

KAPLAN LOGISTICS

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A CUSTOM WEB APPLICATION IMPROVES DISTRIBUTION CENTER BILLING AND INVOICING PROCESSES.

Kaplan Logistics' central distribution center required substantial manual activities to complete certain invoicing and payment processes. Working with West Monroe Partners, the company automated these processes—enabling it to process invoices and payments faster and more accurately.

KAPLAN LOGISTICS.

Kaplan Logistics is a division of Kaplan, Inc., a leader in the higher education, professional training, and test preparations and admissions markets with operations in 33 countries.

Kaplan Logistics operates an upper-tier publishing and distribution center for in-house products, as well as other major bookstores and publishing companies.

AUTOMATING FOR FASTER, MORE ACCURATE PROCESSING.

Kaplan Logistics' central distribution center manages various operations for the company's clients, including shipping, assembly and disassembly, returns, and warehouse inventory management.

The company sought to automate several distribution center management processes that required significant manual activities:

- ◆ Invoice generation for all services performed by the distribution center, including freight and client billing
- ◆ Creation of vouchers used to pay freight carriers

By automating these processes, Kaplan Logistics hoped to:

- ◆ Process invoices and vouchers faster and more accurately
- ◆ Reduce labor costs
- ◆ Improve the timeliness of reconciliation

For assistance, Kaplan Logistics turned to West Monroe Partners, which offered systems integration and custom application development expertise, along with strong knowledge of supply chain operations.

A SOLUTION THAT SAVES TIME AND MONEY.

West Monroe Partners began by mapping current processes and working collaboratively with Kaplan stakeholders to define specific process issues, define business requirements, and design a solution. In several cases, the West Monroe Partners project team challenged the client's identified business requirements in order to create a more effective and cost-efficient solution. For example, Kaplan Logistics initially determined that it required a unique set of prices for each service, by client. In working with the company's controller, the project team demonstrated that a "flat" pricing strategy would reduce complexity and save operational costs over the long term.

The project team then created a custom web application that would allow integration of data with the company's billing system. For example, users could either manually enter freight information or choose to import freight data automatically by using Microsoft SQL Server Data Transformation Services. The team also developed a custom utility within the application that enabled users to export voucher data in a format that can be integrated with the company's Oracle accounts payable system.

Once the system was developed and tested, West Monroe Partners helped Kaplan Logistics introduce the system to users and provided transition support and training.

The automated processes have helped Kaplan Logistics save time and money, reduce errors, and improve the timeliness of payments to freight suppliers. In addition, West Monroe Partners' approach helped Kaplan Logistics overcome one of its biggest challenges—user adoption—by involving stakeholders in the development process.

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