



Case Study

Sealskinz

Integrating SYSPRO
with Shopify, Descartes
and a 3PL system





Company Details

SEALSKINZ

Sealskinz has over thirty years' experience in developing and manufacturing endurance accessories. The Norfolk-based brand initially sold waterproof and breathable hats, gloves and socks, but has now expanded to create a full range of clothing. The company has worked in partnership with some of the world's greatest athletes, including mountaineers, explorers, cyclists, skiers, runners, sailors, as well as the British military, to ensure its products deliver the very best in comfort and performance that protect users from rain, snow, sand and mud.



The Challenge

- Integrate Shopify, Descartes and 3PL system with SYSPRO
- Separate different orders from Europe for VAT purposes
- Automate the transfer of data between various systems

Applications used

- SYSPRO
- Shopify
- Descartes
- Third-party 3PL system
- HMRC system



The Solution

- Automated order downloads from Shopify to SYSPRO
- Automated the transfer of data between Descartes HMRC
- Automated order processing from website to 3PL

Platform & Capabilities Used

- BPA Platform
 - ➔ Data Integration & Synchronisation



The Results

- BPA Platform became core middleware component of IT environment
- Streamlined order processing
- Reduced resource, memory and SQL processing



The Challenge

Integrating Shopify with SYSPRO

As a global developer, manufacturer and retailer of waterproof accessories and apparel, Sealskinz receives a lot of its orders from different European countries through its website built on Shopify. Sealskinz also uses SYSPRO for its business operations, and therefore its online orders need to be downloaded into the ERP system. Although Sealskinz had a middleware solution in place, it couldn't handle the processing required to adhere to new custom rules.

"The circumstances that initiated the first project was Brexit and the sudden requirement to pay the relevant VAT to the Internal Revenue Office (IRS). We sell a fair amount of our products into Europe through our website. However, like many other businesses in our position, we suddenly needed to separate out VAT for specific European countries to be able to submit IRS returns. We therefore needed a way of splitting up the orders so that we could analyse the VAT and submit all the returns," explained Tim Petts, IT Manager, Sealskinz.

"Prior to this, we were using an old middleware product to download our web orders from the website into SYSPRO. However, it couldn't really achieve what we needed it to do in regard to downloading the web traffic and analysing the orders."

"We therefore started looking around to see what other options were available on the market and how much time it was going to take to build what we needed to split out these Euro transactions. We discovered BPA Platform and HIT Technology, which is a Premium Solutions Partner for SYSPRO, had a quick chat and scoped out what was possible. We now had a solutions provider and an integration platform that could connect Shopify and SYSPRO together."

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The Solution

Enterprise-wide process automation

Having discovered BPA Platform and employed HIT Technology as its IT partner, Sealskinz quickly realised the integration project between its Shopify website and SYSPRO. It also now meant that BPA Platform was fully embedded into its IT ecosystem.

“David Burke is one of the most senior consultants at HIT Technology. His SYSPRO knowledge is second to none; he's fantastic with the system. He also has in-depth knowledge of BPA Platform as well. So he was the perfect guy to help build the Shopify and SYSPRO integration. David put the scope together, built the system and, after a bit of testing, we soon went live with it. As a result, BPA Platform became our main middleware between the website and SYSPRO. That system has now been running for almost four years and it's running very well. It ticked all the boxes that we needed,” enthused Tim Petts.

The next project that Sealskinz needed to focus on was when it opened a bonded warehouse at its headquarters to address the VAT implications created by Brexit. A bonded warehouse is a secure space in which goods liable to import duty and VAT are stored. Customs duty and VAT payments on these items are then deferred until the goods are sold or removed from the bonded warehouse.

“We opened up a bonded warehouse at our headquarters in King's Lynn as we wanted to bond all our stock that we buy in from China. So we utilised BPA Platform and HIT Technology again to achieve that. We set up the two APIs between SYSPRO and BPA Platform to a system called Descartes – a logistics technology platform. That was quite lengthy project. It took probably eighteen months to put together from start to finish with HMRC, registrations, licences, warehouse inspections etc., but that went very well as well,” explained Tim Petts.

“We came up with quite an automated flow to get the data in and out of the business to utilise that system. When a dispatch happens in the UK from our UK warehouse for stock that's in bonds, we need to inform HMRC that it has been released into a free circulation state or an export country, and pay the relevant duties behind it.

