Inefficient Processes Cost Warehouses Time, Money

Written by **Babette DuPriest**
Wed, Feb 27, 2013

Time is money, the cliché goes, and the saying also rings true for supply chain distributors looking to increase the quality of their workflow processes. For example, a recent U.K.-based survey of 250 suppliers found that distribution centers lose close to 3,000 hours annually due to unproductive workflows, an average of 15 minutes of productivity lost per worker per eight hour shift. The leading inefficiency was inventory control, followed closely by unloading, and picking orders.

While much discussion in supply chain management trends these days revolves around big data applications and enterprise resource planning (ERP), for many third party logistics and small warehouse distribution facilities, the switch to wireless data collection alone can reap enormous benefits in efficiency and cost savings.

Modern Materials Handling featured some real-life examples in which supply chain software and mobile technologies lead to near-immediate advancements in operations. One such instance was with a Canadian-owned hardware and building materials cooperative that introduced data collection software and mobile data

collection devices into its operations and experienced an almost immediate 10 percent productivity increase.

"Our long-term goal was to grow the business and be one of the leading suppliers in the industry, and we saw our warehouse system as one of the top areas where we needed to operate at a higher level," said Steven Cain, the company's IT manager. Knowing that they had reached the limits of using pen and paper, Cain acknowledged that only by employing a warehouse management system would the company begin to perfect its operations.

Wireless barcode scanners and data collection software provides businesses with tools to increase revenues and streamline workflows with many integrated, all-in-one solutions available to meet the needs of everyone involved in the supply chain.