

Case study: The Co-operative Group



Introduction

A long-time user of a warehouse modeling tool, the logistics services team at The Co-operative Group first became aware of CLASS when the business acquired Somerfield and, along with it, a CLASS licence. Until this point in time, the team was quite happy with the technology it was using and was initially doubtful that CLASS could better it.

However, they decided to attend a Cirrus Logistics training course to learn more about CLASS and then the team, led by The Co-operative's Warehouse Design and Project Analyst, Chris Sollinger, trialled CLASS on a modeling exercise that had already been undertaken using the existing tool.

Testing CLASS

The test project was for the design of a new warehouse in Scotland, transporting an AutoCAD design into CLASS and then preparing a presentation for The Co-operative senior management team. This included an animated fly-through video which was so well received and understood that the logistics team decided immediately to use this element of CLASS for all future presentations of new depots to the board. Previously, The Co-operative had used architects to prepare these. Now Chris Sollinger and his team

Quick facts: The Co-operative Group

- **Headquarters:** Manchester, England
- **Number of outlets:** 3,750
- **Solution:** K.Sight CLASS

At a glance

- A warehouse modeling and simulation tool that uses data direct from the WMS
- Animated graphics and fly-through capabilities that demonstrate the plan with clarity
- Saves significant executive time by storing key co-ordinates from one project to the next
- No need to build up complex routing pathways for all journeys carried out in the warehouse
- Includes a unique module for investigating existing and proposed traffic movements around the warehouse site
- Generates cost savings in both the design and operations of warehouses



had a tool that they could use themselves in-house which delivered compelling presentations – achieving an instant saving in architects’ fees.

Convinced by CLASS

However, the team remained skeptical about the power of CLASS to successfully assess the real warehouse scenario until the latest generation of CLASS was released. This introduced a number of new features, key amongst which was the ability to import real warehouse activity direct from the warehouse management system. The facility meant that even faster and more accurate model building than before was now possible and that a range of simulation possibilities based on accurate and current data were now available. Chris decided that it was time to employ the technology to tackle a problem at the new purpose-designed CDC in Newhouse, Scotland which was currently under construction.

The centre had its own dedicated de-kit area where the cages, trays and other used packaging were taken off vehicles returning from making deliveries. A degree of congestion was occurring in this area and the logistics team wanted to understand its extent and explore options for improvement. This required the use of the Site Traffic Yard module of CLASS to simulate activity across the site – a capability that did not exist within The Co-operative’s previous system. Once again, The Co-operative team was trained by Cirrus, this time in the use of the module, so that the entire project could be handled in-house. The first simulation looked at movements in the de-kit area when the yard was at its busiest with both Co-operative and 3PL vehicles and it established that the perceived congestion problem was not as serious as initially thought and that there were, in fact, sufficient bays. As before, the 3D modeling and fly-through meant that Chris’s team was able to demonstrate this clearly to the depot’s general manager and the senior team before moving on to test a plan to extend the vehicle turnaround time. This, CLASS showed, would actually

result in an increase in site congestion. While the results of the simulations were convincing, Chris was also impressed by the responsiveness and reliability of Cirrus in dealing with any teething problems that arose – an important factor for a team determined to handle the work in-house.

On to the next level

With the business case now made for CLASS, the logistics services team attended an advanced training course to understand how to model pick-by-line processes. Until this time, the Co-operative Group had opted for an entirely pick-by-store approach in its warehouses. They next used the CLASS software to explore the impact on efficiency of the introduction of pick-by-line operations in a number of their warehouses.

“The graphics are a million times better than what we had before, the help function is brilliant, the modifications between projects are easy because you don’t have to change all the co-ordinates and being able to bring data in from the WMS makes a massive difference.”

- Chris Sollinger, warehouse design and project analyst at The Co-operative

