

How EMS Barcode helped Cardinal Systems gain real-time inventory visibility

Summary



50 barcode label printers



25 mobile computers



7 battery-powered mobile kiosks



10 month anticipated ROI



1 happy customer

Challenge:

As Cardinal Systems grew – both organically and through acquisitions – its legacy accounting system couldn't adequately support its inventory needs and work processes. Besides poor inventory visibility, it had several long-time employees who were approaching retirement age and had a lot of knowledge that needed to be passed on to new employees.

Solutions:

The company replaced its legacy system with an ERP solution from Global Shop Solutions, and it partnered with EMS Barcode Solutions to implement barcode labels, scanners and printers, and to systematize its work processes.

Benefits:

The company has real-time inventory visibility, and its work processes and business best practices are available to each employee.

Customer Profile:

Cardinal Systems was established in 1976 and has become a leader in the in-ground pool industry. Today, its offices and manufacturing facilities occupy over 300,000 square feet, and the company has more than 150 employees.

Acquisitions and Expansions Result in Growing Pains:

As the company grew through acquisitions and expanded product lines over the past few years, it ran into a few challenges. "We had several seasoned managers nearing retirement age who had a lot of tribal knowledge that would be leaving with them," recalls Mike Dodson, IT manager at Cardinal Systems. Another problem was the company's legacy business management system. It was using a customized Access database to manage sales orders and inventory. Orders were manually entered into the database after a sale was made, and the database wasn't integrated with the company's accounting software, so the company was always playing catch-up on its sales forecasting and inventory counts.

We immediately saw a significant improvement in inventory accuracy as soon as we implemented the Global Shop ERP system, and the hardware EMS Barcode recommended.

~Mike Dodson, IT manager, Cardinal Systems



Service is standard!



"...they don't just sell and implement the equipment; they provide training and post-sales support."

The 10-Month Quest for the Best ERP Solution:

Cardinal Systems evaluated 20 ERP systems over ten months. "Some were easily ruled out because they couldn't accommodate all the products we manufacture," recalls Dodson. "We developed an implementation team from all departments and did on-site visits to various software vendors and narrowed our list down to the top three and asked our team to vote on the final choice. Global Shop Solutions was the unanimous choice because of its ease of use and support. The number of hours and resources they made available to guide us throughout the implementation processes was a real differentiator. Other software vendors had limited personnel resources, and we felt some were too big and impersonal."

Boost Your ERP Potential with Barcode Technologies

In the past, Cardinal Systems didn't use barcoding technologies; the only product identification system used was packaging labels attached to skids. Since its ERP software came with a mobile app - GS Mobile - Cardinal decided to go all-in with barcode labeling, scanning, printing technologies.

The company selected EMS Barcode Solutions to assist with hardware procurement and implementation. "EMS is a Global Shop Solutions partner, and their barcode equipment is certified to work seamlessly with Global Shop's ERP software, which eliminates compatibility problems or integration issues," says Dodson. "Plus, they don't just sell and implement the equipment; they provide training and post-sales support. They were also instrumental in helping us systematize our work processes."

Cardinal purchased 25 mobile computers, 50 barcode label printers (mostly wireless), along with 7 battery-powered mobile kiosks equipped with dual monitors, a keyboard, mouse, USB scanner, and UPS power protection. EMS also helped Cardinal Systems select and implement barcode labels on the manufacturer's product panels, parts, and packaging material; plus, it assisted with the implementation as well as helping Cardinal systematize its work processes.

Inventory Visibility, Productivity Gains and More

The implementation occurred over 10 months, and EMS worked closely with Cardinal Systems throughout each step. "EMS was easy to get a hold of for support throughout the whole process," says Dodson. "Shortly after we purchased a high-end laser scanner with a long-range reader, the manufacturer came out with a new model that EMS felt would have a longer lifespan. Not only did they inform us about the update, but they also did an even swap with the other device. They've also been on-site and provided end-user training on the devices, and they helped with the implementation."

Dodson says that Cardinal now has a repository of shared knowledge as opposed to various data silos and a lot of knowledge locked inside employees' minds. "Having these standard operating procedures documented in our ERP system has helped us greatly with succession planning and future growth initiatives," he adds. "We immediately saw a significant improvement in inventory accuracy as soon as we implemented the Global Shop ERP system, and the hardware EMS Barcode recommended. We're less than two months into the deployment, but it's a pretty safe bet we'll achieve a payback on our investment within the next 10 months."