



MANUFACTURER ADAPTS TO SEASONAL DEMAND WITH ADVANCED WAREHOUSE SYSTEM

ORBIT IRRIGATION PRODUCTS, INC.

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH



industry

MANUFACTURING AND DISTRIBUTION

applications

INVENTORY CONTROL

situation

Orbit Irrigation Products, Inc. is a worldwide leader in manufacturing and distributing both residential and commercial irrigation products. The 300-employee company distributes products to all 50 states, as well as globally. Orbit operates four distribution centers; its main distribution center, staffed with 65 employees, is based at company headquarters in North Salt Lake, Utah.

critical issue

Due to rapid sales growth, Orbit began experiencing inefficiencies with its paper-based warehousing system. For example, during busy selling seasons, warehouse operations were hamstrung by phantom or misplaced inventories that were difficult and time-consuming to locate. Also, forklift drivers would roam aisles at random, seeking to find open locations to stock overhead inventories.

reasons

The paper-based inventory control card system was adequate during lull times, but too slow and inefficient during peak selling seasons. Orbit's business is highly seasonal. Weather patterns during spring and summer months can cause demand for Orbit's products to rise rapidly, which, in turn, requires rapid order processing and shipping to meet demand. These shipping delays could result in canceled customer orders in favor of competing products to meet seasonal demand.

vision & capabilities

Orbit needed a warehouse management system that ensured inventory accuracy and directed workers to their next step in the most efficient manner. Orbit's management concluded real time warehousing transactions and bar code verifications were the only way to realize the company's vision of keeping labor and inventory costs down while increasing customer satisfaction.

intermec solution

Intermec and Auto-Soft, an Intermec business partner, supplied Orbit with the Warehouse Rx system, using 18 900 MHZ JANUS™ JR2020 Hand Held Computers, a 9180 Network Controller, and a 9181 Base Station Receiver. Bar codes on upper storage locations in the warehouse were read with long-range scanners.

benefits

Orbit now processes 20-30% more total orders every day with the same number of workers. Also, the company is now able to reliably and efficiently locate products on demand. Prior to the installation of Warehouse Rx, Orbit nearly always had at least one worker roaming the aisles at random in order to find a given product. That does not happen anymore. Warehouse Rx allows Orbit to use either random or dedicated put-away slots, thereby allowing the company to make better use of storage space. In so doing, Warehouse Rx has doubled forklift operators' hourly output, while eliminating the problem of product shortages in dedicated pick locations. The new system's cost savings will cover the capital investment in less than 18 months.