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# FINDING HIDDEN WAREHOUSE PROFITS

Case Study

Accellos One Pulse and Hall's Warehouse

Learn how Hall's Warehouse Corporation mines data for real-time visibility to accelerate putaway by 10%, improve personnel productivity by 15%, reduce replenishments by 13% and monitor USDA and FDA hold orders.



# Finding Hidden Warehouse Profits

**LEARN HOW HALL'S WAREHOUSE CORPORATION MINES DATA FOR REAL-TIME VISIBILITY TO ACCELERATE PUTAWAY BY 10%, IMPROVE PERSONNEL PRODUCTIVITY BY 15%, REDUCE REPLENISHMENTS BY 13% AND MONITOR USDA AND FDA HOLD ORDERS.**

**H**all's Warehouse Corporation provides seamless warehousing and transportation services for companies throughout the northeast, from Maine to Ohio, with emphasis on food products and pharmaceuticals, along with general merchandise. The company serves more than 200 client companies through eight warehouse facilities totaling 1.7 million square feet of ambient, cooler and freezer space. Of the facilities, which are deployed across New Jersey, three provide all three types of service, with the remaining five devoted to products requiring only ambient temperature storage.

In 2008, Hall's Warehouse Corporation commenced a shift from proprietary enterprise management software and paper-based warehouse operations to standards-based solutions and extensively deployed electronic documentation and communications. The company selected Accellos One 3PL to manage the receipt, inventory management and distribution of products placed in its charge by more than 200 clients with diverse receipt, storage and delivery requirements.

The standards-based environment brought additional possibilities in the form of Accellos' new Pulse web-based business intelligence tool, which Hall's now uses to monitor a fluid set of financial and operational metrics from multiple applications to derive precision analyses and perspectives – in real time.

## WHAT IS PULSE?

Accellos One Pulse is a web-based tool that incorporates (1) content in the form of a Key Performance Indicator Library and (2) a mechanism for pulling and displaying KPI data from various sources. Pulse's flexible graphical display schema presents the information in any of several user-selectable graphical representations on any frequency timetable the user requires, whether a floor supervisor with near real-time performance requirements or a financial manager that may need only a monthly update.

Accellos Pulse responds to four key needs:

1. Speed of access to relevant data
2. Integration of data from multiple business applications
3. Interpretation and visibility to a broad audience of authorized users
4. Low overall costs.

Pulse draws data both from Accellos solutions and related applications and databases, formatting it in about a dozen user-selectable, customizable displays. The choices include charts (pie, bar, line), grids, reports and gauges, which Dale Jayne, Executive Vice President of Hall's Warehouse Corp. refers to as "widgets."

## HOW PULSE WORKS

The nature of warehouse information acquisition and use virtually mandates a structured query approach, so Pulse resides on an SQL Server database that sits on top of the applications from which it pulls data.

Operation is browser-based, so it's easy to use regardless of the user's location. Use of Ajax (Asynchronous Java Script and XML) web development techniques enable Pulse to interact with the information-generating applications in background without interfering with the display and behavior of the parent application.

Output is in the form of graphics and tables that reside on and are controllable from an on-screen dashboard. A Microsoft Office-like graphical user interface makes Pulse intuitive in use and simplifies the generation of the visual displays.

Presentation involves three basic components:

- Desktop panels display a piece of information about the business – cycle time, late appointments, pick/putaway, etc -- with a variety of metrics available to record performance on each information element.
- The view allows the grouping of panes in an individual metric. For example, there may be dozens of operational metrics that are tracked. Pulse allows users to place them in neat logical groups and to create views that are easy to comprehend quickly.
- Fly screens provide window panes, groups of KPIs, etc. for various logistics functions --warehouse, transport, 3PL, claims management -- which serve as a framework for accommodating all of the applications that Accellos provides.

*“Pulse provides us with valuable single-glance information about complicated moving parts of our operations such as order velocity, pick line and various quality assurance attributes allowing us to give immediate feedback to our customers.” -- Dale Jayne, Executive Vice President of Hall's Warehouse Corporation*

## FLEXIBILITY

Pulse comes with on-board Key Performance Indicators (KPI) optimized for the logistics field, and it provides the flexibility to adapt these to mission-specific requirements, to extend and refine them, and to add new ones that may be derived from either Accellos logistics applications or associated software systems.

The Pulse KPI Library comprises approximately two dozen Industry Standard KPIs that track all of the activities controlled or enabled by Accellos solutions, among them:

- inventory accuracy through RFID and barcoding
- warehouse processes and counts
- receiving, picking and shipping
- labor efficiency and utilization
- customer-specific information requirements.

In addition, key performance indicators that address discreet activities such as accounting and finance can be created and added to the KPI library. Scheduling of displays can range from real-time operating updates to weekly/monthly reviews.

## PULSE AT WORK

“Pulse provides us with valuable single-glance information about complicated moving parts of our operations such as order velocity, pick line and various quality assurance attributes—product on hold, product types—allowing us to give immediate feedback to our customers,” Jayne says.

