How Rocket Dog Strengthened its 3PL Partnership and Unlocked £180,000 in Savings

value through insight™

A story of specialist expertise, better visibility and smarter logistics management

> ERA Group brought the specialist logistics expertise we did not have in-house. They helped us challenge costs, improve visibility and strengthen our supplier relationship, without disrupting the service our customers rely on.

Mike Routledge, General Manager, Rocket Dog Europe

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The Right Time to Look Under the Hood

Rocket Dog has always been a brand built around movement.

Originally launched in California in 1997, the women's footwear brand has grown around a simple promise: relaxed, contemporary style designed for everyday comfort. Today, Rocket Dog serves customers through major retailers, online channels and international markets, making the smooth movement of stock from warehouse to customer a critical part of the business.

In the UK, that supply chain had been working. Rocket Dog had a positive relationship with its incumbent third-party logistics provider. There was no sense that the supplier was acting unfairly or that the partnership was broken. In fact, the relationship was constructive.

The business wanted to understand whether its current approach to their logistics was still the right one - not because something had gone wrong, but because the market had changed, costs were rising, and standing still was not an option.

The timing was important. Rocket Dog's 3PL contract was coming up for renewal, creating a natural opportunity to review warehousing, delivery, reporting, processes and commercial terms before committing to the next stage of the relationship.

For Mike and the UK team, the question was not simply: "Can we save money?"

It was: **"Are we managing our logistics operation in the best possible way for the future of the business?"**

The Challenge: Good Relationship, Limited Internal Bandwidth

Like many growing businesses, Rocket Dog's leadership team was close to the day-to-day realities of the business. They understood the pressures, the customer expectations and the importance of reliable fulfilment.

But third-party logistics is a specialist field. The detail can be difficult to challenge without the right operational background: warehouse charges, pallet storage costs, picking and packing processes, reporting quality, inventory controls, cut-off times, delivery models, Amazon fulfilment and contract protections all need to be understood in context.

Rocket Dog recognised that it did not have a dedicated operations manager with the depth of 3PL expertise needed to fully benchmark costs, challenge supplier proposals and identify practical opportunities for improvement.

This was where ERA Group came in.

Through a shared connection with the British Footwear Association, ERA Group Consultant David Smith was introduced to Mike at Rocket Dog. After an initial Opportunity Assessment, it became clear that the 3PL contract renewal was the right place to begin.

ERA Specialist Kevin Davies then joined the project, bringing more than 35 years of warehousing and distribution experience. For Rocket Dog, Kevin effectively became an extension of the internal team - a specialist adviser embedded alongside the internal team who could look under the hood, ask the right questions and challenge the detail in a way the business did not have the time or specialist knowledge to do internally.

Not About Replacing the Supplier - About Improving the Partnership

One of the most important aspects of the project was what ERA Group did not do.

This was not a supplier-bashing exercise. Rocket Dog did not want to replace the incumbent supplier for the sake of it. The relationship was strong, and the business wanted to retain the value of that partnership where it made sense.

ERA's role was to bring structure, expertise and commercial challenge to the relationship.

Kevin's experience meant he knew what good should look like: what pricing should be reasonable, what contract terms should protect the client, what operational reporting should provide, and where inefficiencies could be addressed. Just as importantly, the supplier understood that they were now dealing with a specialist who knew the 3PL market in detail.

The result was a more focused and constructive conversation between Rocket Dog, ERA Group and the supplier. Instead of long reports that did not always provide the right clarity, the emphasis shifted towards the information that mattered: relevant data, clearer actions, stronger reporting and a more strategic view of the logistics operation.

A Two-Phase Approach: Commercial Challenge, Then Operational Improvement

The project moved quickly because Rocket Dog's team, notably Sarah Wright and Amira Burzic, were engaged, responsive and open to collaboration. Data was provided rapidly, often in days or even hours, allowing Kevin to benchmark costs, test assumptions and negotiate from a position of evidence.

ERA Group approached the project in two clear phases.

