

Spirit streamlines operations for 151 Products with Honeywell scanners and Zebra printers



Warehousing and distribution are vital aspects of the supply chain, where operations need to be slick, quick and accurate. 151 Products, a leading supplier and distributor of a wide array of household goods, recently decided to upgrade its warehouse management system. An important element was the introduction of new Honeywell scanners and Zebra printers, recommended and supplied by Spirit Data Capture Limited. These are already promising to produce significant time and cost savings.

151 Products Ltd is based in Manchester and provides a wide range (over 1,500 different items) of high quality, competitively priced household, DIY and automotive products. The company has a workforce of over 75 employees; an in-house laboratory; a design suite; and a 200,000 square foot distribution centre at St Helens.

Defining the issue

The company's Operations Warehousing and Distribution section recently decided to streamline some of its main activities. It had previously been using a paper-based system for operations such as warehouse stock control, picking and packing. This was time-consuming, costly and inaccurate. One of the key requirements of its new system would be a barcode scanning and printing solution for the warehouse receipt, store, pick and load operations.

Mike Hutchings, 151 Products' Operations Manager, explains: "We needed handheld devices that would be rugged yet light, as they would be used throughout a full shift. They also needed to be reliable and have a clear display." The company had already come across Spirit Data Capture during an Internet search and Spirit had subsequently quoted on another project. The company liked the fact that Spirit was a local firm, within easy reach of its premises.

Developing the solution

Spirit recommended Honeywell ScanPal EDA50K scanners and Zebra GK420 thermal printers. The EDA50K is an enterprise hybrid device that provides users with real-time visibility into business-critical information. It's a lightweight Android mobile computer that gives a high-speed performance. The device has a large touchscreen display and a curved, ergonomic hand grip that's ideal for long periods of use. The Zebra GK420 is a reliable, durable and flexible desktop thermal printer, which can print 4-inch labels at 203dpi and at speeds of up to five inches per second.

Mike Hutchings comments: "The Honeywell scanners are comfortable to hold and light enough to use on a full shift. They are rugged and have an accurate scanning engine and a clear display along with a numeric keypad for ease of use. The Zebra printers are a very cost-effective and robust solution. We'd used one previously and so we've had experience of its reliability, as our pallet carrier had one on site for our despatches."

The new system has gone live recently. The Honeywell scanners are being used for capturing data on the company's warehouse management system from all functional areas of the warehouse. The printers have been set up in the warehouse, in the 'goods in' and picking areas. They are used to create intake, put-away labels and pallet despatch labels. Spirit also provides accessories such as barcode labels and ribbons for 151 Products.

Reaping the rewards

The company is delighted with the new products, which are all working very well.

"Once all of the solutions are fully deployed and our employees trained, we're anticipating a 20% increase in productivity," says Mike Hutchings. "This will come from the time saved by the faster speed of information retrieval and the increased accuracy that comes from scanning. In addition, we'll make significant cost savings on paper. Meanwhile, our customers will also benefit from the increased accuracy that results in a first-time correct pick."

He adds: "Spirit's guys were very helpful and constantly requoted as we changed our minds about the equipment we wanted. We also changed the software at the last minute, which necessitated a different handset to the one that we'd been considering. I'd recommend Spirit and would have no hesitation in using them again."



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