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CATHY HENRY | DIRECTOR OF IT OPERATIONS

VSE Corporation

Defense contractor automates data collection for supply chain management and maintenance, repair and overhaul using RFgen Mobile Foundations for Deltek Costpoint.

At a glance...

Industry

Aerospace & Defense

Maintenance, Repair & Overhaul (MRO)

Application

Inventory Management

Environment

Deltek Costpoint 7.0.1

The Challenge

Headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia, VSE Corporation is a diversified defense contractor employing over 2,700 people. As a preferred strategic partner to the Department of Defense, VSE extends the service life of military vehicles by providing sustainment services, consisting of supply chain management (SCM) and maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO).

VSE's Director of IT Operations, Cathy Henry, faced an efficiency challenge as the company grew and competed for larger contracts: much of the day-to-day inventory management for vehicle overhauls was managed on manual spreadsheets, then manually reentered into the company's Deltek Costpoint ERP system.

“As we looked at larger and larger contracts it was really critical to have an automated solution that included barcode scanning. We wanted to be able to scan something as it was received on the loading dock and have that item automatically loaded into inventory at a specific rack, shelf and bin, so that we could grow the business without having to add a lot of staff. We needed to scale up,” recalled Henry.

The Solution

First, VSE added the Deltek Costpoint Inventory Management module to their existing financial ERP. Next, Henry looked to integrate barcode scanning into inventory management processes to reduce the manual data entry burden for employees at the receiving dock, the warehouse and the shop floor.

“Our employees just want to fix trucks,” she said. “They don't want to have to mess with computers much. If they have that barcode scanner in hand and can just scan what they're receiving, it makes their day go faster.”

Henry's top priority for an automated data collection solution was seamless integration to Costpoint. After speaking to Deltek, she implemented RFgen Mobile Foundations for Deltek Costpoint—the only Deltek recommended mobile solution for providing real-time, bi-directional information exchange between Costpoint and barcode scanners, handheld devices, RFID devices, PLCs, and scale type devices for the aerospace and defense industry.

RFgen is a suite of pre-written, pre-validated data collection solutions that apply best practices to real-world challenges in inventory and supply chain management. Mobile barcode scanning improves accuracy and creates labor efficiencies by eliminating data entry. In addition to the handheld barcode scanners used by VSE, RFgen can run online and offline on any Android®, iOS and Windows® mobile devices, including consumer-grade devices.

“When we went through a demo, RFgen really blew our socks off. You could scan something and data would appear in Costpoint live, in real-time. It was important to us to choose a partner who had been there and done that and could provide a live, successful system quickly. RFgen has the experience; they are very familiar with Costpoint,” said Henry.

The Result

VSE was able to deploy RFgen quickly, and employees picked up the use of the barcode scanners with ease. Using RFgen has enabled VSE to:

- Replace manual spreadsheets with automated data collection for inventory management processes.
- Receive items into inventory and update the Costpoint Inventory Module with efficient, mobile barcode scanning.
- Achieve full lot-level traceability to comply with DoD contracts and ensure 100% billing accuracy.
- Mass transfer entire racks, shelves or sections of a warehouse to another location or warehouse.
- Improve the visibility of inventory management operations to increase inventory turns without double ordering parts or running out of stock.

Automating Inventory Processes

VSE never had an automated data collection solution, and Henry appreciated the knowledge that RFgen consultants brought to the project. "It was really important for us to have a business partner like RFgen. If we made a suggestion about how to do something, they would listen and come up with a better suggestion because they had more experience than we did," she said.

For example, VSE employees previously completed inventory transfers by moving items to a new bin and then noting that on a spreadsheet. With Costpoint Inventory Module and RFgen, they gained a transfer function that enabled employees to scan the barcodes on items and bin locations in order to complete a transfer quickly.

"Our RFgen consultant further suggested that after a transfer is completed, we should set up RFgen to come back and ask us if this is the new default location for this item.

We hadn't thought of this, but it was obviously the next logical step—you don't want new things coming in on the loading dock going back to the old location. Now RFgen takes care of that by popping up and asking during the transfer process," Henry said.

During the RFgen implementation, VSE opened a new warehouse and needed to move inventory into it from another facility. To make the process faster and easier, RFgen built an inventory mass transfer app. "Instead of moving items from one bin to another bin, the mass transfer app can move an entire section of inventory to another warehouse. We could move all of the items in a whole rack or section at once," said Henry.

Receiving and Quality Control

Using RFgen in receiving, employees can know in real-time when parts needed for a vehicle have arrived. Before RFgen, employees printed out a copy of the Purchase Order and checked off items before logging into Costpoint and manually rekeying the information. "Now, we can bring up the PO right on the scanner and go through the lines adding quantities. If everything on the PO is in the box, we can perform an auto receive with just one click," Henry said.

Some items are identified as requiring extra quality checks. RFgen automatically assigns these items to go through QC upon receipt. Henry explained, "QC used to require several emails back and forth. Sometimes items sat for days because people didn't know they'd been received. RFgen traces who received an item, when QC was notified, and when it gets into stock. Anyone waiting for that part can see where it is."

RFgen updates Costpoint in real-time so if various people pull the same parts all day, it doesn't take until the end of the day for inventory managers to be alerted. "Inventory management is now totally automated," said Henry. "We have the ability to reserve things, so if there are three in the bin but they are reserved for a hot project, other employees won't be able to see them on the scanners."

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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