The first phase focused on the commercial position and the need for better operational reporting. Kevin could see there was an opportunity to remove cost and inefficiency from the existing 3PL processes, but the aim was not to create conflict with the incumbent supplier. Instead, ERA Group worked constructively with the 3PL provider to challenge the cost base, test the proposed commercial terms and identify where improvements could be made.

At the same time, Kevin benchmarked Rocket Dog's position against the wider market. This confirmed that there were alternative commercial opportunities available and gave Rocket Dog a stronger negotiating position. The incumbent supplier understood that the contract could not simply roll forward without challenge. If the proposed terms could not be improved, the contract was genuinely at risk, and there were alternative suppliers ready to step in who were capable to rising to the challenges Kevin was setting.

This created a more focused and constructive negotiation. The supplier was given the opportunity to respond, improve its position and demonstrate how it could continue to support Rocket Dog in a way that was commercially competitive and operationally fit for the future.

Once the commercials had been agreed, the project moved into the second phase: contract negotiation and process improvement.

ERA Group worked with Rocket Dog and the supplier to introduce stronger KPIs, improved reporting and better inventory controls, supported by an action plan to keep progress on track. The focus moved beyond price alone and into the practical detail of how the logistics operation could be managed more effectively day to day.

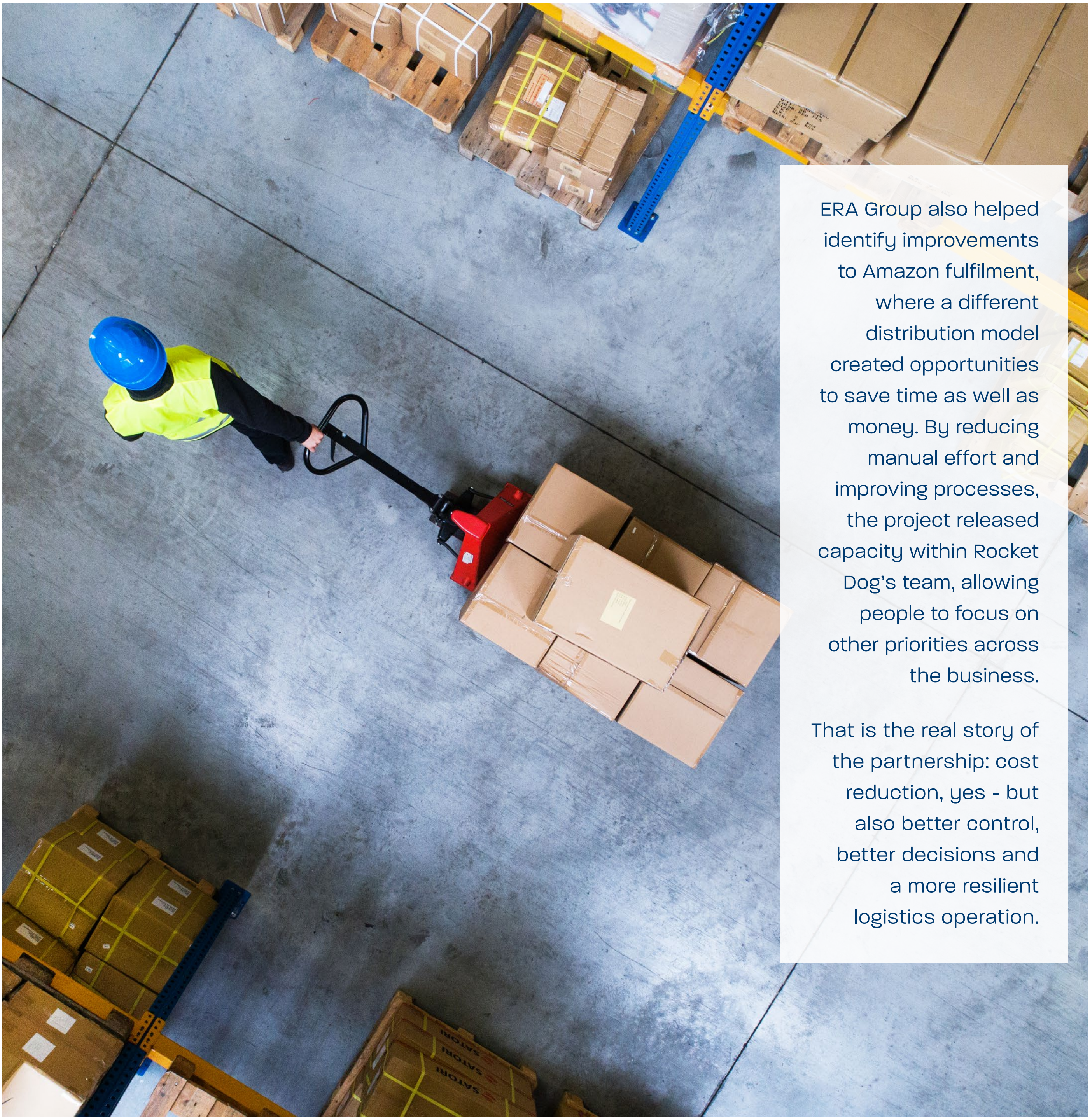
Some improvements were customer-facing. One simple but meaningful change was extending the next-day order cut-off time from 3pm to 5pm, allowing more orders to be dispatched for next-day delivery and improving the customer experience.

