Datalytyx
Big Data Engineers

JD Sports: optimising warehouse processes to help drive business growth

Datalytyx expertise and Talend technology are helping the UK's leading distributor and retailer of branded sportswear and fashions to optimise warehouse operations and replenish 1,000+ stores faster and more efficiently.

Client

JD Sports Fashion Plc – leading UK specialist retailer of branded and own brand sports, casual and fashionwear.

Challenge

Replace inefficient manual and paper-based warehouse and shipping processes with a new integrated technology-driven approach, providing a better service to suppliers and supporting JD's continued business growth.

Solution

Talend Open Source ESB solution integrated with JD's Warehouse Management System (WMS) architected and deployed by Datalytyx; a Datalytyx managed service across the Talend platform.

Benefits

Streamlined warehouse operations to speed up processes, improve accuracy, remove bottlenecks, provide a more efficient and focused service for suppliers including Adidas and Nike; better supporting a three-hour replenishment model and enabling more effective daily deliveries to 1,000+ retail outlets.

JD Sports Fashion Plc is a leading multichannel retailer of sports fashion, premium fashion and outdoor brands in the UK and Europe. With more than 1,200 stores, the group is dedicated to providing its customers "with the latest products from the very best brands". To help deliver this customer promise and support ambitious growth plans, JD has embarked on a wide-ranging technology programme – which includes partnering with Datalytyx,

initially to optimise warehouse processes, and deploying tried-and-tested Talend technology.

"We'd decided that Talend was a strategic solution," says Barry Loftus, Group IT Director, JD Sports. "However, we also realised it would be a significant learning curve to get the in-house team up-to-speed on certain elements. We met Datalytyx, following a recommendation by

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Barry Loftus, Group IT Director, JD Sports

Talend. I saw immediately that Datalytyx was an excellent fit for JD, and clearly had the technical expertise we needed."

Optimising retail distribution

JD wanted to partly automate the receiving (goods in) processes at the company's major distribution centre in Rochdale. This would include the ability for the Warehouse Management System (WMS) to receive and manage Advanced Shipment Notification messages from key suppliers such as Adidas and Nike. Loftus says, "We recognised a number of areas that we needed to improve. We wanted our processes to be stronger and faster. Our replenishment model runs every three hours, so it's imperative products come into our Warehouse Management System (WMS) then out again as quickly as possible. However, our approach was still pretty manual and paper-based, so this was really a no-brainer: to streamline warehouse processes, particularly relating to big suppliers, remove bottlenecks and make everything run faster. A tremendous number of units pass through our warehouse, so speed and accuracy are vitally important to get the products out to more than 1,000 stores; many have daily deliveries."

Why Datalytyx?

As Loftus explains, "Our IT teams in Spain and France had engaged with Talend and were using some of their products. We had engaged with them for Talend Data Integration for ETL and Data Quality. Successes in these areas meant Talend was clearly seen as a strategic technology for the JD Group – and we knew that JD needed something like ESB, to provide more efficiency in integration with different systems, and so support our strategic growth plan." Talend Open Source ESB is a flexible high-performance architecture that enables organisations to seamlessly integrate heterogeneous systems and applications.

"We saw an opportunity to make savings on licenses and ETL tools," Loftus continues. "We learned more about the product including ESB and Master Data Management (MDM). We knew it would be quite a steep learning curve to get up-to-speed and establish momentum on ESB as quickly as we wanted, so Talend suggested we speak to Datalytyx. We met, and it was clear that Datalytyx would be a good fit with our culture. They had the technical expertise including a thorough grounding in ESB." Deploying the pilot solution took just 12 weeks.

Driving integration for the business

Datalytyx was asked to architect and deploy Talend ESB, alongside Talend Professional Services, then provide a managed service across the Talend platform. Design goals included a flexible solution so JD could rollout the new process to suppliers with as little effort as possible, and with suppliers able to send data in various formats using different communication methods. Project objectives included:

- Maximising the efficiency of shipping to warehouse processes, and profitability per shipment
- Minimising or completely removing manual overheads for shipping notice data entry
- Enabling JD buyers and merchandisers to proactively reach out to supplier, and to more easily address issues and challenges in the product supply process

"Datalytyx pulled out all the stops, putting in a tremendous effort," Loftus says. "It's the type of relationship you aim for all the time, but very rarely get." Key Datalytyx activities in the multi-stage ESB implementation included: raw ingestion of source messages into persistent storage area; transforming source data into standard SOAP-based message format; validating messages against Purchase Order details in the ERP system; and enabling transmission of valid data into JD's Warehouse Management System using API calls.

Delivering the goods for JD

"There are two sides to this: the technology, then the Datalytyx approach and culture fit between Datalytyx and JD," Loftus adds. "I want to build a real partnership with suppliers. When you're looking to implement new technology, you realise the landscape of IT and the opportunities available are huge. Datalytyx understands what we're trying to achieve: they know what we are looking for, in terms of our strategic path in IT to support our growth plans. We're now talking to Datalytyx about other solutions, including business intelligence and our BI strategy."

"I expect my people to work hard, and to provide quick solutions to challenges. I also expect that from suppliers. I get that from Datalytyx. When I asked them to step up and deliver, they did. We engaged Datalytyx for 12 months and I expect to extend that. We want to be self-sufficient, and Datalytyx will help us get to where we want to be. ESB will be used in a lot more areas of JD and we need control over that: demand from the business will only grow."

About Datalytyx

Datalytyx is a leading provider of big data engineering, data analytics and cloud solutions, enabling faster, more effective and more profitable decision-making throughout your enterprise. Datalytyx specialise in deployments of data driven solutions, and leading implementations into high performance data environments.

Together with industry leading partners – including Talend, Snowflake, Cloudera, Ephesoft, Tableau, Thoughtspot, Zoomdata, AWS and Microsoft Azure – we deliver high quality solutions to diverse clients across multiple sectors. Our proven design patterns for data pipelines, cloud data warehouses and Hadoop data lakes are powering real-time and batch data processing engines across an array of sectors.

Our customers are now benefiting from the ability to ingest, curate, cleanse, integrate and enrich data from any data source or IOT device, at any scale and speed. Founded in 2008, privately owned, and with customers across EMEA and the US, Datalytyx has become a specialist provider of choice for customers looking to successfully embark on, and realise the value from, modern real-time data architectures. Our Clients include AstraZeneca, JD Sports, BetVictor, Flybe, Calor Gas, iDirect and many more.

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