25 years delivering dependable, global QAD Data Collection

THE COMPANY

MiTek New Zealand Ltd. specialises in the development of software solutions for structural timber engineering and the provision of steel connector products for floor and roofing systems. As specialists in the building components industry, MiTek has been a market leader for over forty years and MITEK systems, LUMBERLOK timber connectors and BOWMAC structural brackets are clear brand leaders in their respective markets.

As a subsidiary of MiTek USA, a Berkshire Hathaway company, MiTek New Zealand Ltd. works to continually streamline building component design for improvements in timber truss and wall-frame design solutions and associated fixings, including the manufacture and supply of a wide range of hardware products, computer systems, engineering design services and roof truss and wall framing fabrication equipment.

The company utilises the most advanced and the most efficient design software programmes in the industry and, as well as a commitment to research and development both internationally and within New Zealand, provides innovative and extensive technical support to its customers.

THE CHALLENGE

RF Express™ for QAD is the answer to the countless problems associated with data collection, such as labour-intensive manual systems, excessive paperwork, inaccurate and invalidated collections and delayed data posting. The project to integrate RF Express for MiTek New Zealand Ltd. had the clear objective of improving inventory accuracy within two large warehousing sites, so as to better manage movement of inventory from production to the warehouse, distribution order shipment and receipts and sales order shipments.

HOW EAGLE MET THE CHALLENGE

The project was split into three phases, beginning with installing RF Express within the distribution centre. It was crucial to remove an existing, customised programme which forced users to delete previous sales orders

and prevented reconciliation with the shipment and product receipt.

The second phase was to move both warehouse sites from single-location to pallet-location warehousing, giving increased control of the actual location of each product and also providing greater accuracy of individual product quantities at each particular location. Whereas the existing solution required staff to have detailed knowledge of each product location (necessitating long-term, static locations for products which, in turn, reduced the flexibility of the warehouse space), the requirement of phase two was to provide a quick and simple way of training new and contract warehouse staff to be able to efficiently pick product. This would allow the user to find individual products easily, with an added benefit of reducing labour time. The introduction of RF Express allowed data collection at the point of inventory movement and saw the use of sales order picking, distribution order shipment and receipt, cycle counting and transfers.

This second phase also introduced the use of work order receipt backflush at the end of the manufacturing lines for full pallets, to provide real-time update of inventory into the marshalling location and subsequent movement into the warehouse. This allowed users a high-degree of visibility with inventory which increased speed and assimilation of stock. The project also allowed the removal of transfer cards and back office updates.

THE RESULTS

With the proven implementation methods of the Eagle Consulting

and Development services team, the MiTek teams were ready and prepared over the course of two well-orchestrated and effectively planned cut-over weekends that saw marked improvements in the ability to pick large, month-end orders from the first day of running. The results have been better than MiTek had anticipated. The teams upskilled themselves faster than the original plan had predicted and the level of anticipation and excitement at the "go live" was apparent in both warehouses.

The teams found an added benefit that had not been initially tabled; calls from customers taken remotely in the warehouse allowed the receiver to interrogate the inventory levels immediately, without jumping off the reach truck, walking back to the office and using QAD for the inventory quantity on hand. This created a better, more efficient service for customers, with no waiting time for answers. Along with increased process self-management in all areas, there has also been a new level of interest from the warehouse teams on where and how further implementations can be achieved.

THE FUTURE

MiTek is committed to continue improving its manufacturing to despatch process throughout the organisation and the company has a long-term plan to revisit solutions that were previously unavailable without the use of real-time data collection. These process changes will encompass wider areas than the manufacturing and warehouse teams and has provided the business with an exciting

future for continuous refinement, particularly in areas that had apparently stalled in advancements and improvements. This is where MiTek believes increased value will be realised from the investment that has been made with the initial phases of the projects.
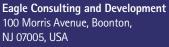
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