

Stock Accuracy

BlueStone Solutions with SMS Manufacturing software has given Crystalware 99% Stock Accuracy on over £1,000,000.00 worth of finished goods.

The Company

Crystalware Products Luton Limited was founded in 1948 and it is believed its first production run was in a Bic style ball point pen. Crystalware is now one of the leading suppliers of plastic housewares, storage and garden products to High Street Retailers throughout the U.K. employing over a hundred people. Its long list of prestigious customers includes Wilkinson's, Tesco, Argos, Sainsburys, Stax and Roches Stores as well as many major independent wholesalers and retailers.



The Requirements

Originally the Sapphire system was installed at Crystalware in June 1998 to manage the 24 hours a day, 7 days a week manufacturing and distribution processes of their business. Over a number of years SMS Sapphire allowed Crystalware

to achieve 99.95% stock accuracy through a combination of system reliability, and disciplined system use. In June 2004 after having had the SMS Sapphire software installed for six years, Crystalware were happy with the results they were achieving with the system and were ready to move on to the next level of their business development.

What they required was a completely bespoke barcode enabled Works Order backflushing solution that would be integrated with their existing Sapphire system. The system needed to take Works Orders previously entered into the Sapphire system and fully backflush them. This procedure entails automatically issuing the stock from the associated Works Order components and then booking the finished batches of stock into a holding depot whilst maintaining complete system batch traceability.

The Solution

It was absolutely critical that the stock levels in the holding depot be accurate, therefore it was decided that the best way to achieve this would be through a gate type system with the gate being the only way for stock to enter the depot. The physical hardware setup comprises two raising gates with a fixed barcode scanner station area between them allowing the forklift operator to pass through in a very controlled manner.

As the operator nears the first gate on the forklift a pressure sensor triggers the gate to raise and the operator is allowed to access the scanning station area. Once in this

area the Symbol LS4008i barcode scanner is activated and the Works Order number is read, ready for retrospective processing by means of a queue through the Sapphire system. It is only after the scan is successful that the second gate will raise and allow the operator to move into the depot.

In this implementation the depot that the finished stock is to be booked into is known so this is predefined in the system configuration setup, however the software does include a facility to specify the finished goods depot on the barcode label itself should Crystalware wish to make the system multi-depot by adding more gates in the future. The system has been designed to work completely independently of the rest of the system, which means that it can be used even when the network is down.

Conclusion

BlueStone Solutions and Sapphire Manufacturing co-ordinated the whole activity from recommending computer hardware through procurement of the Symbol scanner through to complete integration with the Sapphire system. Mark sums up what the system means to Crystalware, "More than anything else the GateKeeper system gives us a real-time stock system that we never had before, but needed desperately. Now that it's in place, it is absolutely critical to our business ensuring 99% stock accuracy on over £1,000,000.00 worth of finished goods and it is impossible to imagine how we could operate without it."