BellHawk® Systems Corporation
Watching Your Operations Like a Hawk
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Case Study – A Rolled Material Converter

This client purchased their BellHawk system about 7 years ago and has been operating it successfully ever since.

This company purchases large rolls of paper, plastic and aluminum foil and then coats these in a wide variety of colors to meet the specific packaging needs of clients. After coating, the rolls are slit and then sheeted and boxed, according to the needs of each customer order. Almost all of their products are made to order, with typical runs lasting from a few hours to weeks.

The driving forces behind the purchase of their BellHawk tracking system were:

1. The computers on which the company's existing accounting and production tracking system was running had become obsolete and were no longer able to function reliably. The existing system had been highly customized at a substantial cost over the years and the company put off replacing the system as long as they could.

2. The need to reduce the time to take annual inventory. This activity had taken at least two weeks, from December 15th to early January, for many years due to the variety of inventory and the fact that it was stored in many locations throughout a large mill complex. This was causing major personnel issues as employees had to work through Christmas and New Year to try to get the inventory done by the end of the year.

3. The need to accurately determine the cost of each job. This client has many repeat orders but is in a highly competitive industry with thin margins. By accurately tracking the job costs, the client expected to be able to bid jobs more effectively.

Because of the nature of their business, the client had four major requirements:

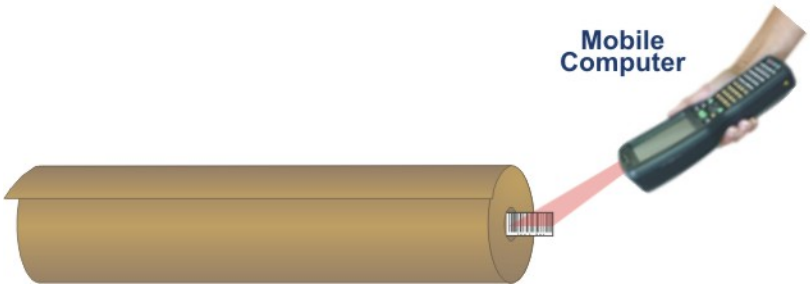
1. That the system would track production operations as well as raw materials inventory, work-in-process, intermediate materials and finished goods in near real-time in a large complex of old mill buildings. The system had to be able to track the transformation of materials and maintain traceability between the materials used and the materials produced.
2. The system had to handle multiple units of measure. This company purchases its rolls of raw material in pounds, converts it in linear feet in a web coating process and then sells it by the square measure or ream. They had an absolute requirement that the system knew how to convert between these units of measure.
3. The system had to be able to handle a width attribute for the rolls. This was to avoid creating part numbers for each different width of material. The system had to be able to convert between length and weight based on the width of each individual roll.
4. Ability to track left over butt rolls so that they could efficiently use left over materials rather than scrapping this material.

Because of its special requirements, this company initially looked at having a custom solution developed for it. But this was going to cost over half a million dollars, including implementation services, which was beyond the available budget. It was also a high risk alternative due to the extended development time

Instead the company elected to purchase a BellHawk Tracking System in combination with an AccPac accounting system. The total cost for the purchased software was around $50,000 and then the client spent about $150,000 on support and customization services over the next two years for both the tracking and accounting systems.

The system took about two months to initially install and get set up in a training-room environment. User training and deployment then took about another six months due to the large number of people involved on 3 shifts.

This system uses eight mobile computers and about 12 PCs equipped with tethered barcode scanners to track inventory and production. The system uses a SQL Server database with the accounting system running on the same server as the tracking system.



Data transferred between the tracking and accounting systems is validated by people in accounting before the data transfer is authorized. This enables the people in accounting to correct any erroneous quantities entered in the tracking system before they can impact the company's general ledger.

In the combined system:

1. Vendor purchase orders are entered in AccPac and exported to BellHawk.
2. All raw materials are received and put-away in BellHawk using mobile computers. Then the receipts are exported to the accounting system.
3. Usage of materials, labor and machine time on jobs is recorded using PCs at each machine. This is reported to the Accounting system.
4. Material movements are recorded using mobile computers.
5. Shipment of materials is recorded using mobile computers. The shipments are exported to the AccPac accounting system as they occur.

The biggest short-term benefit of implementing the BellHawk solution was in reducing the time to take annual inventory from 14 days to 12 hours. As a result we got a very nice thank you note from the inventory manager thanking us for giving her back her Christmas and New Year.

In the longer term, the company was able to replace their old ERP system with a combined tracking and accounting system that provided all the information they had come to rely on. More importantly they were now able to make this information available in real-time to anyone in the company with a PC.

The use of mobile computers has proven to be a big benefit, given that the company operates out of a complex of old mill buildings. The mobile computers enable for accurate recording of put-away locations, wherever they are placed, and also enable rapid retrieval of materials when needed.

The CFO has reported that his sales people now look at the cost of previous jobs when bidding new jobs or repeat orders. This has helped avoid doing jobs for less than cost or of losing jobs by bidding too high.

For more information, please Email Marketing-Support@BellHawk.com or call 508-865-8070 X314. Also, please see www.BellHawk.com for more details on BellHawk System's tracking and traceability solutions.

