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A sourcing tale, part II: The perils and promotions making up fresh produce life

...Continued from last month.

At the daily meeting, Alison is organising tomorrow's production schedule by dragging and dropping works orders on a big plasma screen, with some help from Jon and Gavin.

'Two main changes,' says Gavin, looking at his forecast report. 'First, we've got a competitor promotion starting up. Second, sales of our new-season range are coming in more than 20 per cent ahead of this week's programme - and it's only day three.'

Meanwhile, down on the production line, Mike is signing in his shift to line 3 on the touchscreen. He selects the first production order displayed and presses Start.

Elsewhere Mario is preparing for his first despatch on the afternoon shift. Lifting the scanner from its holster, he clips it into the forklift cab bracket and selects Outloading to view the trips and then Pick to begin. The screen directs him to pick the first pallet at aisle 3, level 1, position 12.

'You owe me one,' says Jon, putting the phone down and grinning.

'Guess what?' he says to Alison. 'I've just made a couple of grand selling the excess we were worried about.' She looks over at the consignment profit view displayed on John's laptop. 'Nice one, maestro!'

There's a red FAIL message on Krista's tablet. 'Goods on this pallet have the wrong price,' she says accusingly to Mario. He shrugs. 'Don't blame me - I didn't label them. You got 30 minutes before the truck gets here.' She zaps the pallet label and clicks BLOCKED, slaps on a QC Hold, and marches off to production.

'Thanks Krista - the order ran over this morning, line leader on second shift wasn't reminded about the price change - I'll get it sorted right now. MIKE! I NEED YOU!', yells Alison.

'Trev - it's Gavin again - how about a BOGOF on the farm fresh lines? I reckon this will play nicely against your Oppo and looks like we can secure a good margin contribution for you right now. I've some ideas on the packaging too - let me send you the pricing we've modelled on the system. Speak tomorrow.'

Mario clicks Send ASNs, pulls the despatch paperwork from the printer, hands it to the driver and confirms his last outbound truck of the day, watching as the vehicle departs into the night.

It's quiet in the now empty packhouse - almost. From the IT room some whirring and a click can be heard: a small cartridge tape has just been ejected. The monitor now reads:

Brian, your ERP software backup is complete and verified.

100.0% of customer orders were satisfied today!!!!!!

And a little while later:

Hello gorgeous! It's going to be a totally awesome day...