



Beyond Borders: Warehouse Automation Essential When Working with Vendors from the Far East

Barrow Industries is a leading designer, importer, and supplier of fabric to a wide range of customers that includes retailers, furniture manufacturers, and designers. Much of their product line is imported from the Far East. They sell a fashion product and having long delivery lead times from overseas means that there is little margin for error in replenishing inventory.

The company employs nearly 300 people worldwide and operates a 275,000 square foot warehouse outside Atlanta, Georgia. The company implemented Expertek's NxTrend SX.enterprise System to automate the warehouse. By doing so, Barrow has been able to eliminate most of the paperwork through the use of RF (radio frequency) terminals. In the Expertek case study Barrow Executive Vice President Gary Sweeney notes "The system tracks all product movements through the warehouse, (so)...product can now be stocked in any location, and the system always knows where it is. That allows us to utilize space more efficiently and to save time locating product."

As a fabric supplier, having visibility to pieces and sizes of pieces in inventory is critical. Barrow's previous system kept track of total yardage, but gave employees no visibility to what was actually in inventory for pieces. This situation created problems for customer service, since it was not always possible to know if they had the right piece size to fill an order. Additionally, management had no way to track remnant pieces. Their ability to track and liquidate those pieces has improved considerably.

"In our old system, we printed extensive replenishment reports on green-bar paper on a nightly basis that were used by our buyers to reorder product," stated Gary. "These reports provided too much information in some cases and not enough in others. With the new system, all of that information is accessible online. Our buyers can compare product supply with demand interactively side-by-side and can drill down into detailed information when they need it. Furthermore, the system tracks what has been reviewed and calls attention to what products need immediate attention. Having this information has allowed us to keep a tight rein on inventory and minimize costly air freight charges."

Source:

"Covering their Bases with SX.enterprise and Expertek Systems." *Expertek Case Study*. expertek, n.d. 2 June 2014.

