesses need to be increasingly efficient and agile in order to assert their competitive advantage. Growing consumer caution has increased uncertainty in manufacturing; this and the rise in small, temporary logistics contracts have boosted interest in flexible, low risk applications which offer rapid-time-to-value, minimal IT and revenue interruption, and which can be ‘switched on or off’ in line with demand.

A hosted, SaaS platform like SideUp is ideal for warehouses requiring rapid start-up and for those which operate in uncertain scenarios or with very high transaction requirements. Increasingly, suppliers are using it to manage peak demands or one-off projects.

But with operating expense being the phrase of the moment, SaaS is rapidly becoming “business as usual” rather than a stop gap or contingency. Based on a ‘pay as you grow’ payment model, it smooths the operating expense required over a number of business cycles, providing businesses with the customisable adaptability to support gradual and progressive adoption of the technology.

Finally, in addition to WMS as a Service, we are able to support the supply to Retail ecosystem in the UK with transportation, co-managed inventory and inventory visibility functionality, developed specifically for this unique market and available as a Cloud-based, “pay-as-you-go” solution.

What benefits do your services bring to clients that competitors don’t?
A major benefit of SideUp is that it is quick and cost effective to set-up – it can be up and running in as little as two weeks (typically 4-6 weeks) with the system paying for itself in 6 months or less. This speed-to-benefit is a major differentiator from traditional WMS systems – which can typically take up to 6 months, or more, to go live and 12 months plus thereafter to start to provide a return on investment.

Unlike traditional WMS systems, SideUp has the ability to scale upwards, adapting as a business grows in capacity and complexity but, more uniquely, it offers downward scalability to both the infrastructure and the commercial model. Where with on-premise WMS systems, users are required to invest heavily in a fixed number of licences, servers and IT systems people, a WMS on-demand aligns the warehouses’ needs to the number of functions activated on the system, so only the “capacity” used is paid for.

If the WMS is no longer needed or seasonal demand dictates greater use, it is no harder than (de)activating a utility. This is all managed behind the scenes by the solution provider.

Furthermore, all of the pain and costs associated with future up-grades (a requirement every 2-3 years with an on-premise WMS) are removed, as up-grades, maintenance and support – both hardware and application-related – are provided incrementally as part of the service.

A leading UK food group, supplying the major UK retailers is now saving £4,000 to 5,000 in supplier fines each week for one retail customer alone since deploying SideUp from @logistics Reply. This is the result of demonstrably accurate order delivery, backed by a full audit trail and cool chain; improved date rotation to ensure the delivery of optimum shelf life products and the virtual elimination of costly “special transports”, which have to be borne by the supplier. Inventory control is also improved, scrapage reduced and customer service levels increased.

Does the company have any plans for the future?
We are very interested in making SideUp available for the UK WMS market. The feedback so far has been extremely positive, with some organisations even contemplating replacement programmes for their existing ‘market leading’ WMS solutions. We will aim to capitalise on this solid start in the UK to offer a range of customer-focused and results-oriented WMS solutions to as many market sectors as we can sensibly address.

We will add related supply chain execution solutions such as Co-Managed Inventory to our offering, to address areas of pain or opportunity that are currently unaddressed in the market or can only be addressed by very expensive ERP-type solutions.

Finally, we will build on our successes and heritage in Italy, and increasingly in the UK and Latin America, to create a respected and reliable global supply chain execution partner for the Cloud generation.

Do you have a website?
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