Keep Track of Your Assets

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What are the critical issues your customers are dealing with in regards to asset tracking?

Global manufacturers are constantly looking for ways to make their operations more agile, efficient and profitable. A smart way to reach those goals is to realize the most value from every asset in its supply chain. However, traditional asset management processes require significant time and resources to search for, identify, and log asset information. Moreover, these processes only identify the item at a fixed point in time and do not provide actionable information, such as where the asset has been, what condition it is in, where it is going and when it will get there.

Making faster, more proactive business decisions requires gathering rich information about inventory and assets — not only the "*what* are you" and "*where* are you" but also the "*how* are you", including the physical and environmental condition and the precise location of an asset. Traditional asset tracking processes simply do not provide the "*how* are you" visibility nor the level of integration into enterprise-level planning systems that agile manufacturing operations require. Barcoding, passive and active RFID, and Real-Time Locating System (RTLS) solutions provide greater visibility — in real time — and give assets a virtual voice that can be used to make smart business decisions that will help improve operational performance.

How can manufacturers reduce losses, increase productivity and improve profits with Zebra's line of asset tracking products?

Intelligent asset tracking allows businesses to know precisely where high-value assets such as tools, forklifts, and other equipment are located, when they move, where they move, as well as the asset's physical and environmental condition. It

shortens the time to find the item, reduces incidence of theft, and accelerates inventory turns. Accurate tracking of all parts throughout the assembly line enables streamlined production and lower labor costs. When businesses can ensure the right asset is at the right place at the right time, there is a measureable, positive impact on efficiency. Products that cost less to produce, store, and ship mean higher profits.

Zebra’s asset tracking solutions enable visibility and traceability throughout the supply chain, allowing businesses to make smarter decisions. For example, tool service personnel at a leading aerospace manufacturer utilize RTLS solutions from Zebra to gain real-time tool and equipment visibility. The solution allows them to quickly locate misplaced tools that were not in the crib or in the appropriate work zone, while preventing purchase of excess tools. Businesses can use asset-level visibility to make smart decisions enabling them to tighten processes, increase efficiency, and improve order?to?cash cycles.

Does a company’s size or volume of goods hinder it from using Zebra’s asset tracking products?

Zebra delivers application-matched solutions that span the full spectrum of manufacturing operations. Whether it’s a large aerospace or automotive enterprise, or a small operation with a single manufacturing site, inventory turns and revenue are impacted by efficiency and productivity. Zebra’s barcode, passive and active RFID, and RTLS solutions offer businesses the scalability and flexibility they require to grow as market conditions change. Even Zebra identified opportunities to enhance operations in its North American distribution center. We integrated our RTLS technology to enable a truly dynamic and real-time facility. The solution enables staging requests from Oracle to occur dynamically, resulting in a 40 percent space savings reduction versus traditional fixed staging and saving 400 man-hours on total order search and staging per month.

In addition, warehouses and manufacturing plants contain assets used continuously in daily operations. Both high- and low-speed batch- and process-related production tasks can benefit from Zebra’s barcode and RFID solutions. Where high-value assets and wide area coverage is critical, active RFID and RTLS solutions provide the right balance between the need for granular information and solid ROI. For lower?value assets, barcode labels and passive RFID tags provide near 100 percent accuracy, allowing easy identification of items for an efficient asset management solution. Zebra offers a flexible range of barcode, passive and active RFID, and RTLS solutions that cost?effectively meet virtually any tracking need, regardless of the operation’s size or budget.

How do Zebra’s RFID asset tracking technologies simplify the recording of changes to an asset’s location, condition and availability?

Zebra’s RFID solutions deliver an easy path to visibility. With RFID technology, multiple items can be read simultaneously and automatically — without the need for a direct line of sight to the asset—eliminating time-consuming manual searches and audits. Employees don’t have to stop and scan a barcode or stop and log

information into the ERP system. You can see where your assets are and know their condition in real time—without interaction from an operator—enabling intelligent management and flow of critical assets.

Zebra RTLS solutions offer a total “hands-off” approach to the location and condition of an asset. Active RFID tags transmit a ping at predetermined intervals that location sensors placed throughout a facility or open area can detect, enabling precise location determination. Or in Zebra’s passive RFID solutions, an Ultra High Frequency (UHF) tag stays quiet until it moves into an RF zone, which excites and activates the tag, waking it up. Readers and sensors link directly to existing ERP, manufacturing execution systems, or warehouse management systems to provide timely and accurate information with minimal user interaction.

How do you determine the best solution for customers that will address their needs?

Zebra understands that in manufacturing, visibility equals efficiency. Our team of barcode and RFID experts will work closely with key personnel in your operation to perform a detailed analysis of where inefficiencies exist within your current asset management processes. We’ll examine where and how errors occur and recommend solutions based on how enhanced levels of visibility can provide actionable information to help you decrease errors and improve productivity.

Next, we’ll work with you to determine what technologies will enable the level of visibility needed to help you deliver on your unique business goals. You may need a single technology solution, or a solution that combines multiple technologies — including barcode, RFID and RTLS — to meet the level of granularity you require. Zebra’s breadth and depth of barcode, passive and active RFID and RTLS products offer a wide range of options that are flexible enough to fit the budget and needs of any size manufacturing operation. In addition, Zebra partners with leading WMS and ERP system providers to allow full data visibility back into your business operations.

What should manufacturers do to prepare themselves for implementing an asset tracking system?

First, it’s important to identify and understand the bottlenecks in your current processes. Where are errors happening and why? Where and why are goods being touched more than needed? And are there areas where you can reduce or eliminate rework steps? You should also determine if mobile assets such as forklifts could benefit from having precise routing instructions based on real-time location information. Precise asset tracking provides actionable data to yard and warehouse management systems that can be analyzed to help shorten travel distance, improve productivity, and reduce equipment wear and fuel costs.

Most importantly, you should consider the benefits to your own customers, both upstream and downstream. For example, how can greater supply chain visibility improve shipping and ordering cycles, and even product build processes that shrink manufacturing cycles and reduce costs?

If you can answer the above questions, you are ready to explore how a smarter asset management solution can create opportunities for new business value in your organization.

For more information, please visit www.zebra.com [1].

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[1] http://www.zebra.com/us/en.html