

WELLBORN CABINET - INCREASE QUALITY WITH RF TECHNOLOGY



CASE STUDY

ABOUT THE COMPANY

For more than 40 years, Wellborn Cabinet, Inc. has cultivated a niche as the leading manufacturer of top-quality kitchen and bath cabinetry. Paul Wellborn, the company's CEO and president, describes their offering strategy as "products that we are proud to build and products that you will be proud to own."

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Wellborn's dedication to quality and customer service is carried out down to the smallest detail. It starts with their own timber processing mill, where the finest hardwoods are selected by hand and integrated into the company's 1,300,000-square-foot plant in Ashland, Alabama. It ends with a fleet of trucks making weekly deliveries to dealers of cabinetry - their shipments on time and complete.

An integral part of Wellborn's complete customer satisfaction policy is a pledge to accurately ship within the shortest lead times possible. Like so many companies that embark on the cutting edge of technology, Wellborn found itself with a barcode technology for tracking shipments that had become outdated. That in-house tracking process relied on aging terminals that needed to be physically docked with a PC to upload or download data. In addition, these terminals were under the control of shipping clerks who were tasked with preparing them for each truck before and after a delivery. Data for each carton loaded in the truck was downloaded to the terminal, which was then given to the driver. The driver scanned a barcode label on each carton for delivery. Once the truck arrived back at the plant, the clerk would collect the terminal and place



INDUSTRY:

Manufacturing/Chemicals

BUSINESS CHALLENGE:

- Overhaul an existing barcode solution to track dealer deliveries; introduce RF technology to move data; and open the application to provide future signature capture and direct access to SAP

SOLUTION:

- Private fleet delivery software
- RF technology

KEY BENEFITS:

- Eliminated delivery of incorrect parts to assembly line minimizing assembly shutdown
- Product moves into inventory in one hour, compared to one day in past

it in the docking station for uploading to Wellborn's computer system. Not only did this process turn shipping clerks into data entry personnel, but there was also a delay after the trucks returned before the data was ready for managers to analyze.

Wellborn called upon Peak Technologies to begin overhauling the technology in its once state-of-the-art logistics operation.

THE SOLUTION

Wellborn needed a phased overhaul of this scheme that would upgrade the basic technology, introduce a strong Proof of Delivery (POD) mechanism and provide the hooks to grow into a real-time enterprise. Such a project required expertise in wireless RF (radio frequency) technology, barcode scanning, private fleet delivery software and ERP (enterprise resource planning) – specifically SAP – integration.

For Wellborn Cabinet, Inc., Peak was the perfect partner to help support its corporate vision statement to “strive for excellence in this crucial function [distribution].” Mark Miller, authorization and network administration manager, said, “The first phase of this project went on-line early spring 2015 and is already paying benefits through the direct reduction of overhead tasks for shipping clerks and significantly faster access to this data for analysis by the company's director of transportation.”

At the heart of the new system are wireless “hot spots” located in the loading yard. Gone are the old terminals that needed to be docked with a PC. Now, drivers

equipped with new handheld terminals simply park in a hot spot in order to download all of their shipment data before starting a delivery run. Upon return of their delivery route, information collected at the point of delivery is automatically uploaded into Wellborn's computer system. Through the use of RF technology, in combination with a proof of delivery solution, Peak helped Wellborn eliminate the need to manually distribute information to the drivers and collect the tracking information upon the drivers' return.



The first phase of this project went on-line early spring 2005 and is already paying benefits through the direct reduction of overhead tasks for shipping clerks and significantly faster access to this data for analysis by the company's director of transportation.

*– Mark Miller,
Authorization and Network
Administration Manager,
Wellborn Cabinet, Inc.*

