Cooper Standard

DC Series – Printing Cart

Customer Profile

Cooper Standard Automotive Group specializes in manufacturing and marketing automotive products. The company has headquarters in Findlay, Ohio, and employs more than 20,000 employees at 51 manufacturing facilities in 13 countries. Their statement of strategic intent says 'we will succeed by providing products and services that meet or exceed our customers' requirements and expectations of quality, reliability, delivery and technological innovation at the lowest competitive price.'

The Challenge – Eliminating the risk of human error in shipping.

With a time and supply sensitive customer base like the American automotive manufacturers, it is critical to Cooper Standard's continued success that the company eliminates the risk of human error. The need for correct and on-time deliveries is crucial. An incorrectly labeled shipment has costly implications. The automotive giants can levy heavy financial penalties if an error is made and have been known to place late suppliers on probation programs that investigate process improvements and also prohibit sales of new products until the six-month probation is lifted. The cost of such an error could be in the tens of thousands of dollars.

Cooper Standard's Bowling Green facility ships around 2050 cartons a day from their four door shipping dock bound for these key customers. Under the old system, 5 shippers staged the cartons in rows behind the doors and then moved along the row scanning the warehouse labels with Intermec wireless handheld scanners that communicated with printers located at the rear of the shipping area – approximately 150 feet away. Once scanning was completed, the shipper walked back to the printing station, collected the labels and then walked back along the line to apply the labels to each carton. While every care was taken to ensure the right label was matched to each carton, the potential for human error was large.

The Solution

Cooper has standardized on Intermec products provided by reseller GS Data Solutions. When Cooper presented the shipping process to GS Data Solutions, the resellers responded with Intermec's new mobile printing solution – PowerCarts. The DC 1200 carts are equipped with a battery system that powers Intermec's 4440E wireless, 400dpi high resolution printers. Even though these are maximum energy consuming printers, the carts provide more than enough power for two full shifts of labeling. They roll so easily that they can be pulled along by the shippers as they process the cartons. The carts have become the quietly critical component behind the new one to one labeling process at Cooper.

The Results

The new process has each shipper working with a printer cart next to each piece of product to be labeled. The reduced potential for human error is reflected in Cooper Standard's reliability figures.

The additional benefit is the valuable time recouped by eliminating unnecessary travel to and from the central printing stations. Previously the walk took the better part of a minute to collect labels for approximately 50 cartons and was made 40 times a day. With the new process, Cooper Standard's shippers are reinvesting their time savings in developing further warehouse improvements.

The Conclusion

Ken Bauman, network analyst for Cooper Standard says "we originally planned to buy one cart and run a trial, but we decided we couldn't wait to implement the change so we ordered five. The carts have more than paid for themselves in time savings and peace of mind. It was a good decision."

PowerCart