

Painting Themselves Out of a Corner

Seymour of Sycamore Paints manufactures reliable and environmentally-friendly paint products for use in the automotive, industrial, hardware, specialty, and marine industries by professional painters and do-it-yourselfers. Seymour's® corporate headquarters and 220,000 square feet of manufacturing facilities are located in Sycamore, Illinois.

Challenges

Outdated Manual System

Seymour relied on a paper-based inventory and shipping process, essentially an "index card system." This antiquated method lacked efficiency and precision, making daily operations slow and unreliable.

High Risk of Human Error

Manual processes led to frequent mistakes in product picking due to misread or incorrect paperwork. These errors resulted in wasted products, financial losses, and logistical complications.

Need for Modernization

The company recognized the urgent need to implement a more reliable "pick and ship" system. Modernizing operations was critical to reducing errors, improving accuracy, and increasing overall productivity.

Ric, IT Coordinator at Seymour

Seymour of Sycamore Paints came on board in 2014. On his first day, the company was going live with its new ERP system. And the company had challenges.

"I had to learn the company pretty fast on that 12-hour day," he said. "One of the things I noticed right away that we were pretty outdated. We had an urgent need to move from a manually-operated company to an automated one."

Solutions

Replacing the Outdated Manual System with Automation

Seymour partnered with ISE for MV2 MES to implement an automated pick-to-ship system, replacing the inefficient index card method. This transition modernized operations, streamlining processes and eliminating reliance on paper records.

Reducing Human Error Through Technology

By equipping workers with hand scanners and tablets, the new system minimized mistakes in the picking process. The technology verified each selection in real time, preventing costly errors and improving accuracy.

Empowering Workers with Simple, Effective Tools

The automated system was designed to be intuitive, ensuring ease of use for employees while boosting efficiency. This upgrade enabled faster, error-free order fulfillment, aligning with the company's goal of operational modernization.





So, how did Seymour implement the solution?

Ric started out by talking to personnel in different roles, from shipping managers all the way through to pickers themselves. "We identified the processes we had in place," Ric said. "Using that background, we put a game plan in place that would change our structure. We drafted it out on a board and brought everyone in. Gave them a chance to give their input. We went through multiple rounds of edits."

ISE assisted in auditing the processes and helped develop potential solutions that would lead to a recommended next step.

"Once we had that proposal in place, we had everyone in the company represented in the finalization of our plan," Ric explained.

Seymour restructured its operations, implementing MV2 MES. Testing scores of scenarios. And, finally, went live a year after its first whiteboard sessions.

Ric credits ISE with its support from auditing assistance, creating ideas for potential solutions through testing, to the ultimate launch.

"They were very helpful in bringing a fresh perspective. They had solutions that worked in other instances we could leverage into our thinking," Ric said. "It is a relationship that still works for us today."



Results

"While we are still a very paper-based operation, we definitely use a lot less paper because of our work with MV2 MES. Their systems. Our relationship with the people. These are very critical to us transitioning to a more automated culture. It reduces errors and increases efficiency. Overall, we are just better at quicker, more accurate order turnaround," Ric said.

He added that MV2 MES has become so ingrained in the company's system, and that he knows as much about the product as anyone. "They call me Mr. MV2 around here," he said. "Thanks to the support we get. The way ISE approaches a business relationship. We know this product very well. We understand exactly how it fits what we do and what the potential is to even further improve our operations."

Ric says the results bear out in the company's statistics:



Greatly reduced product returns.



Readily identified and cleaned up 50% of expiring paint supplies before they expired.



Improved pick time efficiencies.