

## Make The Case For Real-Time WMSE

A VAR/software developer solves a building supply company's inventory errors with a real-time, wirelessly enabled WMS (warehouse management system).

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In the building supply market, the more successful building material suppliers are the ones that can deliver products within 30 minutes of a promised delivery time. Using a paper-based inventory management system is not how building material companies consistently hit this goal and stay competitive.

Majure Data, Inc. is a WMS software developer and VAR that understands the importance of accurate data and how to get businesses like building supply company Universal Supply to understand the value of trading in pens and paper for a WMS. "The typical paper-based warehouse experiences 80% to 85% inventory accuracy," says Patrick Majure, president of Majure Data. "A WMS can improve inventory accuracy to the 98% to 99%-plus level and drive employee productivity up as much as 25%." With more than 26 WMS installations in the building products industry under its belt to date, Majure Data knows the best way to demonstrate how a WMS can live up to the statistical claims. "Assessing our clients' needs and demonstrating the value of wirelessly enabled, real-time data capture and access is key to our success," says Majure.

### Clients Need To Try Out WMS Before They Buy In

Universal Supply was looking for a way to improve the accuracy of its inventory management and deliveries. The company contacted Majure Data to inquire about the benefits of a WMS. Majure Data set up a meeting with a large group of people from Universal Supply, where Majure Data set up a WMS demo. The demo comprised a Dell laptop fitted with a wireless access card, an Intermec access point, and an Intermec 2435 wireless handheld terminal. "We also ran a program we created that enables us to project the display from the wireless handheld terminal onto a large projector screen," says Majure. "The initial presentation, which lasted about three hours, is designed to give the client a basic understanding of what a WMS can do for them." Concepts such as real-time data access and database updates are the primary goals achieved by the first demonstration.

After getting departmental representatives' buy in from the initial demonstration, Majure Data schedules a follow-up demonstration, which entails going to the warehouse and getting a better understanding of the client's business. "We spend a lot of time speaking with different warehouse employees and determining how their daily routines will be impacted by a WMS," says Majure. By getting to know some of the warehouse employees better, Majure Data strives to eliminate the number one cause of WMS failures -- lack of employee buy in. "Surprising employees with a new way to do their jobs is never a smart move," says Majure. "Talking with them about their daily work routines, discussing how a wirelessly enabled WMS can help them work more productively, and answering their questions can have a huge impact on their willingness to adopt the WMS." Shortly after the second demonstration, Majure Data was able to win the Universal Supply installation contract.

### A Thin-Client Architecture Eases WMS Deployment Difficulty

The solution Majure Data deployed included a Dell 2600 server running a Windows 2000 operating system, an Oracle 9i database, 15 Intermec 2435 wireless handheld terminals, and 4 Intermec access points. Majure Data set up the wireless handheld devices in a terminal emulation environment using [Georgia SoftWorks'](#) Telnet server software. "By deploying the handheld devices in a thin-client manner, we don't need to load the WMS application on the devices, which makes future application upgrades and network security much easier to manage," says Majure.

Majure Data spent six months running a pilot test at Universal Supply's facility. The pilot phase enabled the client to define, evaluate, and document standard operating procedures and train employees on the new procedures. Because not all of the products Universal Supply procures have bar code labels, Majure Data implemented a license plating feature to the WMS, which enables warehouse employees to track products that are not bar coded, using other identification information.

By thoroughly evaluating its solution before going live, Universal Supply was able to maximize the benefits of the wirelessly enabled WMS solution. Within the first six months after going live, the client's inventory accuracy climbed 14 points to 99.66%.