

Raising the Barr

How one manufacturer cleaned up operations with barcode automation

If you've ever had to remove an ink stain from a shirt, tried to remove sticky price tag residue, or needed to absorb dampness in your basement, then you've probably already introduced yourself to Barr Brands. Barr Brands is the maker of over a dozen popular household cleaners and removers to keep your home clean and safe for your family.

When you manufacture and distribute consumer goods, you can be sure there are a lot of products going out the door; millions, in fact. In the early 2000's, the company acquired a number of brands to complement existing offerings. Adding a half-dozen brands meant taking on a much larger inventory of materials. The acquisitions drove a need for greater operating efficiencies for these business functions:

Order Picking

Manufacturing

Inventory Management

Warehousing

Shipping

When Barr Brands decided to enlist in a barcoding application to help them streamline processes, reduce paperwork and maximize worker productivity for their 24/7 operation, they looked to MSM Solutions to provide insight and expertise to make it happen.

Sticking with the Right Labeling Solution

MSM Solutions helped Barr Brands develop a label application using two different labels containing a barcode and other pertinent information about the item being labeled. With a barcode label on raw materials, WIP and finished goods, it was important to have the right type of label material, size, and printed format in order to make it easy to scan and fit on shelf tags, boxes, and pallets. Working together, this labeling system aimed to maximize resources and reduce opportunities for error.

Barcode automation helped Barr Brands make big changes in their warehouse and on the production floor. For starters, implementing Zebra handheld mobile computers enabled workers to seamlessly process orders from picking to packing to shipping. Within weeks of deploying the new system, they realized a return on their investment:



 Handheld devices mobilize workers, allowing them to keep pace with demands more easily.

 Errors are reduced; employees are alerted when incorrect items are being picked or shipped.

 Real-time tracking manages stock-outs and production requirements more accurately.

 Inventory locations are easier to find, so tasks are completed quickly.

 Reduced paperwork and fewer manual processes increase operating efficiency.

 Point-of-work enablement means minimal distractions and faster throughput.

Protecting Company Assets with Barcoding Technology

Implementing barcoding technology has simplified the production process as well as the shipping process. With 40-50 trucks picking up shipments every day, it is critical that items are tracked and recorded. Everything gets a barcode label; this includes product on the assembly line and pallets that are being prepared for shipment. The process boils down to this:

- Barcode labels on raw materials (cans, caps or chemicals, for example) are scanned into the system
- Materials are then scanned out of raw materials and are put into production
- Once product is produced and palletized, it's scanned again and placed in finished goods inventory with a barcode identifying the picking location
- When an order is received, product is scanned out of the picking location and prepared for shipment
- Once the pallet of product is placed on the truck for shipment, it is scanned again to confirm that it has been loaded for shipment and the order is invoiced

Success Factors

- ✓ Error-free operation
- ✓ Increase worker productivity
- ✓ Streamline operations
- ✓ Optimize material management

Winning Combination

MSM's relationship with Barr Brands has been a strong one for over 20 years. "MSM Solutions is one of our best vendors," said Duffy Cothran, Manager – IT Infrastructure at Barr Brands. "The service and support they provide is phenomenal; whenever we need them, we know they will be there for us," he added.

"Another advantage of doing business with MSM Solutions is their Customer First program," said Cothran. "We purchase our printer supplies exclusively from MSM, and in exchange we receive low priced support and service," he added. "It's been a valuable way to keep our budget in check."

Would a reliable barcoding system get your warehouse out of a sticky situation?

Contact MSM Solutions today for expert advice.

Identify. Track. Count. Manage