Hall’s monitors approximately 20 metrics, about a dozen classed as “first order of magnitude” and relating to critical ongoing operations, with the rest serving indirect or supplementary purposes. Jayne’s group tailors the KPIs to user job functions, using Pulse’s drag-and-drop capability to build and modify clear, precise graphical presentations.

Executives, for example, might require a pan-facility view of a certain metric while operations personnel would want the same information localized to their areas of concern: throughput, revenue, OS&D, mistakes, and so on.

Typical metrics currently in use at Hall’s include:

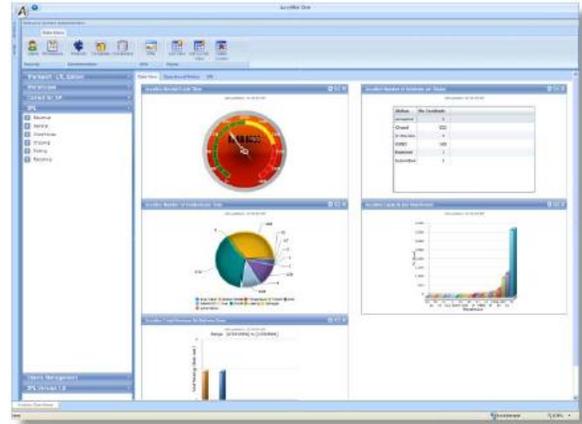
- Inbound receipt and outbound order volume per shift/per day
- Inbound receipt and outbound order processing (# of pallets/cases) pick velocity pr hour/per shift/per day
- Order fill-rate per hour/per shift/per day (e.g. shot order metric)
- Worker productivity per hour/per shift/per day
- Shift profitability per hour, based on productivity
- “Special order” handling requirements notification (e.g. # of labels, custom documents needed, etc.)
- Warehouse space utilization per shift/per day/per week, month, quarter
- On-time carrier pickup performance
- Inventory accuracy
- On-hold/quarantine product accuracy.

“Each metric can be as broad or as granular as you need,” Jayne says, noting that Hall’s metrics are necessity-based and derived from SQL statements. “The value is in the way that Pulse reads and leverages the open standards data.”

Hall’s implementation of Pulse provides security protection for the distribution of the information, requiring user authentication to preclude it falling into the wrong hands, as well as controls to prevent too much information being sent to the right hands.

## IMPACT

Pulse has enabled Hall’s to institute changes that likely would not have been possible without the ability to monitor the real-time activities in the warehouse, Jayne says. Among them:



#### WAREHOUSE GEOGRAPHY

Tracking of putaways and picks suggested efficiencies that could be achieved by altering the physical placement of certain inventory. Changes were made that accelerated these processes by as much as 10 percent.

#### WAREHOUSE PERSONNEL

Monitoring the performance of floor personnel revealed that some were far more effective than others. Managers sought the agreement of high-achievers to partner with others needing improvement in order to equalize performance at the higher level. Overall pick speed improved by 15 percent.

#### REPLENISHMENT

Pulse metrics revealed exceptional activity in certain lanes of high velocity movers; expansion of pick space for such products resulted in a 13 percent decline in the number of replenishments required.

#### HOLD-CODE COMPLIANCE

A widget was created to flash an on-screen indicator if a pick attempt was made on products under a USDA or FDA hold order, preventing allocation of the products. It instituted a tighter way to monitor and comply with orders that could actually lead to life-or-death situations.

“Using our proprietary software, only a couple of people in the company knew how to harvest this kind of information, and it was a time-consuming process to get it and put it into report form,” Jayne says. “Now it’s mined automatically and the underlying activity can be actionable at a glance. Our metrics have degrees of value and our managers have learned to recognize them. As they see widgets in use, they sense the value similar presentations can have in their own sectors and they have not been shy in expressing their own requests.”

## ABOUT ACCELLOS

Accellos is a global provider of logistics, warehouse, 3PL, transportation and mobile fleet management solutions. Accellos addresses the supply chain management and execution market with warehouse management systems for multiple environments; Microsoft Windows-based transportation management solutions; and in-field mobile resource management solutions. Accellos’ powerful supply-chain execution solutions are easy to customize and implement, providing our customers with more innovation for less investment while producing significant savings and greater profitability. Through a culture of innovation, Accellos strikes the perfect balance of customer satisfaction, employee fulfillment and shareholder value, delivering greater profitability and rapid return on investment for our customers and accelerated logistics and warehousing services for the clients they serve.

About iCepts Technology Group, Inc. 

For over 30 years, iCepts Technology Group, Inc. has been working with Wholesale Distribution and Manufacturing companies with the latest technology offerings to help these organizations achieve efficiencies, streamline their supply chain process, gain access to vital business reporting and control cost. Find out more about iCepts Technology Group, Inc. by visiting our website or contact us today!

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