



CASE STUDY:

Crop Sciences – Process Improvement

“ACSIS’ knowledge of SAP, combined with their Data Collection Solution, enabled them to execute our requirements extremely rapidly and effectively. Their experience implementing RFID and data collection in factory and warehouse environments was tremendously valuable in helping us fundamentally improve our plant processes.”

—Senior Project Manager
Process Optimization
Technology Services

CHALLENGE

As the subsidiaries sought to streamline their operations, the Technology Services organization was tasked to implement automated data collection in their warehouses and plants. Technology Services realized they needed a set of standard data collection-enabled processes across all the subsidiaries. The diverse nature of the groups and operations presented a challenge and Tech Services knew they needed an experienced implementation partner with capabilities that included:

- Data collection system implementation expertise
- Deep SAP integration experience
- A highly flexible and configurable system

SOLUTION

Rather than going with one of the large system integrators, the Tech Services group selected ACSIS, Inc., because of ACSIS’ deep experience with data collection systems in general, and with SAP in particular. In addition, ACSIS’ high availability, low-maintenance data collection solution was designed specifically to work with SAP systems. The selection of the right partner turned out to be critical to the ultimate success of the program.

The first implementation of the new standards was for a \$7 billion manufacturer of crop protection products, pest control and transgenic seeds. The plant produces all the active ingredients for every company’s product. The production of these active ingredients involves sensitive and exacting processes.

Some of these active chemicals are dangerous, especially in the wrong combinations, so it was absolutely critical to ensure the correct ingredients were being delivered. Variations in quality could cause trouble further down the line in the production of final products. The company required a complete production batch number-tracking system, providing full control over the flow of materials to achieve required safety and quality control and to be able to recall specific batches if necessary.

They also wanted to increase the speed and accuracy of their plant’s receiving, put-away, transfer, picking and shipping processes. The existing process involved a lot of paperwork. Transfer orders were manually filled out by operators, given to their supervisors, and then entered by data-entry personnel. This resulted in errors, delays and lack of real-time visibility into the location of product. An inaccurate or late order could mean losing that customer for life.

The company was implementing SAP’s warehouse and materials management modules to manage their pick, pack and ship operations. The SAP system requires all materials to be booked before each product movement. With more than 100,000 bulk product movements per month, they realized that a barcode scanning approach was the only practical way to get all the necessary transactions into SAP. To accommodate this, they began replacing existing manual data entry with barcode data collection.

ACSIS Inc.

9 E. Stow Road, Suite D
Marlton, NJ 08053 USA
856.673.3000

Email
info@acsisinc.com

ACSISinc.com

ACSIS was responsible for managing the whole project, including specification, implementation, testing, training and go-live support. The project faced a number of challenges:

- Diversity of mobile computing and data collection devices. The plant used a variety of legacy handheld and vehicle-mounted computing devices, each with their own user interface and programming peculiarities. In addition, a variety of data collection devices were needed. More than 200 devices were eventually used across the company.
- Ease of Use Requirements. The company rotates its employees through different functions in the warehouse. They needed a consistent user interface, because they couldn't afford to force their operators to learn several different methods, devices and interfaces as they moved between different jobs. The functions of the system needed to be integrated into the natural workflow interfacing with SAP. In order to achieve the desired consistency and ease of use, a layer of functionality needed to be added between SAP and the devices. This and other integration issues required an intimate knowledge of SAP.
- Time Pressure. The planned go-live date for the SAP system was only seven months away when ACSIS was brought in, giving Bayer only a short time to develop, test and deploy the data collection system to keep the plant running.

Much of ACSIS' effort was spent in specifying a workflow that worked smoothly for the personnel at the plant. Because of their long history implementing plant and warehouse operations, ACSIS knew what worked well and what was clumsy for the operators. In many cases, they reduced several SAP transactions into a single operator action or eliminated the need for operator interaction entirely. For example, because ACSIS understood how SAP handles bin-to-bin transfers, they were able to make the system recognize the source bin without operator intervention.

The success of the project can also be attributed to the completeness of ACSIS' offering—from concept, through specification, implementation, end-user training and support, with the necessary technology framework and functionality to quickly fill in the pieces. The flexibility inherent in the system enabled them to rapidly roll out the solution to its other subsidiaries, even though they use many different devices, different data standards and have different workflows and requirements.

BENEFITS

The project has had many benefits. Their order-to-ship time was reduced and the productivity of transfer and picking operations increased. At the same time, accuracy improved and error rates plummeted. Inventory accuracy also improved dramatically, and the number of physical inventory checks required decreased dramatically. The net result has been that their customers now have an even higher degree of confidence in working with them, since they are consistently receiving prompt, error-free deliveries. And the project was good for business: they have gained market share and increased gross cash flow by 28 percent in the year the solution went live.

THE RESULT

Working with ACSIS to implement a paperless, integrated, real-time solution to manage its order processing procedures enabled:

- Increased plant throughput—enabling employee productivity gains
- Eliminated lost or misplaced stock and incorrect shipments
- Improved staff productivity by eliminating the need for personnel to wait for the next task to be assigned by a supervisor
- Reduced quality-control issues and wasted stock
- Met more deadlines and delivered a consistently high-quality product

For more information on ACSIS Cloud Solutions for the Intelligent Supply Chain, contact us at 856.673.3000 or email us at info@acsisinc.com

ACSIS Inc.

9 E. Stow Road, Suite D
Marlton, NJ 08053 USA
856.673.3000

Email
info@acsisinc.com

ACSISinc.com