

SENCON

CASE STUDY

3 Month Project Yields 67% Increase in Warehouse Pick Rates

OVERVIEW

Aspera Solutions & Epicor Kinetic Warehouse deliver exceptional results

"In just three months, implementing Epicor Kinetic Warehouse has led to a 67% improvement in our total part pick / putaway rates. We're picking more parts with less people, increasing revenue, and getting more out the door, with more accuracy. Job well done, Aspera!"

- Robert Young, Operations Manager, Sencon

SENCON

AT A GLANCE

COMPANY FACTS

Industry: Canning & Aerosol Manufacture
HQ: Northern Worcestershire, England, UK
Website: www.sencon.com

CHALLENGE

Inconsistencies and errors in warehousing were affecting profits, quality, and customer satisfaction levels.

SOLUTION

Epicor Kinetic Warehouse

PARTNER

Aspera Solutions

BENEFITS

- 3-month project yields 67% growth in warehouse picking ability;
- Handheld devices eradicate errors and time wasting;
- Significant improvements to sales order processing;
- More professional and accurate bin and part scanning validation;
- Expedited invoicing with detailed shipping labels;
- Improved customer service; &
- Additional innovations in stock control through cycle counting.



CUSTOMER STORY

Founded in 1976, Sencon is an SME family run business that manufactures metrology equipment specifically for canning and aerosol businesses. From its R&D and manufacturing plant in the UK, Sencon develops, builds and supplies, specialised sensors for line and machine control, on-and off-line test, inspection systems, and hi-tech gauges for measurement and quality control.

The company, which has 80 employees, has been a customer of Aspera Solutions since 2015, when it first implemented Epicor ERP to improve operations and data flow.

In 2022, when Sencon identified that issues in its warehouse were stifling growth and productivity, it engaged Aspera to implement Epicor Kinetic Warehouse (EKW).

Within six months of project go-live, Rob Young, Sencon Operations Director, has declared the project “a major success story”.

Read on to discover what triggered the project, the benefits that have been realised, and why Sencon value Aspera Solutions as its ERP partner.

WHY IMPLEMENT EPICOR KINETIC WAREHOUSE

Sencon identified the need for Epicor Kinetic Warehouse (EKW) because of warehouse issues it simply wasn't willing to accept.

Minor errors in picking and delivering parts were reoccurring regularly, and keeping track of stock and orders had become very labour intensive for the warehouse team.

As a result, the company sought a solution that was less time consuming, more accurate, and more dependable.

When operations director, Rob Young, joined the company in 2022, his experience of SAP's warehouse solution gave him the confidence to lead a project in Sencon's chosen solution, Epicor Kinetic Warehouse.

According to Rob,

“I wasn't familiar with Epicor when I joined Sencon, but I must say it has surprised me!

In particular, the implementation of Epicor's handheld devices, compared to SAP, was far superior - which I wasn't expecting!.

As a huge global brand, I presumed SAP was 'the best of the best', but the Epicor system is better.

It's easier to use, better supported and the quality of the interface is higher and more modern. All in all, it's fantastic, and so much simpler than the SAP system”.

BENEFITS REALISED WITH EKW

Over a period of three months, Aspera Solutions worked with Sencon to implement Epicor Kinetic Warehouse (EKW). And in Rob's own words,

"Reducing the time stores personnel spent on computers was the single most important objective of the whole project! Having to travel back and forth to computer terminals was wasting time in the warehouse, and allowing time for error, because people got distracted."

The use of EKW on hand held devices has eradicated that, and we're delighted with the impact that such a simple change has made".

Following the project, the additional benefits triggered have been significant.

For example:

1. Picking capacity increased 67% thanks to EKW.

Sencon 'pick to kit' via a Kardex machine that has 69 shelves and over 3000 different parts. In 2022, the 4 man warehouse team completed 18,790 picks. In 2023, the team, which was one man down due to long-term illness, had completed 23,460 picks. **That's a staggering 67% improvement that naturally delights management since the company is manufacturing more, in a shorter space of time.**

2. Sales order processing has significantly improved.

The person responsible for sales order picking has calculated that he saves a minimum of 10% of his time every day, because the process has become more streamlined and efficient

3. Bin and part scanning validation has become a lot more professional and accurate.

Prior to EKW, multiple mistakes were made in bin and part picking because many of the company's parts look alike. Now, thanks to EKW, those mistakes are eradicated because both the bin, and the part, are scanned. If the scans don't match the order being fulfilled, then an alert is triggered and rectified immediately.

