

Schneider Electric

Global Electrical Equipment Manufacturer

RES Brings Automation into the Assembly Line

Overview

Schneider Electric is a multibillion-dollar corporation, headquartered in France, which specializes in energy management solutions and the production of energy related equipment. With offices in over 100 countries, they are the leading global supplier of energy and infrastructure related products and services.

RES had the opportunity to develop and implement an RFID based inventory and employee tracking system along the assembly line at **Schneider Electric's** Peru, Indiana facility. This branch of **Schneider Electric** is responsible for the manufacturing and assembly of electrical panel boards. By introducing RFID technology into their processes, **Schneider Electric** hoped to increase efficiency and visibility along the line. Prior to working with **RES**, there was no way to track individual items along the assembly line in real time, automate diverts along the line, automate scans within the cells and stations, or capture employee information within the cells and stations.

Challenges

- There was no system in place to track individual items down the assembly line. This led to zero product visibility along the line, making it impossible to monitor progress in real time.
- Manual barcode scans at divert points and within the cells slowed down processes and were susceptible to human error.
- Employee information was not captured within the cells along the assembly line. Therefore, there was no way of knowing who worked in which cell, what products they worked on, when and for how long they worked on each item, etc.

Solutions: RFID Asset Tracking System

RES Software: AIMS



Solutions

RES was able to develop a solution for **Schneider Electric** that seamlessly integrated RFID technology into their current assembly line processes. RFID was first introduced at the beginning of the assembly line, at the work order print station. Here, when work orders are printed for the product to be assembled, a 35 digit barcoded label and adhesive unique RFID tag will be automatically assigned to each individual product and printed directly onto the product paperwork.

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Solutions (cont.)

Once printed, a relationship is created between the product barcode and RFID number and committed to the database. This paperwork continues to the pick area and stays with the product until the end of the line.

RFID was also introduced at divert points and stations along the assembly line. RFID readers and antennas placed at divert locations will read an item's RFID tag as it approaches, communicate directly with **Schneider Electric's** existing controllers, and initiate a divert based on the product's unique RFID identifier.

RFID readers and antennas placed at install stations along the line will automatically capture time stamps for each product as they enter and leave each station or cell. The in/out times, as well as total time at each station/cell, will be recorded in the database for each product. Additionally, reads will communicate with the backend systems and initiate the product's corresponding install instructions, which will appear on a screen for the station employee. As the product moves down the line, a log is created in the database detailing its progress. The log will list which stations the product has entered, what day and time it entered, what day and time it left, etc.

With **RES's** new system, RFID will be used to capture data on station/cell employees as well. Each employee will be assigned an RFID enabled badge, complete with a unique RFID number. RFID readers and antennas at the station will not only track the cycle counts at the stations, but they will track which employees are manning the stations and what products they work on.

Once the product has been removed from the line, the product log, with all information, is archived in the system. Future plans for the system involve expanding the use of RFID into **Schneider Electric's** shipping process.

Ongoing Benefits

Schneider Electric has seen increased visibility and efficiency along the line since implementing **RES's** system. Automatic data capture through RFID has successfully allowed them to streamline processes while increasing overall accuracy.

- Real time data collection through RFID enables product tracking along the line and provides an audit trail for each item.
- RFID automates diverts and eliminates manual scans at the stations, saving time and reducing errors.
- Employee data captured at the workstations provides Real Time Expectations for productivity.

Contact us today to schedule your consultation!

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