

POLYFLOR INCREASES DISTRIBUTION ACCURACY To 99.95%

Polyflor have implemented BEC's eSmart® Warehouse system, eliminating data re-entry completely and improving order pick accuracy close to 99.95%!

The implementation of the eSmart® Warehouse system from BEC (Systems Integration) Ltd, has proved invaluable to Polyflor, removing manual data re-entry and boosting inventory accuracy and warehouse utilisation significantly.

Polyflor Ltd is a major producer of commercial floor coverings, who manufacture vinyl flooring near Manchester, England and distribute via their own transport fleet. They operate in the healthcare, education, retail and transport sectors and are a global business, thriving both in national and international markets. Recognised as the best in their class, their worldwide success is easily attributable to their range of high quality, innovative flooring products.

THE CHALLENGE

Polyflor have always been heavily focused on customer satisfaction and outstanding service. To enhance performance further in these areas, Polyflor sought to perfect their delivery and warehouse processes by implementing a RF based warehouse data capture solution.

“Using the eSmart® Warehouse solution has given us the ability to scan all items at the point of despatch resulting in our order accuracy improving close to 99.95% (by volume). This has resulted in a reduction in picking errors and has prevented customers receiving the incorrect products or orders causing unnecessary costs to both us and them.”

Andrew Turner,
Distribution Manager at
Polyflor Ltd.



In the past, Polyflor's distribution operation used an AWACS warehouse management system, a legacy DOS based system with a number of limitations. For example; a lack of interoperability with the company ERP system used throughout the business, meant that large daily data synchronisations were necessary between the two systems.

This lack of communication between AWACS and Movex/M3 resulted, at times in the warehouse having to revert back to manual stock management.

Ultimately, the existing system did not provide the stock visibility that was required to manage the warehouse and delivery functions, to the standard required by Polyflor.

THE JOURNEY

The overall requirement for Polyflor was to regulate the receipt, storage and despatch of all goods from their main warehouse at Leicester Road, Manchester. In order for this to be achieved, stock visibility within Movex/M3 needed to be improved, pick to order data had to be recorded and first-class inventory had to be established.

By implementing a mobile eSmart® Warehouse solution from BEC, Polyflor sought to achieve the linked objectives of superior customer service and better stock accuracy.



THE SOLUTION

Polyflor were introduced to BEC as a result of BEC's impressive reputation for seamless data capture integration into ERP. After a rigorous selection process taking into consideration BEC's solid track record of integration into Movex/M3, and their helpful and consultative approach, BEC was chosen to implement the critical mobile data capture solution including hardware, data capture software and a CISCO wireless infrastructure.

The installed solution covered a number of key warehouse transactions including put-away, picking, stock moves and stock enquiries. All warehouse operators were equipped with Intermec hand held terminals, which featured an integrated barcode scanner and 802.11g Wi-Fi.



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The client application on the terminals communicates to the host server in real-time over the RF Network. Supplying all warehouse operators with these devices equipped all staff with the ability to execute the complete range of transactions available. This introduced a degree of flexibility into job allocation, which would have been difficult to achieve with a more manual process.

THE IMPLEMENTATION

As with each eSmart® Warehouse installation Polyflor benefitted from a seamless data capture solution presenting operators with screens which were intuitive and fast to use. Unnecessary keystrokes and scrolling through lists were removed, leaving the operator free to focus on the task in hand. Task specific transactions are stored within BEC's software removing the requirement to reintegrate data capture functionality each time the host system is upgraded or modified. BEC's solution is independent of the ERP host allowing high levels of flexibility and forward compatibility to new releases of the host.

THE RESULTS

Following on from the implementation of the eSmart® Warehouse solution, Polyflor recognised a number of major advantages some of which were expected and others that were unexpected but nonetheless welcome. For example, the amount of 'clean-up' investigation into picking errors was reduced and warehouse performance was increased through improved accuracy and operator efficiency. Since the system utilised barcode auto ID technology, duplication errors were also removed from the operation.

In summary, Polyflor have attained real time visibility of product stock, increased warehouse efficiency and most importantly, they have reduced issues with regards wrong delivery. All achieved on time and on budget.

"Our detailed knowledge of mobile devices, wireless infrastructure and industrial printing allowed us to provide a genuinely competent and proven 'one stop' data capture solution to Polyflor and provided peace of mind that the entire project was in safe hands" Stuart Kiernan, Sales & Marketing Manager at BEC commented.