Panalpina

Global Supply Chain Solutions Provider

Solutions: RFID Scanning Portal & Inventory Tracking System

RES Software: AIMS

RES Revamps Cross-Dock Operations with RFID

Overview

Panalpina is a global provider of intercontinental logistics support and customized supply chain solutions. Headquartered in Switzerland, they service customers worldwide and in varying industries. **Panalpina** first approached **RES** for help incorporating RFID technology into their cross-dock operations. Their goal was to provide an RFID based solution to their clients that would resolve inefficiencies associated with their current process.

Original cross-docking procedure began at **Panalpina's** Lugano, Switzerland location. When an order was received, boxes of product were pulled and their LPN numbers, or box IDs, were assigned to pallets. The assembled pallets were then assigned to House Bills, which are essentially like order numbers. An identical barcode sticker was placed on each pallet under the same House Bill. From there, various House Bills were assigned to a Master Bill, which served as a shipment manifest.

Once all of the orders, or House Bills, had been compiled and assigned to a Master Bill, all of the pallets' boxes had to be manually counted, scanned, and verified for accuracy before they were ready to be shipped. The Master Bill was then emailed to **Panalpina's** Secaucus, New Jersey location a night prior to shipment.

The receiving process at Secaucus involved sorting the shipment by House Bill, counting the quantity of boxes on the pallets, and then comparing that number to the quantity on the manifest. Lastly, the boxes on each pallet were manually scanned into the system, thus, completing the cross-dock process.

Challenges

- The process of checking and rechecking physical shipment counts was very time consuming and prone to human error.
- Each box of product had to be manually scanned upon outbound and inbound, requiring a great deal of manpower and leaving the potential for inventory inaccuracies.

Solutions

RES developed an RFID solution for **Panalpina's** cross-dock process that utilizes RFID scanning portals and **RES's Asset Inventory Management Solution** (**AIMS**) software.

Implementation of **Panalpina's** system began by placing RFID tags onto each box of product upon their arrival in Lugano. Once tagged, boxes are commissioned, which means that each box's unique RFID tag and LPN number are read and linked together in the system. Both the RFID tag and LPN number then contain each box's individual information.
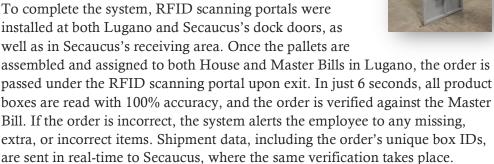
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Solutions (cont.)

RES's **AIMS** software was installed and linked to **Panalpina's** database, allowing an exchange of information between the two systems without any changes to **Panalpina's** existing applications. Once installed, shipping data, order information, RFID scans, and all other relevant information can be shared between the two systems.

To complete the system, RFID scanning portals were installed at both Lugano and Secaucus's dock doors, as well as in Secaucus's receiving area. Once the pallets are assembled and assigned to both House and Master Bills in Lugano, the order is passed under the RFID scanning portal upon exit. In just 6 seconds, all product boxes are read with 100% accuracy, and the order is verified against the Master Bill. If the order is incorrect, the system alerts the employee to any missing, extra, or incorrect items. Shipment data, including the order's unique box IDs, are sent in real-time to Secaucus, where the same verification takes place.

Upon arrival, all pallets are passed through the RFID scanning portal and marked as received in the system. Because each box is linked to both a House and Master Bill, the system is able to provide real time, running bill totals down to the box level. This is made possible through RFID and **RES's AIMS** software. If only part of a shipment passes under the tunnel, or boxes from many different House Bills pass under the tunnel, a running tally is kept for each Bill. At any time, both locations can see how many boxes were received from a Bill, which boxes were received, what time the boxes were received, which boxes are missing or not yet received, which Bill they are missing from, etc.

Ongoing Benefits

Since implementing **RES's** system, **Panalpina** has seen a dramatic increase in the accuracy and efficiency of their cross-dock operations. RFID has automated many of their labor-intensive processes, successfully decreasing labor efforts and improving inventory management.

- The use of RFID portals saves time and eliminates human error; no longer is it necessary to hand scan every box or disassemble a pallet due to a misplaced barcode.

- RFID and **AIMS** real time updates have allowed for complete inventory visibility through the cross-docking process. They are able to track product with 100% accuracy, as well as ensure systemic data is always up to date.

Contact us today to schedule your consultation!

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