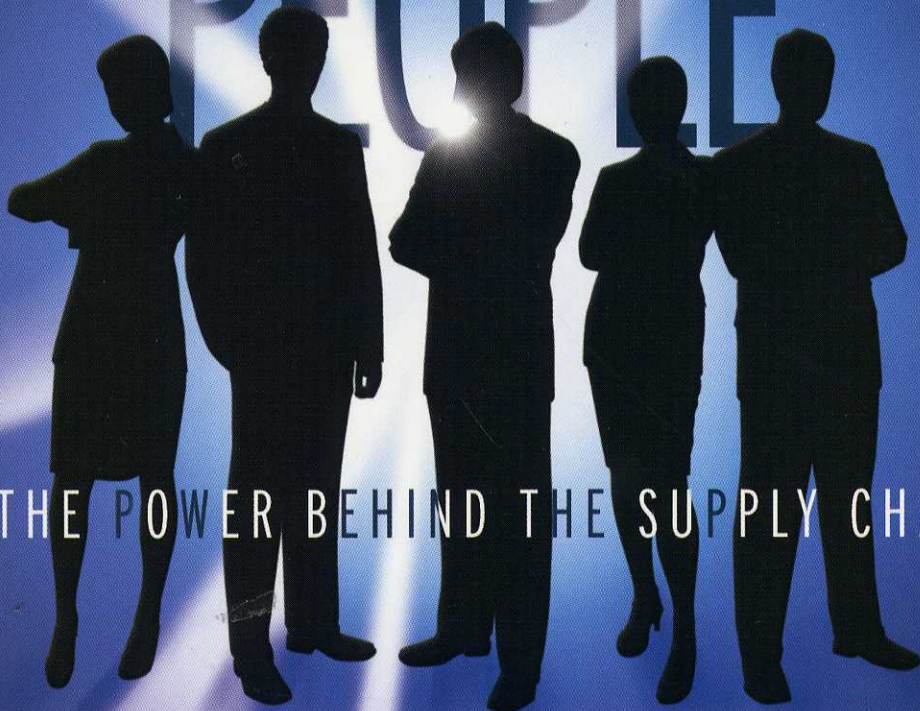


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THE MAGAZINE FOR DEMAND-DRIVEN LOGISTICS • JANUARY 2007

PEOPLE



THE POWER BEHIND THE SUPPLY CHAIN

2007

LOGISTICS PLANNER
LEADERS IN LOGISTICS

Using rugged mobile computers, Seaquist improved its ability to perform tasks faster. Taking physical inventory used to be a five-day event. Now the company stays on top of inventory through daily operations.

Amherst, N.H., ultimately won the business.

"We sent Seaquist demo mobile computers to try," says John Geary, vice president at Glacier. "People at all levels of the company checked them out and offered feedback."

The mobile units fit the bill for several reasons. First, they require no special shock-resistant mounting, allowing easy transfer from trucks to

carts. Second, the units have a "soft shutdown" capability, which is rarely needed because an internal power supply runs the computer in rare instances when the forklift batteries are being replaced.

"We started out with an initial delivery of 15 units," says Raddatz. "Glacier was able to supply the units we needed, when we needed them."

The new computers can be mounted on either trucks or carts, depending on Seaquist's needs at the time. "We like the fact that we can move the com-

puters to carts because that allows us better access to deep narrow aisles," Raddatz says.

As Seaquist's products move out of production, they are given storage unit numbers, and license plates are assigned to pallets. Once in the DC, associates use the mobile computers to scan the license plates, then receive put-away directions from the SAP system. As associates put products on shelves or prepare them for shipping, the computers verify that products are where they should be.

The computers also give associates their picking assignments, and verify the picks as they happen.

"The computer also allows for remote label printing," says Raddatz. "Workers order the label on the mobile unit, which directs that order to a printer."

After picking and/or labeling products, associates place them in staging and a shipping document is printed. Further verification takes place during truck loading.

"Once a carrier arrives at the DC, the computer identifies the pallets that were picked for the shipment," explains Raddatz. "The mobile units verify information as the pallets are loaded onto the truck. If an associate chooses a pallet that was not on the list, the computer sends an alert to stop loading."

Using the mobile computers, Seaquist has significantly improved its ability to perform tasks faster. "Workers are more productive because they are comfortable with the equipment. And, with the computers' large screen size, they can read the information easily," Raddatz says. "Having the ability to transfer the computer to carts also makes us more flexible."

While the mobile units have been a boon to daily productivity, Seaquist has



DISPENSE WITH IT:

Seaquist Closures replaced its outdated warehousing methods with a rugged mobile computer system that boosts inventory accuracy and worker productivity.

also greatly improved its physical inventory taking. "It used to be quite a production to take physical inventory," says Raddatz. "It was a five-day event that required bringing in extra help. Now we stay on top of the inventory through daily operations."

A forklift operator performing a routine pick, for example, might also perform a cycle count. As the operator scans a pallet's bar code, the mobile system requests a count of the boxes remaining on the pallet. If the number the operator enters on the touch screen is different from the number recorded in the database, the computer sends an alert and the operator performs a recount.

This process provides Seaquist with a continuous audit of inventory accuracy. Unlike the traditional physical inventory process, cycle counting provides ongoing feedback so procedural problems can be addressed as they arise.

The result? Seaquist now achieves better than 99-percent inventory accuracy and rarely encounters any variance between physical inventory and book values.

The company also moved from performing quarterly physical inventories to a single year-end count. "We no longer have to perform an inventory count," says Raddatz. "Once our auditing company saw the

results, and how few variances we had, it could see no benefit to performing a physical inventory."

As the result of a recent acquisition, Seaquist has added five more

is handled in the DC with equally innovative technology that has improved productivity, customer service, and cycle counting.

Seaquist, out. ■

Ask yourself...



Does your supply chain feel lucky? Well... does it?

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mobile units. It has also replaced its first-generation units with Glacier's latest models.

The company has been able to improve productivity significantly, and today handles 35 percent more inventory without the need for additional staff.

READY TO GO

Customer service has improved as well. Once a forklift operator presses "yes" on the touch screen to confirm that a truck is loaded and ready to go, for example, the invoice process begins automatically.

A legend with bar codes for each of the top 25 freight carriers helps the operator generate a pickup record number for the truck driver. If a customer calls, a customer service representative can provide the order's status.

Raddatz can't imagine having installed the SAP system without the mobile units. "If we didn't have the mobile units on our trucks, we would not be able to get the most out of the SAP system," he explains. "The mobile computers have been critical to our success as we've grown."

Today, Seaquist's innovative product line