



CLOTHING MANUFACTURING INCREASES SHIPPING CAPACITY

APPAREL MANUFACTURER

UNITED STATES



industry

MANUFACTURING – CHILDREN'S APPAREL

applications

SHIPPING/RECEIVING

situation

A major manufacturer of children's clothing had difficulty in keeping up with increasing demand for its products. The company's 335 U.S. stores and catalog sales accounted for approximately \$300 million in 1996 revenues.

critical issue

All of the company's clothing is manufactured overseas then shipped to the company's northern California warehouse. From there it is distributed throughout North America. In early 1994, product deliveries were slowed by bottlenecks in the shipping department. This resulted in long delays and the inability to trace shipments during busy seasons (Back-to-School and Christmas). The company's finance department was dissatisfied with the inability to report shipments accurately, and the stores were dissatisfied with the inability to check exactly which products they were receiving, and when they were receiving them.

reasons

Labor at the northern California shipping center was deployed inefficiently because workers were sent from one central location with paper pick orders. They would find the proper container, place the clothing on a conveyor belt, then walk back to the central location to obtain another paper pick order. Too much time was spent walking back and forth.

vision & capabilities

The company told Intermec it wanted to create a system that would maximize workers' picking time near the clothing containers and conveyor belts.

intermec solution

After working with Intermec, a conveyor supplier (W&H System, Carlsberg, New Jersey) and a software provider (A&L Systems, New Jersey), the clothing manufacturer installed a "pick-to-light" conveyor system. This system makes it easy for temporary workers to look for a light flashing above a bin, indicating the location and quantity of clothing items to be picked (i.e. five blinks equals five units). As each worker fulfills a pick order, he or she scans the article's bar code label, and enters the quantity of items actually picked (in case not enough items were available to fulfill the work order). Sixteen Intermec JANUS™ JR2020 Hand Held Computers are used in the shipping center.

benefits

Shipping efficiency per worker has increased 20%, and overall shipping capacity at the Northern California warehouse has increased by 30%. In addition, real time report information, readily accessible by the warehouse manager or anyone on the network (including finance), allows the company to more accurately forecast and generate information to and from individual stores.