



**With 80% of the U.S. market share, this agricultural giant faced an equally big challenge: just 90 days to implement a new TMS/WMS system before trainloads of produce started arriving at a new facility in Chicago —**  
**READY OR NOT.**

**SS062:**  
**Agricultural Business**

## TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE

*If a train in California is scheduled to haul carloads of carrots to Chicago...*

Remember those word problems in math class that started out this way? Well this particular scenario describes the situation Plan4Demand supply chain specialists faced when called to implement an integrated RedPrairie transportation and warehouse management system for a leading U.S. produce company. In our case, though, things were a lot more complicated:

*...Our client was replacing its homegrown business/execution systems.*

*...The client already signed a non-negotiable contract to ship at a low rate.*

*...The Chicago facility, newly purchased, was closed for refurbishment.*

*...The first shipments were slated to arrive by rail in just three months.*

The question was: With no access to visit the new facility until late in the project, could Plan4Demand consultants install, integrate, and launch a fully integrated, operational system before produce started arriving in Chicago?

## SEASONED EXPERTS DRIVE RAPID PROGRESS

With no floor plan to reference, no luxury of a learning curve, and no time to spare, Plan4Demand's logistics experts leveraged their years of hands-on technical knowledge and best-practice expertise to begin defining project requirements, identifying key resources, and setting time lines for core tasks.

**Right out of the gate, our consultants began driving process and efficiency improvements.** During the initial discovery phase of the project, we determined that our client relied heavily on FOB (Free on Board) shipments, which means that warehouse and transportation staff relied on their customers to communicate arrival times of their trucks in California.

The expectation was to continue this process in Chicago, with customers coming to the new facility to pick up their merchandise. Our team had a different idea, though, and proposed establishing a carrier base in Chicago, to improve efficiency and create additional revenue streams. A no-brainer.

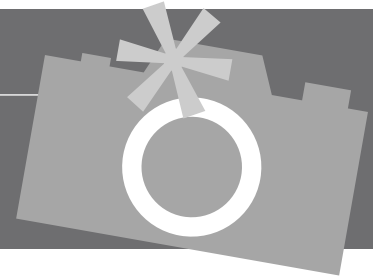
Another issue Plan4Demand uncovered was that managers, anticipating using existing servers in California, hadn't purchased any hardware for the Chicago facility. Our consultants explained why that decision wasn't viable, and helped expedite the purchase of new hardware to resolve the oversight.

And because we discovered early on that few people throughout the company had in-depth knowledge of the existing legacy systems, but that none of them had been assigned to help with migration to the new systems, we had these resources quickly reassigned to work with us without delay.

## Solution Snapshot

**Problem:** Our client had just 90 days to develop, design, and implement a new TMS/WMS system before perishable produce began arriving by the railcar load at their new distribution facility.

**Solution:** With no time to spare, and obstacles at every turn, Plan4Demand's veteran supply chain professionals leveraged their extensive expertise from Day One and came through under the wire!



### CLEARING EVERY HURDLE

Even though our consultants couldn't visit the new facility and had no idea of its layout, they still had to move forward mapping an optimal floor plan and operational flow for the site. They could work from blueprints, but none were available on-site, and they couldn't wait — even one day — for a set to be shipped. Instead, they created a mock-up based on guidance from our client's project team, then used the dummy layout to draft trial workflows and define put away and staging lanes, which they validated once the blueprints arrived, making progress despite the absence of essential resources.

In terms of configuration and integration issues, our team had to address a host of other challenges, mostly around restrictive customer requirements:

- Reverse logistics
- No put away to pick lines
- Ability to pick expired product
- The need for EDI communications
- FEFO issues (first to expire-first out)
- No commingling of FEFO Dates
- No commingling of expiration dates in a location
- Ability to receive products "blindly," without advance shipment notices

These requirements were mandated because our client's customers often make last-minute order changes and have variable shelf-life requirements. Our consultants were able to address most of these issues through configuration and integration of the WMS and TMS software packages. In some cases, though, they had to customize the software — for example, in cases where they needed the systems to ignore normal shelf-life requirements.

### NEXT STOP, CHICAGO!

Two months into the project, we completed the majority of configuration work for both the TMS and WMS packages. By the eleventh week, our team had produced most of the testing, training, and configuration documents, and trained end users on both packages, **leaving master content to train subsequent new hires**, including personnel to fill four new positions.

One day before go-live, we finished regression testing of the entire system, then purged all test data. The next morning **our client's team successfully received the first railcars at the new facility**, then put away, picked, and shipped their first customer orders — **on time and under budget!**

### DEADLINE MET — EXPECTATIONS EXCEEDED

When we asked our client's project manager what he thought about our consultants' efforts he said, **"You fulfilled our every expectation. We couldn't be happier."** He even invited our team to stay on for two more weeks, to provide additional support while end users continued getting acquainted with their new facility. Since the conclusion of this engagement, our efforts have led to a reduction in picking/shipping errors, improved inventory count accuracy, improved labor management reporting, better ability to prioritize activities for preferred clients, **and more!**

**Plan4Demand** is a consulting services firm that helps Global 500 corporations and mid-market companies increase profitability and reduce operating costs by maximizing efficiencies across their supply chains.



#### People—Process—Technology

By first collaborating with your **people**, we jointly determine the best ways to optimize your **process** requirements. Only then do we move forward with the right **technology** to help you achieve your bottom-line goals.

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