

## Order Management

### *The Logistics Management Solution Designed Expressly for Cement Distribution*

**Order Management** from Process Solutions was designed with and for cement producers. Since the product's initial implementation in 1997, it has evolved to become a comprehensive and flexible front end 'Bill of Lading' solution for the cement industry, able to create and manage a full range of sales and material transfer transactions for bulk and bag cement and associated materials.

As the core module of Process Solutions' **Cement Distribution Management** suite, *Order Management* has been interfaced with a number of different financial/ERP systems, and is designed to work with any or all of Process Solutions' range of *Loading Management* alternatives, including both self-service and operator-controlled automated loading interfaces for bulk product, and simple order completion for both bulk and bag transactions.

### **Cement Logistics**

The diverse and complex logistical requirements for effective distribution of cement and associated construction materials include a number of transaction types which are not easily handled by generic order management systems. These include:

- ↔ Preloads (or 'speculative' loading)
- ↔ Multiple line item shipments
- ↔ Alternative product names ('aliases')
- ↔ Substitutions
- ↔ Certification/specification requirements
- ↔ Shipping document requirements
- ↔ Pickups AND deliveries
- ↔ En route diversions
- ↔ Order type changes
- ↔ Full and partial returns
- ↔ Third party orders

Additionally, unlike other systems, which are designed to be either fully centralized or fully distributed, *Order Management* is configurable to operate in either mode, or even a combination of both.

### **Preloads**

Preloads are commonly used by cement shipping facilities to reduce the demand for loading during peak hours, or to provide a means of distributing inventory closer to customers without having to build expensive fixed storage facilities. The *Order Management* application recognizes Preloads as a distinct transaction type. Unassigned preloads are easily retrieved to assign or 'attach' to a sales or stock transfer order.

### **Multiple Line Item Shipments**

Particularly for bag product, a single truck may be loaded with several 'orders'; either different products for the same destination or for multiple destinations. The *Order Management* application allows each order to be designated as a 'line item', so that multiple orders may be linked together as a single 'shipment'.

### **Alternative Product Names**

Although material is always stored under the producers 'inventory name', the contract with a customer may refer to a different name, possibly reflecting a specific usage or certification requirement. The *Order Management* application allows any order for which an alternative name is specified in the customer contract to be shipped under that alternative name, although the inventory transaction will reflect the inventory name.

### **Substitutions**

In some cases, a customer contract may allow for substitution of a requested material which is not available in inventory with another material with equivalent or better specifications. The *Order Management* application notifies the user if a requested material is not in stock, and provides the option of assigning an authorized substitute. Either the original or substituted material may be identified on the Bill of Lading.



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*Order Management Cont.*

### Certifications

Many customer contracts require material delivered to them to be certified by the appropriate agency for its purpose. These certifications are frequently regional (e.g. state) and requirements vary from product to product. The *Order Management* application will recognize what certifications apply to each inventoried product, and based on the customer contract, will enable printing of the appropriate certification on the Bill of Lading.

### Shipping Documents

In some cases, a customer contract may require additional documentation to supplement the specifications provided on the Bill of Lading. Based on the contract requirements, the *Order Management* application can specify printing of additional documents such as mill certificates to supplement the Bill of Lading.

### Full & Partial Returns

Product may be returned to the producer for a variety of reasons. The customer may not require the full amount shipped, the product supplied may have been incorrect, unacceptable, or simply not required at the time of delivery. The *Order Management* application handles both the return transaction, including re-weighing (if necessary), receipts and credits, and the material re-assignment transaction.

### Pickups and Deliveries

Cement distribution facilities must be able to handle a range of orders, from those, which are picked up with no advance warning by a customer-dispatched vehicle, to those which are scheduled well in advance for future deliveries. The *Order Management* application handles these circumstances with equal ease. For example, orders scheduled in advance may be created at a centralized order desk and assigned for completion to the designated loading point, while unscheduled pickup orders may be created when the customer-dispatched vehicle arrives.

Using driving time calculations from MapPoint® software, the system can even flag scheduled deliveries which are in jeopardy or already late.

### Diversions

From time to time, delivery shipments are diverted en route from one destination to another, as a more urgent requirement is identified. Additionally, shipments which are originally sent as sales orders may be diverted to another distribution point as a stock transfer, or a stock transfer may be re-assigned to a customer. As long as a transaction has not been submitted to the financial system, it may be re-assigned through the *Order Management* application, providing Logistics management with the ability to optimize both inventory and delivery capacity.

### Third Party Orders

Cement producers frequently enter into reciprocal arrangements with other cement producers to supply product to each others customers, providing the customers with both convenience and material availability. The *Order Management* application provides the ability to assign Bill of Lading numbers to future third party orders, to print or electronically transmit the Bill of Lading form, and to complete the transaction record for submission to the financial system.

### Flexible Architecture

The *Order Management* application has been designed to be configured either with a centralized database and applications server OR in a distributed mode. In the centralized architecture, remote users can access the system using a Citrix® 'thin client' application.

When coupled with Process Solutions' *Loading Management* modules at loading points, a centralized system can 'replicate' dispatched order records automatically to the designated loading point database, and receive the completed order record after loading.

### For More Information

**John Crabb**, Manager, Cement Distribution Solutions

Telephone: 780.452.2227 ext. 5270

E-mail: [john.crabb@pscl.com](mailto:john.crabb@pscl.com)

Visit our web site at [www.pscl.com](http://www.pscl.com)

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