



CASE STUDY

Fujifilm Speciality Ink Systems Improves Warehouse Picking Experience

Industry
Manufacturing

Challenge
Optimizing the productivity of warehouse operators engaged in put-away/picking/packing applications

Results

- Reduced support calls by 90% within a few months of operation
- Enhanced employee experience and retention stemming from a cleaner UI and streamlined processes
- Increased productivity by 15% during recent “wall-to-wall stock check”

Products
Rocket API, Rocket LegaSuite

Application
Warehouse picking application

Company

Fujifilm Speciality Ink Systems (FSIS) is a global leader in the development and production of inks and consumables for a variety of printing processes including inkjet, screen, textile, label & packaging. FSIS UV inkjet inks fuel a range of class-leading wide-format printer systems, which are distributed worldwide through Fujifilm sales channels. FSIS also develops UV inkjet inks for industrial and wide format OEMs.

Challenge

Fujifilm’s management philosophy includes constant examination of hundreds of small factors that can be improved upon to create system-wide change and long-term efficiencies. In keeping with that culture of improvement, the IT team focused on optimizing the productivity of FSIS warehouse operators engaged in put-away/picking/packing applications.

A long-time AS/400 user, FSIS powers its ERP, back-office, and warehouse systems on IBM i. The warehouse employs 17 forklift truck operators, who continuously receive, check in and move product from the factory and from external suppliers as well as pick, check, and ship out customer orders. While the forklifts have long been equipped with terminal emulators connecting operators to the ERP system, the user interface for various warehouse picking functions was menu-based, limited to a series of options that needed to be entered manually, requiring heavy use of the keyboard.

Connectivity represented an even greater challenge. Initially, the forklift operators used tablets to link to the core applications via their WiFi network, but they couldn’t always sustain a connection, leading to productivity issues as well as delays. Accordingly, the IT team zeroed in on three key areas: the mobile hardware platform, the connectivity issue, and the UI of the warehouse application.



Solution

FSIS looked to solve the connectivity issue first. The IT team discovered Rocket Software through a free trial, during which Rocket built a small application in just a few days to demonstrate the power of its solutions. Intrigued, the IT team brought Rocket in for a sustained evaluation, solving the connectivity issue almost immediately using Rocket LegaSuite Web. The software maintains a “sticky” session with the ERP system so that if the connection is lost, LegaSuite Web holds the session until WiFi is restored.

After changing platforms to Windows-based hardware with touch screens, the team then turned to the task of making the green screens more intuitive. The team was very deliberate in analyzing existing processes and bundling other system updates into the project. “We wanted to update the programs and remove all redundant functionality in order to deliver an enhanced user experience” explains Alison White, Development Manager.

At one point, the team explored building its own UI in-house. They quickly determined that the process would take too long, and looked for a solution that could deliver a more immediate return. Already pleased with LegaSuite Web’s ability to handle the WiFi connectivity issue, the team worked with Rocket to redesign all of the screens in the trucks to present a more modern look and feel. In just a few months, the team deployed the first new UI on a prototype forklift, and after positive feedback, updated the remaining trucks.

Results

“Using Rocket LegaSuite, we’ve modernized our warehouse operations with a more streamlined workflow” explains Kaye Draper, FSIS Finance and IT Director. “The operators feel that the application is much more intuitive, as most functions are now completed using the touchscreens rather than a keyboard.”

The improved connectivity, which stemmed from several changes (platform, WiFi, better data integration), has reduced the number of support calls by almost 90% in the first few months of operation. The warehouse operators have also communicated their delight with the more current screens, contributing to a happier working environment.

The “wall-to-wall stock check,” an annual event in which everything in the warehouse is counted, served to reinforce the stability of the modernized system. In past years, this event typically took seven hours to complete. With the system and processes in place, the counting took just under six hours, a 15% improvement. After the success of deploying the combined Rocket solutions in the warehouse, the IT team is now turning its attention to the factory itself to deliver its next set of incremental improvements. Fujifilm and Rocket are currently working on a project that will pick up IBM i spool files, take digital signatures against protective equipment issues, then store this data electronically for up to 40 years to satisfy regulatory mandates.

“Combining our ERP system with Rocket LegaSuite Web is making our processes even more efficient. The new system has given the operators bolder, brighter and easier-to-use screens, and has removed the connectivity problems we had before.”

Paul Hill
Warehouse Team Leader
Fujifilm Speciality Ink Systems



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