



Kuehne + Nagel Solution Speeds Order-Cycle for Fire-Protection Equipment Manufacturer

Warehouse network enables Ansul to get closer to customers in a faster, more cost-effective manner

SITUATION

Ansul Incorporated, a Tyco International company based in Marinette, Wis., is a pioneer in the fire-protection equipment industry. Founded in 1915, the company sells products that range from hand-held fire extinguishers to sophisticated fire-detection systems for household, business and industrial applications.

"A strong relationship with our distributor network is critical to our success," says Jim Blohm, Ansul Traffic Manager. "We either deliver the products quickly and accurately, or the distributor chooses another line."

Improving the quality of product distribution was Ansul's goal in 1992, when it began looking for a more effective distribution strategy to support a growing U.S. customer base. Using three private warehouses that received orders by fax, Ansul's typical cycle time was five days from order receipt to delivery. To expedite the process, Ansul partnered with Kuehne + Nagel subsidiary USCO Logistics, which leveraged its information systems and nationwide warehousing network to create a more efficient distribution solution.

SOLUTION

Kuehne + Nagel's distribution strategy combines the benefits of electronic data interchange (EDI) capabilities with the flexibility of multi-client warehousing to provide faster delivery to 400 Ansul customers nationwide. The solution, which initially involved managing distribution from Kuehne + Nagel's Chicago warehouse, soon expanded to four additional locations.

Each morning, Ansul sends EDI orders to Kuehne + Nagel where they are downloaded and incorporated into the shipping schedule. For Ansul, sending orders electronically reduced manual labor and order-cycle time. Together, the Kuehne + Nagel warehouses manage approximately 50 daily orders, which are picked and packed and, in most cases, shipped same day. When orders increase during the summer and fall – prime "fire seasons" – the warehouses are on call 24 hours a day to deliver products to distributors or an actual fire scene.

RESULTS

Kuehne + Nagel's variable-cost structure enables Ansul to economically expand manpower and space to support high volumes and reach new customers. Since partnering with Kuehne + Nagel, the growing company is better equipped to respond to the needs of its distributors, who now receive orders in one to three days. It also is better prepared to support future business expansion.

"Flexibility is a key benefit of working with Kuehne + Nagel," says Blohm. "As our business grows, the warehouse network will enable us to get closer to our customers in a faster, more cost-effective manner."

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