

CASE STUDY

Customer: Watch Gang

Industry: E-commerce

Location: Los Angeles, California, USA

Warehouse size: 10,000 sq.ft

No. of users: 5 initially

Length of implementation: A staggered 90 days

Integration requirements: Platform alignment with the company's custom built and in house Admin and CRM system



Remote Implementation facilitates timely expansion for Watch Gang

BACKGROUND

Founded in 2016, Watch Gang is a fast growing e-commerce retailer of luxury and collectable watches servicing B2C markets. The company provides a subscription service where they deliver watches direct to consumer on a monthly or quarterly basis. Customers can also purchase individual pieces outside of this subscription service. They pride themselves on being the world's best watch club with very active and engaged members.

With ambitions to make their product more exclusive, desirable and customized, Watch Gang was frustrated by fulfillment issues, specifically around delivery times, quality control and poor customer service, due to consistent mistakes being made by their external 3PL provider. Bringing it in house seemed the only option, but they quickly realized that a WMS system was essential if they were to realize their goals.

THE CHALLENGE

Watch Gang did look at other WMS systems, but they were too inflexible, expensive or lacking in functionality – and quite early on knew it would be SnapFulfil when they finally took the plunge.

However, the COVID-19 outbreak threw their best laid plans up in the air. With their move into a new HQ delayed due to the pandemic, an essentially homeless Watch Gang had to find a temporary 6,000 sq.ft space to begin implementation from while managing the new normal challenges of social distancing, self isolation, travel restrictions, plus site labor shortages. The temporary facility, also presented its own challenge of an extremely limited internet bandwidth.

THE SOLUTION

SnapFulfil's Remote Implementation (RI) program provides tailored virtual support, including regular online training and status meetings, to ensure new teams are able to access and test the system, meeting Go Live deadlines. It's a formal, approved document that guides both project execution and control and from the outset makes all stakeholders and personnel aware of the key milestones to be achieved and signed off along the way.

This unique ability to onboard its cloud-based WMS without any physical interaction or movement of people is down to SnapFulfil's sophisticated rules-based engine being extremely configurable, plus their project managers have really mastered remote augmentation.

Watch Gang's senior management team had the added reassurance from their head engineer who critiqued some API documents and reported: "SnapFulfil run a very tight ship, really thorough and clean, which is a rarity."

During the planning stages there were numerous questions around network stability, so technical resource was assigned early to provide guidance on set up and installations. This up-front and direct communication prevented any unnecessary delays and helped prepare for troubleshooting ahead of RF delivery - and Watch Gang acknowledged this early, clear information was extremely helpful.

THE (REMOTE) IMPLEMENTATION

Watch Gang were asked to provide a video walkthrough of the fulfillment space before and after racking had been established, which assisted the SnapFulfil project team with data configuration and set up but also encouraged a collaborative approach. Together, they were able to determine zones, sections and pick sequences for the initial 6,000 sq.ft space, but also formulate a methodology that would accommodate the new HQ warehouse and allow for a smooth transition.

High level knowledge and context was also provided ahead of the web conferencing training, which (unlike on-site training programs typically condensed into 4-5 intense full days) was broken down into smaller, more manageable chunks. Watch Gang's SVP Operations, Sam Christian, explained: "This allowed us flexibility in balancing all the new learning with our day-to-day operations, but especially made it easier to digest and retain information ahead of the next session. This was reflected in how well we were able to apply training learned during Go Live."

Using a dump of the previous month's orders also allowed SnapFulfil to understand expected volumes across each order type and plan for resource availability during Go Live. Sam said: "Real time data was useful from a testing perspective as it uncovered potential mapping issues regarding customers' required values. Testing using real orders gave us all great confidence in the process and meant Go Live was a natural progression from training."

Subsequently, they were able to switch focus for Go Live solely on e-commerce orders, because subscription orders were best delayed a week and started slowly, ensuring no issues were found before ramping up with production.

All said, when it came to moving their operation from the temporary to the new, bigger facility, the technical and system preparation had been done and it tested and transferred seamlessly. That left just the physical move, which was also completed without any hiccups because of all the pre-planning. It started Friday evening and was business pretty much as usual on Monday morning.

THE BENEFITS

Watch Gang particularly appreciated that their SnapFulfil project and technical managers all had direct and relevant warehousing experience and took time and care to respect the wants and needs of everyone involved - from the packer on the ground to the auditing and API guys.

Sam added: "The attention to detail is first rate and very personalized and you would never guess RI is a relatively new concept. It seems like they've been doing it all their working lives, it's so slick and efficient. I can't believe they'll ever see the need to do on-site implementation again."

"SnapFulfil is everything we were hoping for; it manages and solves our specific issues and problems very well and tells us exactly what is where and the right quantities. For example, there's been a perfect count on SKUs from day one and not a miss-shipment since."

Sam was pleasantly surprised to receive direct, dedicated support from the implementation team in the weeks after Go Live, which really helped his team switch their focus quickly from ensuring orders were processed to how to utilize SnapFulfil better. They felt this approach tangibly sped up their learning curve, as they were able to answer questions in real time in the immediate aftermath of Go Live - and the ensuing 2-3 weeks saw them tweaking rules (e.g. on replenishment) and making small amendments to improve efficiencies.

When most things passed through the new WMS after Go Live, incremental volume went through the roof and Sam commented weeks later: "Without SnapFulfil I'd still be processing those orders manually now. Quite frankly I would never have caught up."

"I find Auto mode especially helpful, as SnapFulfil optimizes the work issued to the operator to maximize their productivity. I can assign them a whole queue of tasks with a few clicks of a button, because the RF gun simply tells them what to do next, and it streamlines all our processes, plus saves us valuable time, resource and money."

"SnapFulfil is very scalable too and can grow with us. I know there is nothing that I can throw at them that they can't rise to and overcome. They're proactive, knowledgeable, professional and always ahead of the curve, with never any sense of pressure or panic. Come Go Live we were perfectly confident because of all the preparation and hard work put in - and their highly flexible WMS solution is already an integral part of our business."

THE FUTURE

With all Watch Gang's inventory shortly under one roof, they will comfortably handle thousands of closed tab shipments and subscription orders in just a matter of days. And thanks to SnapFulfil it will be in perfect order and at any given moment Sam can get a perfect snapshot of everything happening on their warehouse floor.

He concluded: "Our next challenge will be reducing costs by trimming the fat from many of our previous fulfillment processes. Not only will we claw back the entire margin lost to 3PL services fees, but we will save product normally lost to 'shrinkage' as well as increase efficiency across the board."

Watch Gang are also looking at stylish customized packaging (e.g. bespoke pamphlets with the latest watches) because now they're in control and can finally fulfill to their own exacting standards.