



8-YEAR OLD BOY GIVES BAR CODE SYSTEM "THUMBS-UP" FOR EASE OF USE

LANDIS & STAEFA, INC.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS



industry

SERVICES

applications

INVENTORY CONTROL

situation

Landis & Staefa designs, installs and services building management systems for hospitals, office buildings, universities and varied industries. The company provides heating, lighting, air conditioning, security, and fire prevention systems for buildings. Landis & Staefa has 4,000 employees and 150 field offices throughout North America.

critical issue

Landis & Staefa was spending tens of millions of dollars on material tracking and supply chain activities to keep track of the many parts incorporated into their heating, air conditioning and security systems. The company was concerned that inventory costs would continue to rise.

reasons

The company was using a paper-based inventory control system. Management believed the efficiency of switching from manual to automated inventory control would result in major savings, due to the economies of scale involved. For example, they already knew the average amount of time it took to issue a receipt when receiving inventory was 4 minutes and 20 seconds. They hoped this time could be reduced.

vision & capabilities

More than anything else, Landis & Staefa wanted a new inventory control system that would be easy to use and readily accepted by their employees. Data collection and dissemination using bar code scanners looked like a promising solution, but Alex Kentfield, manager of logistics systems at Landis & Staefa, wanted to be sure about user friendliness, so he devised a unique experiment. He set up his 8-year old son Philip with a scanner, a bar coded box, and an improvised warehouse. Kentfield told his son to receive the box into inventory with the equipment, supported by ConnectSIP, an Oracle-based software package developed by Intermec's business partner, Connectware Solutions of Montreal, Quebec (Canada). Philip performed the tasks easily.

intermec solution

By March 1997, Landis & Staefa had installed new wireless bar code systems at 13 branches in the United States. Each branch is equipped with one 2.4 GHz radio frequency (RF) gateway from Intermec, along with at least one JANUS™ MODEL JR2020 Hand Held Computer with built-in scanner, and a MODEL 1551 Laser Scanner tethered to another terminal for backup.

benefits

Landis & Staefa has drastically reduced processing time of inventory receipts: with bar code scanners, it now takes 11 seconds to do something that required 4 minutes and 20 seconds with a paper-based system. Encouraged by the results, the company already has plans to install Intermec equipment at an additional 80 branches in the U.S. Just as 8-year old Philip Kentfield did, employees find the scanners easy to use.