

CASE STUDY **IMPACT PRODUCTS**



IMPACT PRODUCTS

Impact Products, LLC, based in Toledo, Ohio, is a leading international marketer of branded and private-label non-chemical commercial cleaning, maintenance and safety products. Impact's comprehensive bundle of products includes a full line of microfiber, cleaning/dusting/mopping equipment, receptacles, washroom, dispensing, material handling, gloves, and safety products. Impact utilizes multiple channels of distribution to reach the end user in the sanitary maintenance, foodservice, safety and industrial markets.

BEFORE INTERLINK

The distribution facility operated in a paper driven environment. Warehouse transactions were not real-time. Although effective in the present scope of business activity, this lack of real-time transaction was labor intensive, prone to error and inhibited multi-shift operations. Impact's rate of growth would necessitate expansion into additional shifts. Impact had expanded the facility with two additions to the original building prior to this latest growth and did not want to move the business but still needed to facilitate growth. Impact decided improving and automating the warehouse processes with a Warehouse Management System (WMS) would allow for continued growth in the existing facility.

The WMS evaluation process was led by the Vice President of Operations and a team

comprised of the Vice President of Finance and the IT Manager. The initial step involved determining the process workflow of the current operations. This was a crucial step. Once these processes were documented and analyzed, critical process elements were targeted for improvement. Next, a detailed request for quotation (RFQ) was developed. This RFQ contained specific system functions the new WMS would need to meet in order to satisfy Impact's requirements.

INTERLINK'S WAREHOUSE LINK SOLUTION

Based on RFQ feedback from prospective WMS suppliers, four vendors were selected for on-site demonstrations and customer visits. During the due diligence phase, evaluating the prospective vendor's company culture and compatibility of future working relationships was also a key criteria. "Interlink Technologies was selected based on Interlink's ability to meet our functional requirements and stay within our budget allowance," said Brian Paul, Vice President of Operations at Impact Products.

Interlink's software, Warehouse Link, manages warehouse operations through the use of desktop applications and Radio Frequency (RF) devices. Interlink's knowledge of wireless technology and RF devices was very valuable with the hardware selection. Impact equipped the warehouse with Psion Teklogix WorkAboutPro Hand-Held Terminals, Motorola Wearable Terminals and Psion Teklogix Vehicle Mount Terminals on the forklifts. Datalogic Scanners and Zebra Barcode Printers were also implemented.

Order processing requires understanding each customer's specific order requirement in addition to picking product. Interlink developed an order planning function, which enables the user to quickly organize order information in a user customized format. This process affords the user the ability to plan over a future time horizon, direct pick location replenishment and release order processing by individual pick modules - all at the click of a mouse. Selectively processing order requirements optimizes labor efficiency.

Other key features of the Warehouse Link software include demand-based replenishment of pick locations, dynamic re-

plenishment profiling and RF picked item verification. Interlink also enabled software integration with an in-line/in-motion carton weighing system and small package bundling system.

During the testing phase, warehouse and production planning management were assigned specific areas of the WMS. Progressively, key team members were integrated into the process. During the final phase of testing, group training sessions were held with remaining team members. Interlink provided timely and effective system training. Specific warehouse tasks were quickly learned in a matter of minutes versus days in the former system due to the RF direction. Users were no longer required to read a paper order to understand requirements.

"Our partnership with Interlink has enabled growth and efficiency that we would not have otherwise been able to accomplish."

— **Brian Paul**
Impact Products
Vice President of Operations

RESULTS

The most immediate improvement was the real time processing of transactions within Warehouse Link. The visibility to the entire operation by the management staff has significantly reduced decision making time. Some process decisions were not made in the past because of a lack of awareness. The management team is now in more control of the order process and shipping. The shipping team can now see all order details and status of each item throughout the picking process

The ability to seamlessly transition to a multiple shift operation is another significant key feature. Warehouse Link software has eliminated non-value added activities from the legacy system. This resulted in a 17% reduction in warehouse labor. Recent order processing volumes have increased 13% over the same period in the previous year. Terry Neal, President of Impact Products, LLC, commented, "We are very pleased with the results of the Warehouse Link installation. The team at Interlink

is very accommodating and knowledgeable. Their support is excellent and warehouse operations have never been smoother than with the Warehouse Link system."

FUTURE

By providing real time solutions to warehousing and order processing, Interlink's Warehouse Link WMS will enable Impact to meet the challenges of growth by more efficiently utilizing physical assets such as shipping docks, pick modules and warehouse equipment. Impact is able to seamlessly transition into multi-shift order processing with the same efficiency as a single shift primarily due to integrated demand based replenishment. The order process is dynamic and continuous and no longer a batch process. "We are very pleased with the results we have been able to accomplish with Interlink," stated Paul. "Our partnership with Interlink has enabled growth and efficiency that we would not have otherwise been able to accomplish."



Warehouse-Link software provides real-time solutions!

