THE POWER OF DELIVERY

Custom Software System
Walters Gardens, Inc.,
Zeeland, MI

Custom Software Optimizes Efficiencies

Initial Situation

Walters Gardens, Inc. (WGI), North America's leading wholesale grower of perennials, ships plants to retail stores, wholesale growers, and landscape contractors throughout the United States and Canada.

viastore systems, Inc., as part of an ongoing relationship as an operational consultant to Walters Gardens, partnered with the company to optimize its current operations with a barcode scanning application.

After evaluating the facility's logistical process as a whole, viastore created a multi-faceted solution that improved efficiency throughout the system.

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System Solution

Without making structural changes to the facility, the picking process was reorganized to increase efficiency. Prior to this upgrade, Walters Gardens would pick their orders and hold product in a freezing pick area until the entire order was fully picked and ready to be shipped. Using customized software, orders can now be picked further in advance, eliminating time lost in the freezing pick area.

In addition to order fulfillment, customized software was integrated into the system to aid in building inventory. When working with a highly perishable product, it is uniquely important to have an accurate and detailed account of that particular product's history. With the implementation of this customized software, this information was at their fingertips-literally. Much of the information needed is available from a handheld RF gun. The software also allowed for real time visibility of their inventory. At any time, Walters Gardens can accurately pinpoint the location of any product within the facility.

WGI, UPS, and viastore teamed up to develop a custom shipping system for WGI. All parcel packages are pre-labeled with a UPS tracking label before being placed on a shipping conveyor. Prior to the package conveying directly into the UPS truck, custom software interfaces with an in-line scale to record the package weight and uploads that information to UPS. Shipping and order information is verified and communicated back to the conveyor system.

If there is an error in the data or the package is out of the weight tolerance, the conveyor system will reject the package to a Quality Control area. Having an in-line scale and a direct connection to UPS allows WGI to quickly and accurately ship and track packages.

The Result

The improvements to the system allowed for increased efficiency in addition to increased accuracy. The facility can now process and ship more orders, while decreasing the number of employee hours, saving the company 188 hours per week. This translates into an additional 106,500 plants being packed each week, using 4 less employees.

Scope of Supply:

Live Product: Inventory, Picking, and Order Optimization software with Handheld RF Terminals, workstations PCs, and control station PCs. Carton conveyor with integrated scale Custom packing stations Print and Apply

Essential Features:

4 Print/Apply stations
20+ RF Terminals
8 pack stations