



ZEBRA CASE STUDY

A Straight Line Through Everything: Worldwide System Integration With Data Collection

Challenge

After a Michigan-based automotive plastics manufacturing company grew by more than 300 percent in just three years, the manufacturer suddenly found itself saddled with 23 different locations, each with different systems, hardware, and processes.

“It couldn’t go on,” said a company product manager. “Developing reports was a nightmare. Identifying efficient manufacturing facilities from inefficient ones was nearly impossible. There were times when one of our factories was buried with work while others were sitting well under capacity.”

Solution

To bring all of its locations onto a single system, the company implemented a robust enterprise resource planning (ERP) system that could manage production on a company-wide basis. Then they integrated a data capture system—anchored by Zebra® printers—to manage the flow of data in and out of the system.

Application

Zebra printers manage every aspect of the production process, from outputting inventory labels upon receipt of raw materials to WIP tags on unfinished products on the manufacturing floor. Even at the end of the production line, Zebra printers produce shipping labels that are in compliance with the stringent specifications of their customers.

Results

“With bar code labeling, we can keep accurate track of inventory levels in real-time, we can pinpoint the location of every item in our warehouse, and our production lines run with remarkable efficiency,” said the project manager. “We’ve saved an enormous number of man-hours, our production lines are operating with a much greater capacity, and our customers are thrilled with our faster turnaround times.”

“Like many manufacturing plants, our operations run at full capacity, 24 hours a day, seven days a week,” he added. “We produce thousands of labels every day. In some of our acquired companies, we have seen other partners come in and implement inferior hardware or less expensive ribbon solutions to save a dollar or two. Not only were they getting inferior print quality, but they were also killing their printers by cranking up the burn temperature in an attempt to replicate the high-quality image produced by our Zebra printers. When operated with high-quality ribbon and media, we’ve found that these printers last forever.”



Ideal for component labeling, Zebra wide-format printers can produce multiple smaller labels on a single, wide-label work-in-process job ticket.

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