



“Our greatest benefit with RFgen is efficiency. It makes life much easier in terms of the actual process flow of transactions, and we’re seeing significant time savings from those efficiencies.”

CHRIS EAKIN | WAREHOUSE SUPERVISOR

TMEIC Corporation

Leading industrial system integrator powers up more than 67% more efficient warehouse transactions using RFgen mobile data collection solutions.

At a glance...

Industry

Industrial Power Solutions

Application

High Availability
Inventory Control

Environment

Oracle® E-Business Suite

TMEIC North America’s products and services are designed to help industrial customers, such as mills, mines and manufacturers, get the power they need to drive operations. TMEIC solutions include the rotating machinery that serves as the driving force for factories and plants, the power electronics that transform and control the required electric power, and the engineering expertise to deliver automation to customers.

“As a systems integrator, we buy parts from various suppliers all over the world—mainly our parent company in Japan,” explained Chris Eakin, the company’s inventory logistics and warehouse supervisor in Roanoke, Virginia. “We do a lot of software integration here in the U.S. We send the purchased items off to various different integrators, and they build power panels that are the brains behind large industrial motors powering everything from steel mills to paper mills to cranes at ports.”

The Challenge

In Roanoke, TMEIC operates a warehouse, and an office building with simulation labs. Eakin monitors and manages inventory being purchased from suppliers and delivered to the warehouse or directly to integrators and customers. “Our warehouse sees maybe 10% of our total volume. The rest of the volume is supplier-to-customer, supplier-to-integrator, integrator-to-customer, or supplier-to-a-freight-forwarder,” Eakin stated.

Even though the warehouse received only a small fraction of the overall volume of supply, the manual data entry that had to be done in the warehouse and the

business office was cumbersome. The data entry was also frustrating, because it often involved rekeying information that already existed in the company’s ERP system.

“The warehouse operation was a very manual, tedious process. We do have Oracle, but the transactions we were doing were very, very time consuming. The efficiency wasn’t there. We’re an automation company, so we decided to make some improvements,” recalled Eakin.

Another problem they were looking to solve occurred at the end of each month when the finance department shut off access to Oracle while they closed the books. Although the warehouse team continued to work, they were unable to process transactions in Oracle for a day or two. “We have a lot of shipments coming in and going out, so it got to be pretty painful at times,” admitted Eakin.

The Solution

The team at TMEIC looked for a solution that would enable them to process warehouse transactions more efficiently using barcode scanners. They evaluated several data collection solutions looking for the best fit. One was too expensive; another did not meet all of TMEIC’s needs. Through a partnership with Inovity, Eakin was introduced to RFgen.

After talking with the solutions team at RFgen, Eakin felt that they could provide the right infrastructure for TMEIC with efficient integration to the Oracle system.

“What RFgen was able to provide for us—within our budget—was far beyond what anybody else that we spoke with was able to offer,” said Eakin.

“Something that really interested us was being able to use RFgen with multiple types of tables. It wasn’t just a front end user interface that had to tie into Oracle. We could also have it tie into Excel® or an Access® database. Some of the stuff that we do here on site is outside of the normal Oracle process flow, and we use outside tables a lot.”

RFgen deployed quickly and it did not take long to learn how to use the new system. “RFgen was literally so easy and self-explanatory that you could turn the desktop version on and walk right through,” Eakin recalled. “With my warehouse guys, I gave them the handhelds, walked through the transactions one time with them, and they rolled with it. The interface is very, very simplified.”

The Result

Eakin and his three warehouse employees all use RFgen and it helps the team complete order management and incoming inventory processes much more quickly than they could using Oracle alone.

Eakin estimates that receiving and putting away items from a ten line purchase order with RFgen takes only about 10-11 minutes. Before RFgen, the same effort required 40-45 minutes.

After measuring transactional efficiency for several months, Eakin discovered that with RFgen:

- Subinventory transfers are 83% faster.
- P.O. receipts are 94% faster.
- Miscellaneous transactions are 96% faster.
- Sales order management (a two-part process) is 67% faster.

“In just the warehouse alone, RFgen saves us about two hours per week on time for miscellaneous transactions, P.O. transactions from inventory, receiving transactions and sales order transactions.”

“Subinventory transfers—those are our internal movement transactions—now take 10 seconds with RFgen versus about 60 seconds with Oracle. You scan barcodes instead of having to enter starting locations, part numbers and the destination locations. You scan a barcode, you’re done.”

While the warehouse workers use handheld barcode scanners, Eakin mostly uses RFgen on his desktop computer. He’s also planning to purchase a handheld barcode scanner for his desk. “From the desktop, I do a lot of the offsite stuff. I can have the exact same screen that my warehouse employees have on their handhelds. I’ve got basically one screen with all my stuff right there in front of me, and it’s just made things a lot easier. It’s an easier process flow,” he explained.

When they were using only Oracle, the warehouse team noticed that some of the pieces of information had to be entered in an order that “seemed a little backwards.” With RFgen, they can change the order that information is scanned in to create a more efficient process flow. Behind the scenes, RFgen feeds the information back and forth to the correct screens in Oracle.

RFgen also solved the problem at month-end with a custom-developed accounting close transaction. “Before RFgen, we could be down, without being able to do any transactions, for a day or two every month. Now, RFgen takes a snapshot of Oracle at the time of closing and allows us to keep working on our handheld devices. When Oracle comes back up, RFgen pushes the information to Oracle, so we never have to actually shut down operations over at the warehouse,” described Eakin.

Now that their most common warehouse transactions have been automated by RFgen, Eakin is moving ahead with additional development projects. “We’re working with RFgen and Inovity right now to develop a process and transaction with the handhelds that will track the movement of parts to our simulation labs using an Excel spreadsheet or Access database outside of Oracle... We had enough development hours to still fit this in under the original budget, so we were extremely pleased with that.”

With RFgen driving automation throughout its warehouse and logistics operations, TMEIC can more efficiently deliver solutions that drive industry. “Our greatest benefit with RFgen is efficiency. It makes life much easier in terms of the actual process flow of transactions, and we’re seeing significant time savings from those efficiencies.”



An RFgen-certified partner and specialty IT systems integrator, Inovity designs and delivers innovative solutions that connect and relay crucial business information between all points of operational activity, in real time. By emphasizing workforce mobility, ERP data mobilization and business process intelligence, Inovity provides automated technology solutions for manufacturing, distribution, healthcare, field service and retail environments.

About RFgen Software

RFgen Software helps organizations reduce supply chain implementation costs and increase accuracy and efficiency with the industry’s most reliable and flexible mobile data collection software and supply chain automation solutions.

Enabling you to increase productivity by providing your mobile workforce with real-time and on-demand access to enterprise data, RFgen’s mobile data collection solutions easily connect Windows, Android and Apple iOS mobile devices like barcode scanners, tablets, handheld computers, voice recognition devices and more to your back office ERP systems and databases, including Oracle’s JD Edwards, Oracle E-Business Suite, SAP, SAP Business One, Deltek Costpoint and more.

In business since 1983, RFgen is known in the manufacturing and distribution industries for its solid, high-quality products and high customer satisfaction ratings among its more than 2,800 customers. With a global reach and local touch, RFgen and its network of more than 140 certified solution partners can support your organization no matter where your operations are located around the world.

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