



CASE STUDY: Crown Equipment

Leading Manufacturer Improves Indirect Material Flow and Productivity with CribMaster

CUSTOMER NAME: Crown Equipment
LOCATION: New Bremen, OH
INDUSTRY: Equipment Manufacturing
MATERIALS MANAGED: Crib consumables and durables
CRIBMMASTER SOLUTIONS: AccuPort plus RFID

Challenge

Workers at Crown Equipment, makers of the number one brand of electric lift trucks in the US, require access to their inventory 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Each crib at Crown moves hundreds of items every day. One crib handles only consumable items, which must be replenished often.

The process Crown originally had in place to manage indirect materials was effective, but when inventory was sometimes slow to reach machine operators across every shift, productivity declined.

Crown was familiar with the advantages of RFID technology in other areas of inventory management, and the company thought RFID could help solve the challenge of providing 24-hour access to indirect materials.

"We really needed to get product to the operators on the machines. We felt our replenishment was effective, but unavailability for all three shifts was hurting production."

– Brenda Hughes, Supervisor and Buyer, Crown Equipment

Solution

The CribMaster AccuPort provided Crown with an RFID inventory management system specifically for indirect materials.

For the solution, Crown affixed RFID tags to the inventory held in a centralized crib, with AccuPort installed in the doorway. Authorized workers authenticate before entering the locked crib, collect the necessary items, and walk out. As a worker exits, AccuPort scans all of the RFID tags and records the transaction.

For small items that aren't tagged individually, such as drill bits, Crown employs reusable bags. Workers pull an untagged item from the crib and place it in a bag with the item's corresponding label and tag. After AccuPort reads the tag, workers can take the item and leave the bag in a "mailbox" for reuse. The process also streamlines restocking, as employees can simply refill the bags and take as many as 30 items back into the crib at once.

Results

With the implementation of AccuPort, Crown has gained secure, efficient management and ease of access to inventory at all times – without requiring 24-hour supervision.

The CribMaster solution has enabled Crown to lower inventory costs, save labor costs, reduce down time, and improve productivity by:

- Transforming a 24-hour position into an hour and a half restocking job for light-duty workers
- Establishing organized item delivery
- Retaining an already effective replenishment method by integrating with their current system

The proven success of the initial AccuPort installation has encouraged Crown to consider expanding its AccuPort deployment to up to 10 cribs across the facility.

Using the CribMaster AccuPort in just one crib has already reduced average daily inventory usage by more than 20%, resulting in substantial ROI in less than four months.



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