

Barcode Tracking Simplified for Make-to-Order Manufacturers

News Release – for immediate release

BellHawk Systems Corporation announces the availability of a new white paper “Barcode Tracking Simplified for Make-to-Order Manufacturers”. This is available for download as a PDF using the White Papers tab on www.BellHawk.com.

This white paper addresses one of the major inventory tracking problems for make-to-order manufacturers, which is that they typically make a wide variety of products with different dimensions, colors, and other options.



In doing barcode inventory tracking we will typically attach a “license-plate” tracking barcode to a finished goods item or a container, such as a box or pallet, of finished goods. Then we associate the tracking barcode with the part number for the item or items within the container and record the quantity in the container and its location.

Make-to-Order manufacturers typically make a limited number of basic products but each one may have many different options. If the manufacturer assigns a different part number to each product they make, which may have many different dimensions, colors, or other options then they can end up with many thousands of part numbers.

Also, if they purchase raw materials in standard widths and lengths, and then cut these down to make products, they frequently have left over material. The left over materials, which may have many different dimensions, are returned to stock and reused on other jobs. If they assign a different part number to each dimension of the same material in stock, make-to-order manufacturers quickly end up with an explosion of part numbers by which they attempt to track materials.

This explosion of part numbers makes it very hard for employees to assign the correct part number when tracking inventory that is received, made, or returned to stock. It also makes it very difficult to track work-in-process inventory. As a result, it is very easy for employees to make mistakes such as making and/or shipping the wrong size or color product with the wrong options to the customer.

In this white paper, Dr. Peter Green explores an alternative approach, which is to assign a much smaller number of “product line” part number and then to track attributes such as width, length, color and other options on an item or container basis. This not only makes it easier to track raw, work-in-process, and finished goods inventory but also makes it easier to do cost comparisons for like jobs and to integrate with ERP and accounting systems.

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