

Digitalisation supporting supply chain compliance

Marks and Spencer, like retailers across the country, were contending with post-Brexit regulations that would seriously impact their operations. For the first time since Britain joined the EU, the nation was faced with the reality of being listed as a third country; products being imported and exported would now be subjected to different rules and regulations, requiring processes that the industry had not dealt with in generations.



Challenges faced by M&S

- ◆ Comply with new regulations while ensuring minimal time is added to the export process, operating as close to day one to day two delivery cycles as possible to maintain product range and shelf life.
- ◆ Products of Animal Origin (POAO), such as meat, dairy and eggs would require Export Health Certifications (EHCs) to move between the UK & EU, the creation of which requires data from across the supply chain.
- ◆ No available systems to support businesses who are facing these changes to operations.

“We needed a solution that would not only allow us to comply with the new regulatory changes we were facing but that could integrate into our existing operations with minimal disruption.”

The Solution

M&S needed to find a solution that would help them adapt to the new SPS regulations, while also minimising the impact across their stores and supply chain. The supermarket giant exports short shelf-life, perishable products as well as long-life ambient and frozen items, moving them from its distribution centres to stores across the UK, NI and EU. The processes therefore, had to be executed without consuming product shelf life and avoiding unnecessary costs.

With the future still uncertain, regulatory requirements constantly evolving and negotiations ongoing, M&S decided they needed to act. The solution came in the form of a scalable and customisable digital platform that continually aligns to developing SPS regulations – P2D Traces.

P2D conducted a thorough analysis of the operating model and customised the solution to meet their exact needs. The platform was integrated and aligned with the M&S supply chain, their logistics partner, and Official Veterinarians (OVs).

P2D Traces SPS compliance tool

- ◆ **Enables the automated creation of digital EHC schedules and documentation.**
- ◆ **Provides full food traceability enabling OVs to sign off on the compliance of food products and issue the relevant SPS certificates.**
- ◆ **Simplifies and streamlines the import and export process.**

Simplifying the complex

By utilising the P2D Traces solution, M&S were able to standardise compliance across their supply chain. The platform was aligned and integrated alongside M&S's logistic partner providing the data and documentation required for the seamless movement of goods. The data collected is aggregated and used to create EHC schedules, simplifying the process of completing these documents and providing the OV with the evidence required to sign off on products. This results in less OV time spent on site and reduced costs for the business.

By using the P2D Traces platform, M&S achieved day one to day two delivery cycles, resulting in only hours added to operations to comply to new regulations. Other businesses, however, lost days (day one - day five) on their delivery cycles of complex loads and composite products.

Prepared for the future

Over 300 suppliers in the M&S supply chain were onboarded onto the P2D platform. During the process, they were given bespoke training, provided by a dedicated team of account managers, benefitting from their expert knowledge in SPS EHC requirements. P2D continue to provide one to one support, ensuring that the suppliers and M&S are getting the most from the platform as it goes through regular updates to stay aligned with changing dates and regulations.

By partnering with P2D and implementing the solution, M&S were able approach the new regulations in a planned and coordinated manner, limiting the impact and disruption to their existing operations. In what remains a volatile environment even 12 months post-Brexit, M&S find themselves futureproofed with their import and export operations based in an agile, digital environment.

Benefits:

Reduces the data collection burden and admin for exporters by collating and presenting data from across the supply chain as evidence for sign-off by OVs - unique to the P2D platform.

Full visibility of suppliers and carriers with itemised inventory, including all required documentation at the point of load.

Automated creation of EHC schedules and certification in-line with government regulations.

Hypercare to proactively manage issues before they arrive at the border, avoiding disruptions and facilitating the Just-In-Time operations.

Standardises compliance processes across the supply chain, removing the need for multiple spreadsheets and SharePoint sites.

Reduces internal development time, costs and complexities with a solution that aligns with evolving SPS EHC requirements.

Rob Barnes

Chief Technology Officer, M&S

"Post Brexit, the supply chain environment has substantially changed. We needed a solution that would not only allow us to comply with the new regulatory changes we were facing but that could integrate into our existing operations with minimal disruption. With regulations changing, and deadlines staggered, we also needed an agile solution that adapted in line with this.

It continues to change and evolve at pace and represent challenges for our food business. Working with P2D has enabled us to adapt to these changes in regulation, improve and develop our supply chain solutions and maintain an innovative customer offer."

P2D Traces supported M&S to achieve*:

99.6% of exports to ROI arriving on time

100% of exports to NI arriving on time

100% of exports to France arriving on time

97% of stock received from suppliers has been capable of being exported, this is despite volume doubling and more complex products being launched

*Statistics collated during 2021 Christmas trading period.

