

Enhancing Warehouse Visibility, Accuracy, & Growth With Footprint® WMS

A Scalable 3PL Solution That “Just Makes Sense”

How Watco was able to gain real-time visibility, improve inventory accuracy, and streamline billing across 65+ facilities

ABOUT THE CLIENT

Watco is a third-party logistics (3PL) provider specializing in rail transportation and freight solutions. They provide freight transportation, material handling and storage, and transloading services, operating short line railroads, terminals, and ports throughout North America and Australia.

THE CHALLENGE

Watco needed a robust management software that offered real-time inventory visibility, automated billing functionalities, mobile compatibility, and versatile integrations to align all of its facilities. The solution had to accommodate a variety of contract terms and billing scenarios.

THE SOLUTION

In partnership with Datex®, Watco transitioned 52 terminal facilities across the U.S. to Footprint WMS within 12 months, successfully standardizing data entry while maintaining the ability to customize workflows as needed.



Interested in seeing how Footprint WMS's data accuracy can unlock new operational success in your warehouse?

[Preview Footprint WMS here.](#)

ABOUT WATCO

Supply Chain Experts Specializing in Logistics

Watco is a full-service third-party logistics (3PL) company that provides rail, transloading, terminal and port, and logistics services. The company operates in industrial 3PL storage, handling bulk commodities and materials such as sand, aggregate, and steel. The 3PL provider, which is headquartered in Kansas, employs nearly 5,000 team members across approximately 70 facilities.

The enterprise offers a selection of integrated services, such as:

- Transloading, including cargo handling at marine and rail terminals
- Industrial development, including securing government funding
- Permitting, including land, track, and building leasing
- Construction management, including cost estimating and budgeting
- Engineering and design, specializing in track and terminal projects
- Supply chain solutions and logistics for all modes of transportation

Operational success and cohesion are highly reliant on the management software Watco chose to employ.

The company must adequately maintain a unified system across a vast and diverse facility network and also account for nontraditional inventory types.

Deployment had to be swift and as smooth as possible, with the potential for expansion to additional terminals in the future.

THE CHALLENGE

Standardizing Operations Across Dozens of Facilities

Watco needed a system that offered real-time inventory visibility, mobile compatibility, and versatile integrations to align all of its facilities.

Its existing management processes involved manual spreadsheets and gathering information from various sources, causing discrepancies, service delays, and internal headaches.

“Whenever you bring in a new system and you're going to train users on a new system, it presents you with an opportunity to take a minute, step back and really think about the way that you're doing things and the way that you could be doing things,”

JUSTIN MARR

VP of Business Solutions at Watco

THE CHALLENGE

Watco needed software that it could easily customize, was flexible, and would meet the needs of its diverse clientele, including different contract terms and billing scenarios. Most importantly, it needed to be fully integrated to allow for standardization across all locations.

Although the general service offerings of each facility are similar, different locations still have slightly varying needs, which the chosen database must account for.

The company needed to standardize data entry as much as possible while maintaining the ability to customize the interface in a way that was conducive to each individual facility's work.

It also required an integrated billing module that could generate billing events automatically based on transactional tasks that were in progress.

THE SOLUTION

A Combination of Standardization & Customization

Watco put together a core team of cross-functional staff members to evaluate the different product offerings in the market. The ultimate decision to go with Datex and Footprint WMS was attributed to the system's ease of implementation, customization potential, and robust integrated accounting module

Watco collaborated with the Datex team to design dashboards from scratch in the WMS for key operational functions, leveraging the intuitive interface to create and modify screens quickly based on client feedback.

These customizable dashboards present teams with only essential information, illustrating a logical flow based on the way the team member enters information into the system.

"All of our facilities—65-plus—are on one common application, and that was not the case before,"

"Some terminals used one application; other terminals used a different application. So it was very difficult to look at things holistically from an enterprise-wide perspective."

JUSTIN MARR

VP of Business Solutions at Watco

THE SOLUTION

While Watco's previous system essentially just captured data without aggregating it, Footprint WMS keeps track of every transaction that's made and task that's completed.

With a clear view of what was done, by whom, and when, this detailed historical data makes troubleshooting and identifying discrepancies much simpler.

As desired, the new system could suitably house customer contracts by loading the specific details of each one into the program—this data would be the foundation for the automated billing functionalities and inventory transparency, Marr mentioned.

The Watco team leverages the necessary transactional data to build scorecard metrics internally around productivity and cost revenue, providing visibility into throughput and how it relates to revenue capture.

THE RESULTS

Speed, Reliability, & Stability Where Watco Needs It Most

To address concerns about scalability, Watco eventually deployed an additional trainer to help double the number of terminals transitioned each month.

According to Watco, some key operational benefits the company experienced with Footprint WMS are:

- High speed of adoption (transitioned 52 terminal facilities across the U.S. in 12 months)
- A streamlined user interface that simplifies the data entry process, including logical data entry flow
- Low-code customization of screens
- Robust user access controls, including implementation of single sign-on access
- Dashboarding and alerting widgets embedded within user interface screens

"Things like inventory accuracy are never solved—it's a constant discipline,"

"What drew us to Datex was the application itself. We needed something very flexible, very open. The Footprint WMS application was the leader in that by far."

JUSTIN MARR

VP of Business Solutions at Watco

THE RESULTS

- Extremely fast deployment (or “publishing”) of new designs to production
- Creation of an “Orders Hub” homepage, a one-stop shop for all Watco customer service representative users

The customer portal—a key feature of Footprint WMS—gives customers lots of flexibility by providing them with a designated place they can go to access necessary reports, run queries, and manage data in real time.

The company has plans to continue onboarding customers to the portal to expand individual account management capabilities, providing clients with more visibility into their operations.

“[Footprint WMS] really has improved our efficiency, and it's really improved our accuracy,”

“The application allowed us to really hone in and create screens from a clean slate, knowing exactly what our users need. [And for] the team members in the field that do a lot of data entry into the system, it's saving them a tremendous amount of time and improving accuracy.”

JUSTIN MARR

VP of Business Solutions at Watco



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