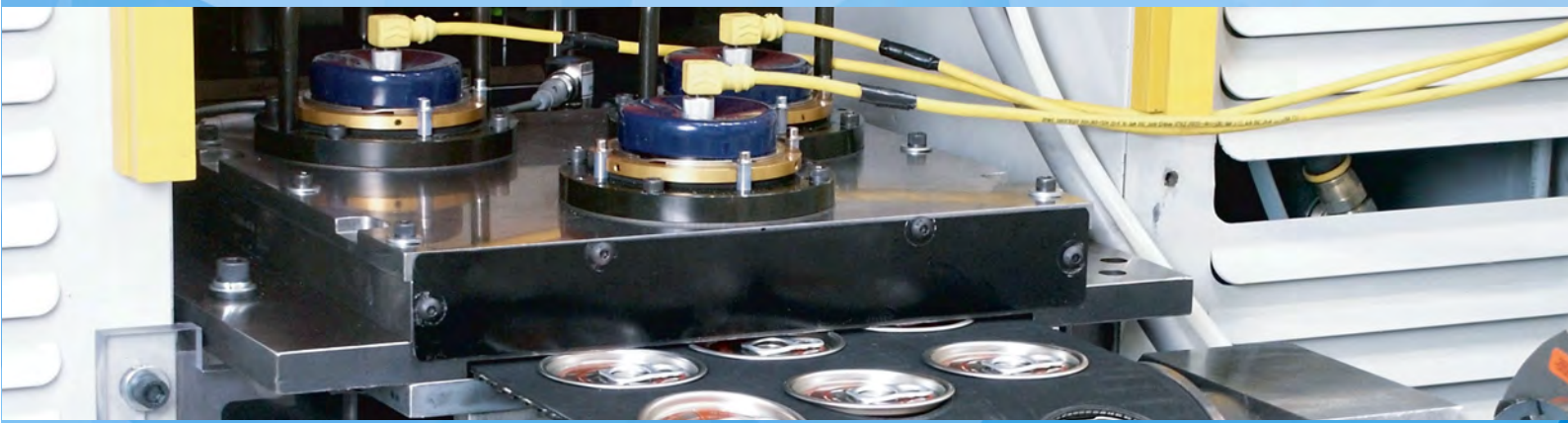
According to Rob,

"When the system was manual, mistakes were made, and sometimes not caught until the order was half way across the globe and onsite with the customer!



Thanks to EKW we're saving time, increasing accuracy, and saving money because we don't have to ship things twice".





EKW BENEFITS CONTINUED.....

4. New shipping labels are expediting invoicing and improving customer service

In the past, when Sencon packed a shipment, they would write the customer details on the box and attach a printout of the pick list, the commercial invoice, and the freight forwarders label before shipping.

Once the freight company picked up the order, records were updated and an invoice generated. However, if the operator forgot to issue the dispatch confirmation, which happened from time to time, this led to inaccurate shipment information, delayed invoicing and poor customer service.

With EKW this no longer happens because when the pack is complete, the system is triggered to print its own branded shipping label, which has the pack and order details within a barcode. When the freight forwarder collects it, the barcode is scanned, and automatically updates the Epicor system detailing that it has been shipped. The result is a more professional, branded delivery, with less errors.

5. Warehouse Location Improvements

The combined use of handhelds and barcodes has led to an increase in the accuracy of parts being warehoused correctly, because alerts are triggered if the wrong part is scanned into the wrong bin.

6. Innovations in Cycle Counting

Historically, Sencon always shut down production and shipping for a week in December to complete a stock take. But, thanks to EKW they successfully trialed a new solution in 2023 - cycle counting.

The cycle count methodology saw Sencon set quantity and value criteria against its stock, to determine how frequently it needed to be counted (e.g. Category 'A', high value parts are recounted quarterly, medium value 'B' parts, are recounted bi-annually, low value 'C' parts, are counted once a year). Then, the EKW handheld devices are used to perform regular stock counts depending on the criteria level set for that part. This means that errors are caught and rectified quicker, and actual stock levels more accurately match data reports.

In December 2023, in order to compare both techniques, Sencon ran the cycle count methodology alongside the annual stock take. The results found that the cycle count methodology was vastly superior to the annual stock take method, yielding accuracy levels of 92% or more.

OBSERVATIONS ON ASPERA SOLUTIONS

When asked about Aspera Solutions' involvement in the project, Rob responded, "I expected to see improvements from this project, but the improvements have been far greater than I expected. Everyone has chipped in, worked well together, and you guys [Aspera], made it easy."

All in all the implementation of EKW took about 3 months, using just 2 people here in Sencon. You guided us through the whole process and were at hand to answer any queries immediately.

...Without Aspera we couldn't have achieved these improvements. I'm not an IT guy but your consultants made it very easy for me to understand what we needed to do, when, and why. Coupled with that your support team is an absolute pleasure to deal with. We've come to really value your experience and the partnership we have."



KEY LEARNINGS:

DOERS NEED TO UNDERSTAND WHY THEY DO WHAT THEY DO!

While the EKW project continues to yield significant benefit within Sencon, it has also highlighted a significant flaw within the business - namely that a lack of system knowledge was damaging operational efficiency.

Labels were being produced for each part transaction, and these labels, which contain all pertinent information, were affixed to Sencon's parts to guarantee easy identification. But not everyone that needed to 'read' those labels, was taught how to. As a result, some staff were unaware of the specifics of the items they managed, or the subsequent impact that delays, or mistakes could have on the broader business operations.

As Rob commented.

"Without knowledge, the people 'doing the doing' continue to do, but they don't understand why, or its impact on the business. The EKW project and use of handhelds has made the power of real time data really clear to us, and it's become an integral part of improving our operations".



PROJECT SUMMATION

"In just three months, implementing Epicor Kinetic Warehouse has led to a 67% improvement in our total part pick / putaway rates.

We're picking more parts with less people, increasing revenue, and getting more out the door, with more accuracy.

EKW is a fantastic product, implemented by a team that we trust.

Job well done, Aspera!".

Robert Young, Operations Director, SENCON

Contact
ASPERA SOLUTIONS
to learn what Epicor Kinetic Warehouse could
achieve in your business.