

Solzon Automates National Ice Cream Manufacturer's Warehouses with RF Solution



Case Study

Radio frequency technology is deployed to eliminate paper-based system, improve inventory accuracy and product traceability.

Inventory movement and control was automated to improve worker efficiency and eliminate paperwork. Using Cisco backbone, Motorola MC9000 and VC5090 RF mobile computers, users now scan bar-coded pallet tags printed on Zebra QL420 mobile printers. Information is recorded real-time, on-line as materials are moved throughout the warehouse. Scanning saves time and improves data accuracy by eliminating keying errors and missed entries previously recorded on paper documents.

Our client is now able to electronically control inventory levels and reduce production line downtime caused by inventory shortages or errors. Using mobile computers and barcodes; product is received, put away and picked for delivery to production. Bar code labels are scanned for every movement of inventory to ensure the right materials and the right quantity is delivered. Our client is saving time and money, and improving overall efficiency.



Client Overview:

- Publicly held food processing business, annual revenues of \$2B
- Founded over eighty years ago
- Product focus - premium ice cream products
- Multiple production & warehouse facilities across the U.S.
- Products sold and distributed nationally

RF Solution Streamlines Inventory Control

Because accurate data is now available in real-time, raw material inventory control has improved greatly. By automating the 3,000 to 4,000 daily transactions our client has been able to improve the accuracy of inventory, reduce the number of warehouse staff, minimize the amount of overtime, decrease time spent on cycle counts and physical inventories and reduce their overall inventory stocking levels. Workers are happy because they can focus on their jobs and don't have to spend time searching for inventory or correcting errors that were caused by the previous paper-based systems. All of these benefits are the result of adopting an on-line real-time system.

Production Benefits by Eliminating Manual Paperwork

From a production standpoint, line workers are able to ensure that the production processes are not interrupted by inventory shortages. By having the right inventory in the right quantities in the right place at the right time the efficiency of the production lines has increased. Line workers no longer have to sift through reams of paper to determine if something is missing. Having the production lines humming at near zero downtime has obviously improved efficiency and also improved the relationship between the production line workers and the raw materials inventory staff.

Special points of interest:

Wireless network & RF equipment was installed in four warehouse locations to-date:

- Bakersfield CA
- Laurel MD
- Ft. Wayne, IN
- Tulare, CA

ROI achieved in less than 11 months!

Solzon Works with Client to Deliver Total Solution

“The payback on this project came as soon we turned the new system on. Our management team was surprised that we experienced an ROI of 11 months compared to the 2 years that they had expected.”

Solzon consultants analyzed the current activities and flow of each functional area. A conceptual “vision” was created of how those processes could be adjusted or reworked to take advantage of RF technology. The “vision” was translated into the actual automated workflow & steps needed to make it work.

The first step of the solution is bar coding key information to enable quick and accurate scanning of data. Bar code labels are used to identify locations, items, and lot numbers. Next, mobile computers are chosen and programs are created to: collect transaction data, and

direct users through business processes as well as inquire against the inventory control system data. To enable product tracking and visibility at the pallet level, a unique identifier (license plate or pallet tag) was assigned for each pallet. Once a pallet is defined, the resource, lot, warehouse and location are always known to the system.

To enable real-time, automated, data capture and updates to inventory, all critical processes were RF enabled. This allowed the necessary activity to be transacted in an on-line, real-time basis without the need for paperwork.

“Great job Solzon!! We look forward to working with you on future projects. We value our relationship and are always interested in your innovative ideas. Keep them coming.”

Selecting The Right Equipment Enables Success

Motorola, Zebra, Printronix and Cisco products were implemented, including the following handheld, vehicle mounts and printers.

Mobile Computers:

- Symbol MC9000 handhelds
- Symbol VC5090 vehicle mounts

Printers:

- Zebra QL420 (wireless) & Z4M printers
- Printronix Model T5304r wireless thermal printers

Cisco wireless backbone:

- Catalyst wireless switches
- Aironet 802.11b access points
- NEMA enclosures

About Solzon Corporation

Solzon Corporation is a technology integration consulting firm focused on providing its customers with enterprise mobility inside and outside the four walls of their business. Utilizing technologies such as mobile computing, advanced data capture, RFID, wireless networks and network security Solzon provides turnkey solutions that impact the bottom line. These include worker mobility, inventory tracking, asset management, field mobility, and warehouse automation. Since 1995 Solzon has specialized in providing integrated business automation solutions that improve worker/process efficiency, increase data accuracy, and reduce manual processes.

Focused on delivering solid solutions, return on investment, and creating long term value.

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