Asset Tracking Optimized With RFID

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Tracking indirect material is a challenge many industries face today. With the need for controlled environments on the rise, many companies wonder which process is best for gaining control and retaining a level of standardization.

Bassett Industrial **[1]** needed supplies at its fingertips 24 hours a day to keep productivity levels high and on track while upholding a reasonable budget. The company needed a system that would allow for a competent structure and process in the facility.

Without a firm managing program in place, Bassett realized that employees were spending too much time locating lost tools within the facility and that many times quantities were not available. Production slowed and estimated times for project completions were extended. This time was critical for an adequate rate of production, so organization and management of the inventory system was crucial.

Bassett knew that it would be easiest to tackle both challenges at one time, so the company turned to RFID. An integrated supply program was put in place using RFID, and employee concentration shifted from maintaining inventory to making product.

RFID allowed items to be tagged and monitored by the frequencies so inventory levels were automatically measured. In an attempt to find this solution, Bassett researched solutions that would allow them to continually provide what was demanded while still having firm control of their stock levels, purchase orders, reports, etc.

WinWare, Inc. [2] installed the Accu-Port, an RFID machine, in the Bassett facility to respond to these issues. This device has a doorway with radio frequencies running

on all sides, and is attached to the store room to allow for instant inventory management and accountability. Bassett saw consumables and costs reduced, and was also able to keep repairs on track. This success led to the installation of more RFID products throughout the company's facilities.

Motorola also became a player in the ever-changing RFID world. Tracking processes for high-use test equipment was not only time consuming, but also error-prone. The difficulty in maintaining calibration schedules was apparent in Motorola's engineering labs, and a managing figure was required. These schedules had to be maintained precisely or the tools being used on the floor would not perform as they were expected to.

Motorola also had a need for automatic retrieval of these test tools: In the existing system, employees were required to first contact a supervisor before checking out a tool. This only added time to the process, as employees found that supervisors were often quite busy.

The company discovered that WinWare's CribMaster could serve as a one-stop solution to its issues. Not only did Motorola install the RFID tags onto the inventory, but it also incorporated CribMaster into its systems for continuous improvement.

CribMaster took care of all the scheduled maintenance and sent reports to alarm individuals when calibration was required. With this implementation, tracking test equipment and monitoring the schedules was a goal that was reached and surpassed with a dominating success rate. Regular calibrations were now being scheduled and followed, and inventory was no longer being misplaced. RFID saved the company time and money, while incorporating organization and maintenance.

For more information, visit www.winware.com [2].

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[1] http://bassettind.com/product.html
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