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The Solution

So when a dispatch happens in King's Lynn, for example sending a pair of gloves that is in a bonded state somewhere, BPA Platform updates the HMRC system. This piece of stock is left under a commodity code, CPC codes and other bits of information, and HMRC updates the records. So it's also a cash flow process as well. We haven't got to pay 10s of 1000s of pounds of duty upfront to bring stock in. We can just bring it in, bond it and we pay when the stock is released into the market. That's fully automated."

"We actually had an HMRC audit this week. That was the first time they've come to site to audit since we've gone live. And that went really well. We were in and out of the system all day and it was nice to show the auditor BPA Platform firing the data over when he was asking questions. For example, I showed him an order for a box of gloves being dispatched to a customer. He could see the transaction going through SQL, then going through BPA Platform and being passed on to the HMRC system which then showed it being removed and displayed the VAT and all the duties we're going to pay on it. I think he was quite impressed."

Sealskinz has experienced significant changes and growth in the past eighteen months, which led to the company employing a 3PL company to distribute its products.

"We were predominantly a socks, gloves and hat business. However, now we make T-shirts, hoodies, swim shorts, you name it. They're doing everything in new product development. As a result, we moved our dot.com business from our warehouse in King's Lynn, to a third party logistics (3PL) company in Milton Keynes. We now send all of our dispatch data down to the 3PL and they distribute it for us", explained Tim Petts.

"We're a seasonal business and November / December are our peak periods, due to the type of product we sell. We kicked this project off late August / September 2023 when we scoped it out with HIT Technology and the 3PL company to work out what needed to be done, as there was a lot of work and coding that needed doing to automate this as best we could. We went live mid to late October with the system, straight into a peak period. That was a massive project we completed."

"There's a lot of task development in the BPA Platform console, using Codeless Platforms' SYSPRO connector tool and web connector tool to pass strings and data from A to B. It is sending stock to the 3PL as well as receiving GRNs and ASINs back in. That system is used heavily. It's sitting there every minute, passing data over to the website, grabbing data etc. It's really impressive what David Burke wrote and configured for us."

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The Result

Improved processes and resources

The initial project to integrate Sealskinz' website with its SYSPRO ERP system set a new strategy for the business, which looked at how it could use BPA Platform to automate even more processes.

"The integration between Shopify and SYSPRO was very successful. It was a nice, straightforward implementation. It made us realise the full potential of BPA Platform and how much you can do with it. When we did the first scope, we decided that we needed to automate as much as possible. We actually achieved more than what we originally thought we could," said Tim Petts.

Now that Sealskinz has employed a 3PL as its main distributor, much of the day-to-day processing of orders has become automated, thus reducing internal resources and speeding up the process.

"Humans aren't really involved anymore. All someone does is load an order onto the system to send stock down to the 3PL, and the rest is channelled from the website. No one touches anything. An order comes down from the website into SYSPRO, passes through the system, and then goes through BPA Platform to their system. When the order is dispatched all of the data is returned and automatically posted into SYSPRO by BPA Platform and the SYSPRO connector. We've probably automated in the region of 80-90% of the system, from order entry through to the customer getting it," said Tim Petts.

Having worked with BPA Platform for over four years, Tim Petts has been extremely impressed by its versatility and ease of use.

"It's a fantastic platform. I highly recommend it. There are so many options with BPA Platform – the variety of connectors and what it can do. I suppose middleware is middleware - they all connect different platforms together - but it's the user friendliness of the GUI in BPA Platform that makes it stand out. It is quite easy to write and see the code, as well as drag and drop things around. I can also look in it and troubleshoot things myself, as well as work on the steps and tasks. Some of it is quite self-explanatory," enthused Tim Petts.

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The Result

“Our old middleware was very old school and very transaction-based, whereas BPA Platform is running side by side on some tasks, simultaneously running beside each other, and one running just slightly behind the other. It is quite impressive to see how it handles this. It doesn't take a lot of resources on the server either, which is one issue that we found with our previous solution. It was very heavy on resource, memory and SQL. BPA Platform, however, is doing a lot of the processing itself in its own front end, and then going into SQL and grabbing data. It's not using SQL to do everything.”

“I also run a VMware environment where the box sits with BPA Platform so I can throw more resources at it as and when I need to, which is handy during peak periods when I throw as much at the box as I can. During this time of year [Spring], I calm it down with more idling bits, using half the power that I normally throw at it. So that's also useful; the ability to just throw resource back and forth at the box as and when I need it.”

“We've got other projects already lined up this year, piggybacking off of what we've already done so that we can do more with it. We're also in discussions about transforming our internal integration between our warehouse management system (WMS) and SYSPRO – exploring the possibilities for the future and what options are available.”

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