Others were about protecting the future. ERA Group helped renegotiate contract terms to reduce Rocket Dog's exposure to future commercial risks.

£180,000 Saved - But That Was Only Part of the Value

**The project delivered approximately £180,000 in 3PL savings.
But the wider value went beyond the number.**

Rocket Dog gained stronger supplier accountability, better operational visibility and greater confidence in its logistics decision-making. The business now had clearer reporting, improved inventory controls, a more robust contract and a more structured way of managing its 3PL relationship.



ERA Group also helped identify improvements to Amazon fulfilment, where a different distribution model created opportunities to save time as well as money. By reducing manual effort and improving processes, the project released capacity within Rocket Dog's team, allowing people to focus on other priorities across the business.

That is the real story of the partnership: cost reduction, yes - but also better control, better decisions and a more resilient logistics operation.

Extending the Partnership Beyond Logistics

ERA Group is also working with Rocket Dog's UK business on a review of payments and merchant card fees. This represents a natural extension of the partnership into another important area of the ecommerce cost base, where payment-processing costs can often be overlooked because they are embedded within day-to-day trading.

For PayPal, annual costs of approximately £31,000 are forecast to reduce by around £14,000 at current activity levels, bringing the annual cost down to approximately £17,000. This represents a potential saving of around 45%.

Further operational changes are also expected to increase PayPal's average transaction size, although no additional savings have been assumed at this stage.

Card payment fees are also being reviewed. Current annual spend is approximately £59,000 and, based on recent comparable projects, ERA Group believes there may be potential to reduce this by around 40% through a change of supplier.

If achieved, this would represent an indicative saving of approximately £24,000 per year, reducing annual card payment costs to around £35,000.

As this work is still in progress, the figures remain subject to supplier change, transaction mix and implementation decisions. However, the review demonstrates how specialist category expertise can be applied across Rocket Dog's wider ecommerce operating model, while maintaining the focus on service quality, customer experience and operational continuity.

> **"This was never just about reducing cost. It was about bringing in expertise we did not have internally, improving the way we work with our 3PL partner and giving the business better visibility, stronger processes and more confidence for the future."**
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> *Mike Routledge, General Manager, Rocket Dog Europe*

A Three-Year Partnership, Not a One-Off Review

The work with Rocket Dog is not finished.

ERA Group's engagement is structured over three years. Kevin remains involved in operational issues and will continue supporting Rocket Dog throughout the engagement.

That ongoing involvement is important. Logistics is not static. Volumes change, customer expectations evolve, supplier costs shift and ecommerce models continue to develop. By staying close to the operation, ERA Group can help Rocket Dog continue to identify improvements, challenge costs and adapt its logistics model over time.

For Rocket Dog, the partnership has created a stronger platform for future growth.

Savings can be reinvested into the business. Time can be redirected to strategic priorities. And the supply chain can become a source of competitive advantage rather than simply an operating cost.

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