

## KAPLAN LOGISTICS

By Munzoor Shaikh

### BY AUTOMATING MANUAL ORDER PROCESSING ACTIVITIES, KAPLAN LOGISTICS IMPROVES PRODUCTIVITY AND CLIENT SATISFACTION.

Kaplan Logistics' warehouse and satellite centers typically exchanged order information by manual methods such as e-mail and telephone, an approach that was slow and error prone. Working with West Monroe Partners, the company automated the exchange of order data—improving speed and accuracy while reducing costs.

#### KAPLAN LOGISTICS.

Kaplan Logistics is a division of Kaplan, Inc., a leader in the higher education, professional training, and test preparations and admissions markets with operations in 33 countries.

Kaplan Logistics operates an upper-tier publishing and distribution center for in-house products, as well as other major bookstores and publishing companies.

#### INTEGRATING DATA TO IMPROVE A KEY PROCESS.

Kaplan Logistics maintains a central warehouse that handles all book orders from its satellite Kaplan centers. While each of Kaplan's satellite centers used a different inventory and order management system, they often exchanged critical information about work orders, inventory, and part numbers to the warehouse via manual methods, such as e-mail and telephone conversations.

Kaplan Logistics sought to integrate data between its warehouse and satellite locations in order to:

- ◆ Streamline the processing of orders from different order management systems
- ◆ Improve the speed and accuracy of order processing
- ◆ Provide automatic updates for new items in the central warehouse
- ◆ Reduce order processing costs

For assistance, Kaplan Logistics turned to West Monroe Partners. West Monroe Partners offered extensive experience in supply chain operations, data integration, and .NET architecture.

#### PROCESSING ORDERS—BETTER, FASTER CHEAPER.

Before developing a solution, West Monroe Partners first had to build stakeholder consensus with respect to the company's needs. The project team facilitated a meeting of all related business units and stakeholders to discuss key pain points, root causes, and a proposed solution, as well as the related cost-benefit analysis and implementation timeline. In addition, the project team studied the current process from end to end, including the cycle time for each step in the process. This enabled the team to identify process elements with the greatest potential for improvement.

West Monroe Partners created a centralized solution that used Web services to communicate data elements, including periodically extracting and sending data from and to the central warehouse. This solution enabled the warehouse to process orders from different order management systems centrally, rather than using separate processes and systems to handle orders from each satellite center. The project team created automated data validation and processing programs to synchronize part master data, purchase orders, and inventory data—with the ability for each satellite center to customize its synchronization as needed. Finally, the West Monroe Partners project team provided post-production support and developed training materials for Kaplan Logistics system users.

By automating a manual process, Kaplan Logistics improved user productivity—saving the company both time and money. And, because the new process enables the company to fulfill orders faster and more accurately, the company also improved customer satisfaction.

West Monroe Partners is an international, full-service business and technology consulting firm focused on guiding organizations through projects that fundamentally transform their business. With the experience to create the most ambitious visions as well as the skills to implement the smallest details of our clients' most critical projects, West Monroe Partners is a proven provider of growth and efficiency to large enterprises, as well as more nimble middle-market organizations. Our more than 300 consulting professionals drive better business results by harnessing our collective experience across a range of industries, serving clients out of offices across the United States and Canada.