Increase Shipment Accuracy With Wireless Scanning In The Warehouse

When you're manufacturing and shipping potentially hazardous materials such as pharmaceuticals, coatings, and chemicals, precision in the warehouse is essential. But Akzo Nobel (Arnhem, The Netherlands), a multinational manufacturer of such products, was having difficulty achieving the precision. So when Akzo Nobel planned to move a warehouse to a new location, management took advantage of the situation to renew the warehouse procedures. It called on SAPSTROOM (Ghent, Belgium), a warehouse management systems integrator, to provide a wireless scanning solution.

Akzo Nobel was operating with an ERP (enterprise resource planning) system from SAP (Newtown Square, PA), but had a paper-driven warehouse management process. That manual process created an accuracy of only 80% and a delivery error once a week. Also, management at the manufacturer thought too many workers were involved in the receiving, shipping, and picking processes, which increased room for human error. Akzo Nobel used its move to address the problems with the manual system and introduced RF (radio frequency)

scanning and printing into the warehouse.

SAPSTROOM installed handheld and vehicle-mounted bar code scanners and vehicle-mounted printers. SAPSTROOM linked the hardware pieces to Akzo Nobel's SAP system with a Georgia SoftWorks (GSW) (Dawsonville, GA) Telnet Server, which is required to transmit the character data between the RF devices and the server.

SAPSTROOM also used the GSW Telnet Server to address the security risk the RF devices brought to the warehouse, a concern of Akzo Nobel's. The GSW product limited the access to specific IP (Internet Protocol) addresses on the manufacturer's network. The Telnet Server also can disrupt the connection when it ends the application, adding to the security of the system.

With the wireless system in place, total labor costs at the warehouse dropped by 30%, while accuracy improved to 99%, and delivery errors declined by a factor of five.

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