



Columbian Logistics Case Study

Synapse 3PL Expert Helps Columbian Logistics Network Grow and Thrive

Columbian Logistics Network is a 3PL provider based out of Grand Rapids, Michigan. This privately held business has been around for over 120 years, and today provides almost 2 million square feet of flexible, clean, food-grade, ambient and temperature-controlled, dedicated, or public warehouse space.

Columbian Logistics Network is committed to developing partnerships and solving unique supply chain challenges, from warehousing and transportation to brokerage, fulfillment, and more. They have run multiple Warehouse Management Systems (WMS) in the past, but realized in 2016 that in order to improve, deepen, and broaden their ability to serve customers, they would need a new WMS that not only helped them grow, but would also help meet and exceed their operational and financial goals.

The Challenge

Columbian Logistics Network found that the old billing model of single storage charges, single handling charges, and single generic accessorial charges were no longer serving them or their customers. The processes were not keeping up with industry demands and inadvertently allowed revenue to slip through the cracks. Why? Because simple items like extra charges were manually entered and weren't being captured properly, versus more modern automated billing.

About Columbian Logistics:

- Founded over 120 years ago
- 7 Locations
- Almost 2 million square feet of warehouse space

Columbian Logistics Network needed a solution that would bill all revenue accordingly, automate that process, and improve profitability.

Columbian was also disappointed with its existing reporting capabilities. While they were able to gather necessary data to answer customer questions, they couldn't collect what they needed to help them improve their own processes. They needed better insight to learn more about their business and understand what was working and what wasn't. They needed a WMS that would facilitate data capture.

Finally, Columbian Logistics Network had the same goal as most companies, to grow organically and without complication. They needed a WMS that would scale with them and meet their customers' needs without unforeseen delays and complications.

The Solution

Columbian Logistics Network was methodical in its search for a new WMS. After determining that a simple upgrade to their existing platform wasn't going to be sufficient, they began a thorough search. They spent the bulk of 2017 shopping and interacting with a dozen or so WMS providers. Through those interactions, they whittled down the list of potential providers to a few finalists, with whom Columbian representatives performed both site and reference visits.

During those visits, Columbian saw many companies that were similar to them in many ways, and others that emulated what Columbian Logistics Network aspired to become. They decided to choose the WMS most used by the companies that more closely represented their future goals, and that was **Synapse 3PL Expert**.

"One of the best features Synapse offers is the sheer availability of data. Whether it's for report development for a client, or for measuring our own progress, we have the information we need to better understand our business."

—Blair Thomas, VP of Client Services, Columbian Logistics Network

"As we look at the growth we've had, we've been able to demonstrate our use of Synapse as an operating differentiator we can depend on."

—Blair Thomas, VP of Client Services, Columbian Logistics Network

The Outcome/Results

More than anything, **Synapse** has helped Columbian Logistics Network grow – and do it fast. Onboarding smaller public warehouses is far easier than it ever was with their previous WMS solution, which makes their customer interactions smoother and hassle-free. In fact, Columbian Logistics Network noticed the impact Synapse has on its customers in three very specific ways.

1. **Customized Reports:** **Synapse** offers seamless access to data, which allows Columbian Logistics Network to provide customized reports to its customers quickly and error-free. Whether it be standard or customized reports, they can provide them in record time.
2. **EDI Capabilities & Integration Partners:** The EDI capabilities in **Synapse** make working with other systems used by Columbian Logistics Network and its clients easy. This means they can service a wide array of data integration needs, making client onboarding far simpler than before.
3. **Improved Customer Service:** The **Synapse** customer web portal is easy to use, provides robust functionality, and gives customers autonomy over their orders. Customers can query their stock, inventory, flow, and throughput as well as their receipts and shipments. The portal helps them work more efficiently while saving Columbian Logistics Network's customer service team time and effort, and ultimately, money.

MADE4NET

The power of speed-to-pivot

ABOUT MADE4NET

Made4net is a leading global provider of best-in-class supply chain execution and warehouse management software for organizations of all sizes to improve the speed and efficiency of their supply chain. The company's solutions are configurable and scalable to provide maximum Speed-to-Pivot™ for ever-changing supply chains.