



Case Study



RFID Tracking With iTrak

According to Harold Nielsen, Kimble Chase Rockwood's Distribution Manager, they had been investigating and evaluating warehouse management systems for quite a long time. Their previous system involved a paper process and an MRP system with no way to communicate back, for transactions, with the flow of product through their distribution facility. It was taking up to two days to get finished product into inventory to then be allocated and picked for customer orders.

Kimble Chase Life Science and Research Products LLC, (Kimble Chase), manufactures and distributes culture tubes, vials, and pipettes for pharmaceutical testing from their Rockwood, TN location. The manufacturing facility and distribution center encompasses 236,000 sq. ft. under one roof and operates 24/7 producing 108 million items per month.

Finding a Warehouse Management System

Their new system captures inventory into the MRP system as soon as it's removed from the manufacturing facility and brought to the floor.

"At the beginning of the RFID process we knew that a lot of



Manufacturer Eliminates Inventory Tracking Issues With RFID Tracking | Kimble Chase successfully implements iTRAK

changes would have to take place within the facility. First and foremost was how to set up the facility for wireless infrastructure. Working with SATO America, an onsite survey was completed that revealed how many wireless access points would be needed and their specific locations. We used that information to install the wireless infrastructure," said Joe Jones, IS Manager,

SATO America's iTRAK Barcode/RFID Solution

The warehouse operator brings each pallet up to the portal to process through iTRAK. The RFID system scans the pallet and as a result, the pick ticket is validated based on

what the iTRAK system has posted. If the information is correct, the operator accepts the information and the system immediately applies the inventory against the customer's order. A pallet label and packing slip are printed and once the picking process is completed, iTRAK confirms completion of the order.

When the carrier arrives to pick up the freight, the first step is to scan the customer information which is a customer ID # and the ship to zip code. Next they scan the pallet ID and iTRAK confirms that the shipment is complete at which point the carrier can load the pallet on the truck for delivery.



“The iTRAK system works so well that if the wrong products are on the pallet or the products are mixed from manufacturing [when they come down] the system will “error out” and force the operator to correct the problem and give a description of the problem,” said Joe Jones.

Accuracy

According to Harold Nielsen, “The inventory accuracy prior to the installation of the iTRAK solution was pretty poor. With nearly every order that was picked, there were issues with insufficient stock being in the bin locations when the operators went to pick the orders. After putting in the system we have had no situations where we have insufficient stock when we go to a bin and our cycle count accuracy of our finished goods is at 99%.”

Challenge: Close Proximity of Products

Working closely with SATO America to overcome the problems associated with the close proximity of RFID labels, the solution was designed to work with both RFID and barcode scanning. This eliminated “scatter” or pick up of labels not being targeted while picking or loading customer orders.

Host Integration with XML

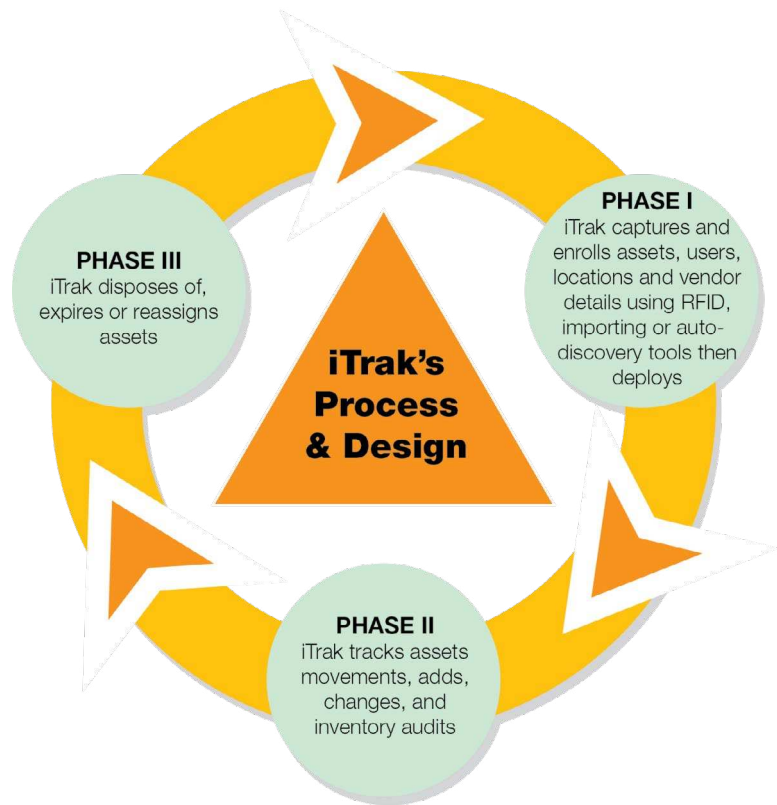
Joe Jones said, “The host integration of this project was key concern, so by working with SATO America’s integration staff we were able to take the transactions from the host system, the iTRAK system, and pass them on to our ERP system via XML uploads. The XML uploads were smooth, easy to track, and really helped in this situation.”

Partnership with SATO America-Turnkey Solution

“One of the biggest benefits from my standpoint was the single, turnkey solution,” continued Joe Jones. “From a technology standpoint, you want to be able to handle all of your stuff with one vendor if possible. SATO America gave us that possibility. They handled the printers, the iTRAK

software development, and the interface uploads to our ERP system. I’ve dealt with a lot of vendors in the past, and a lot of the other vendors have different outsourcing that they do for each step [in the process]. By having SATO America with one in-house source, I had only one area to focus on and that was with SATO America to get the details accomplished on schedule.”

Harold Nielsen concluded, “Well, we were very pleased with the service that we had and the solution that we have in operation right now. Right now, we look forward to possibly growing this technology into other locations with this company and we’re very happy with the SATO organization and glad to be in partnership with them.”



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