

# Eurostop and worldwide solutions

[Business](#)



Ann Summers is one of the most successful and profitable privately held companies in the UK.

It has in excess of 7, 500 party plan sales people and over 140 stores in the UK with more planned, and a rapidly expanding presence in Europe. To support this phenomenal success the company has invested carefully in IT systems that support the business, and provide a good return on investment.

Eurostop and Worldwide Solutions are both long term IT partners of Ann Summers. After automating every aspect of the branch operations from the tills, to the stock control systems with Eurostop, attention then turned to improving the efficiency of the company's warehouse facilities. Working together Eurostop and Worldwide Solutions were able to provide a tailor-made solution that has dramatically cut costs and streamlined procedures. The new solution was based on a scoping document written by Ketan Patel EPOS Executive at Ann Summers.

The document outlined how Ann Summers wanted to run its warehouse picking operation and what security measures it wanted in place, for instance password and user ID protocols. The document also went into detail about how the location would appear on screen, displaying items as the person walks around the warehouse. Wireless Warehouse Picking Ann Summers and Knickerbox warehouses are situated near the company's headquarters in Whyteleafe, Surrey. The previous stock picking and packing system meant that the discrepancy rate was running at 15%. It was all too easy for the pickers to either select the wrong products or supply the wrong amount.

This meant that staff in the stores spent valuable time chasing up missing or incorrect stock and filling out the inevitable paper work. Using Wireless Stock Picking, warehouse staff cannot miss-pick or over-pick any items on the scanner. Since installing the new system the discrepancy rate has dropped dramatically to just to 0. 2%. The system is based on Radio Frequency (RF) scanning. Worldwide Solutions undertook an extensive RF site survey of the warehouses to ensure that all the options were considered and the most suitable systems selected.

The survey took account of a whole range of issues including environmental aspects and the positions of the racking. The site survey also included a signal strength map so that base stations could be located in the best positions to give good wireless coverage throughout the warehouses.

ACiscover wireless network was installed together with Nordic IDs PiccoLink® 2000 hand-held RF terminals. The lightweight scanner has a user accessible full size PCMCIA type II slot to support a wide range of compatible PC-cards.

It uses Intel StrongARM 32 bit processing and has 16 to 32 MB of RAM and the same again of flash memory. The built in bar code scanner can be activated simply by pressing a button and the unit can be trolley mounted. Ann Summers ordered 62 of the PiccoLink 2000 units and so far only one has come to grief, run over by a forklift truck. Fully integrated retail business systems Eurostop developed the front-end software for the picking system to integrate with the existing retail management and stock management systems, also supplied by Eurostop.

The picking system is written in Windows CE so that it runs on the hand-held computers and yet is still compatible with the head office systems. All items in the warehouse have a barcode that is read by the scanner on the hand held computer. As items are picked, they are scanned, so that the system knows that they have been selected. As each item is correctly selected the picker can go onto the next item. The new system is much quicker for the pickers, and makes it much easier for the supervisor to manage because they can see exactly where everyone is, and they can see at a glance the progress being made by each member of staff. As jobs are finished the next task is allocated.

The supervisor can see exactly how many items have been picked and if they are on schedule to meet the requirements for the day. This makes it much easier to not only share the work out amongst the staff more evenly, but it also ensures the correct staffing levels and means that proactive coaching can be given to pickers who are not as quick or as effective as they might be. Fast ROI and improved customer service

The system has enabled the warehouse to go from two stages whereby the pickers gathered the products and then packers wrapped them for dispatch, to a combined operation where the pickers do both. This has cut the required staffing hours by 40% and it has reduced shrinkage. Staff no longer needed in the warehouse have been redeployed in other areas of the business, and life is more interesting for the team of 20 pickers who now have a more diverse role.

Ketan Patel explains, “ Not only have we saved time and reduced overheads, but we are now able to offer a much better service to the branches, which in

<https://assignbuster.com/eurostop-and-worldwide-solutions/>

turn saves them time and ultimately means a better service for our customers. As most of our outlets are small, boutique style shops with a limited stock capacity, it is crucial for us to have the correct stock in all sizes, so that we can make the most of every selling opportunity, particularly for our lingerie ranges, where there are many competitors on the High Street.”

The wireless networking capabilities of the system means that the Supervisor can even send messages to the pickers, for instance telling them when to go on tea break or for lunch, or asking them to come back to base. Ketan continues, “ We have seen immediate benefits and the pay back time for this project is about seven months, which is fantastic. We have also seen some equally good intangible benefits such as the amount of control we now have in the warehouse and the resulting huge improvement in our service.”

For more information contact Ruth Warlow Press Liaison PR Artistry Limited T: +44 (0) 1491 636191 W: <http://www.prtistry.com>