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Ryan O’Neal
Business Systems Analyst
Continental Materials

Continental Materials Improves Inventory and Shipping Status Visibility with RFgen

Certified JD Edward’s Mobile and Wireless Data Collection Solution

Business Challenge

Increase service levels through visibility into shipping and inventory processes, reduce administrative overhead, and improve data accuracy.

Solution

- RFgen Framework
- Psion Teklogix Handheld Scanners
- JD Edwards EnterpriseOne Software

Results

- Improved service to customers with complete visibility into shipping and inventory status
- Increased accuracy of data collection
- Eliminated eight hours per week of manual record entry
- Assisted sales by providing real-time inventory data

Continental Materials

Continental Materials Corporation is a holding company for six wholly owned subsidiaries, including Williams Furnace Company, McKinney Door and Hardware, Castle Concrete Company, Transit Mix Concrete Company, Transit Mix of Pueblo, Inc., and Rocky Mountain Ready Mix Concrete, Inc.



The six Continental Materials subsidiaries provide a wide range of products, including construction and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC). Its construction products segment, which accounts for half of sales, produces ready-mix concrete, aggregates, metal doors, and related

products. They are sold primarily to contractors, government entities, and consumers in Colorado. Continental Materials' HVAC segment makes wall furnaces, console heaters, fan coils, and evaporative air coolers that it markets to wholesale distributors and retail home centers throughout the Southwest region.

Relying on Outdated Manual Processes

Continental had been relying on an outdated manual inventory management solution. With the paper-based system, it would take at least a week after an order was picked to get a final status report of the completed work order. And since data entry was manual, accuracy was also a serious issue.

“Our main challenge was a lack of visibility into our warehouse inventory and shipping operations,” explained Ryan O’Neal, Business Systems Analyst for Continental Materials. “Our salespeople needed access to real-time information on what products we had on hand or what had been picked so far. When customers called to ask the status of an order, they did not have the information they needed to provide clients with a quick, accurate answer.”

Moving to the RFgen Software

“We knew we needed to move to an automated data collection solution,” explained O’Neal. “We looked at several data collection options and decided RFgen was the clear winner from both a price and performance standpoint.”

Continental Materials implemented its first RFgen software data collection solution in 2006. “Our RFgen solution interfaces easily with the JD Edwards EnterpriseOne software. We have nine RFgen user licenses for our warehouse in Arizona. We started with AML vehicle mount scanners, but switched to the PSION handheld scan guns – they are much more reliable and easier to use.”



O’Neal is responsible for all of the JD Edwards and RFgen implementations for Continental Materials. “We have a small IT department. We aren’t a development organization, and must rely on competent vendors to supply our business-critical systems. DataMAX provided 30 hours of development and implementation services to help get us started. We then made additional changes to mold the application flow to our unique business processes. The transactions which facilitate the behind the scenes interaction with JDE run ‘out of the box’ with RFgen. This is a great time savings, since those macros would take a considerable amount of time to create from scratch.”

Continental Materials is using the JD Edwards Super Backflush manufacturing module. “This module provides the ability to complete parts against a particular work order. When Super Backflush is processed, the work order is automatically updated, the raw material is issued, time entry is processed, and the finished goods quantity is increased,” explained O’Neal.

“Our RFgen Sales Order process is now in production. We implemented a pick and ship process that allows us to pick confirm (hard commit the inventory / update the SO) and ship confirm (relieve the inventory / update the SO) from the warehouse,” explained O’Neal. “Now several other business units at Continental want us to expand the RFgen footprint and deploy it for receiving and purchasing.”

Gaining Flexibility and Visibility

Not only has the RFgen solution markedly improved visibility into Continental’s inventory and shipping information, it also makes everyone who uses it more efficient. “With our previous paper-based system, we were spending more than eight hours a week creating work order completion records. With RFgen, the reports are automatically generated. And since we’ve eliminated the manual data entry, data accuracy has increased dramatically.

“We depend on the flexibility RFgen brings to our organization. It enables us to let our data collection processes drive the software – in contrast to more typical vendor scenario, where the software defines the processes and forces changes in company procedures.”

Working with RFgen Service and Support

Continental also had great things to say about RFgen support. “The RFgen service and support team has been very responsive,” stated O’Neil. “We hit a roadblock back in 2007 when we were upgrading our JD Edwards software from version XE to 8.11. We found a bug in their new Super Backflush software module that wouldn’t allow us to do work order completions. This glitch could have brought our operations to a standstill. We talked to JD Edwards, but the fix was not going to be available for several months. So we called RFgen and they were able to create a work-around for us in just one day. RFgen kept us productive!”

About RFgen

El Dorado Hills, California-based DataMAX Software Group, Inc. allows organizations to reduce supply chain implementation costs with the industry’s most elegant and flexible mobile and wireless automated data collection (ADC) technology. In business since 1983, software from the DataMAX Group has a proven track record of success when it comes to designing, implementing, and deploying wireless and mobile solutions.

DataMAX’s flagship product, the RFgen Framework, is a horizontal system for delivering wireless and mobile automated data capture solutions. RFgen-enabled solutions can be found in over half of all Fortune 100 manufacturing companies as well as in numerous mid-level and smaller enterprises.

Whether the target is distribution, manufacturing, retail, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, healthcare, or something else, RFgen is flexible enough to meet each customer’s unique requirements; a fact to which the company’s 2000+ customers and over 30,000 daily users can readily attest. For more information, please visit www.rfgen.com or contact your nearest sales representative at 916.939.4065.