

# Miller Ingenuity

Growth, Lean Manufacturing Challenges and  
Pick to Light Solutions





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### Measuring Best Practice Part of the Pcddata USA Value Proposition

There is a common value proposition between Pcddata USA and clients like Miller Ingenuity. Pcddata USA offers unique solutions for distribution centers facing rapid SKU velocity. The hybrid Pick-To-Light is based on SKU velocity. When SKU is properly analyzed Pcddata USA's Pick-To-Light (PTL) is a tool that is often overlooked in the search for warehouse technology and can be over 30% more effective than rival order pick methods. In high density unit picking environments for example, PTL is by far the most efficient picking solution available, eliminating walking time and producing the most intensive picking environment possible. In a standard warehouse environment it is typical that 20% of the products represent 80% of the revenues, work and costs. In such a typical 80/20 environment companies can achieve 80% of savings by investing only 20% of the total costs. These data are persuasive, meaningful, and lean.

Miller Ingenuity is a railway component solutions company, based in Winona, MN. Founded more than sixty years ago, the innovative firm specializes in the ability to conceptualize, design, produce, and deliver railroad parts that meet the current and emerging needs of the industry. In the 1950's Miller Ingenuity founder, "Rudy" Miller, invented the wick lubricator and ever since has demonstrated the ability to conceptualize, design, produce and deliver railroad parts that meet the current and emerging needs of the industry. Product development is in the firm's DNA.

The company paced the industry as the original inventor and manufacturer of traction motor lubricators and gear case seals for all domestic locomotives manufacturers past and present. Growth continues by expanding product offerings and developing increased capability to manufacture tough wear parts, including pedestal liners, wear plates and center pin bushings for locomotive and railcar trucks or bogies. Truck parts kits introduced new levels of flexibility, ease of use, and completeness.

### Growth produces challenges and the search for solutions

One of the challenges the company faced was the fluency and accuracy of picking items. Jesse Smith, Safety and Manufacturing Manager, noted that for some time the company was picking from a paper picking list. It was very labor intense to search for a part and make sure the part number matched the actual part to be picked. Another chal-

lenge was adding new parts to the picking line. The company tried to add parts to the picking line numerically but then adding a new part introduced new problems.

Lean manufacturing means eliminating waste. Lean Manufacturing is a guiding principle at Miller Ingenuity throughout the operation. Creating greater value for customers, while minimizing the expenditure of resources, is a best-practice policy.

When faced with a challenge or motivated by a new solution, self-directed factory teams accept full responsibility to meet customers' needs—large and small—in the most inventive and efficient ways possible. From the team's early morning "Toolbox" meeting where they organize their tasks for the day, to brainstorming, or to producing the highest quality parts, the lean team is driven to ride to the rescue—solving customer problems and improving internal processes along the way.

### The Pick to Light Solution

Miller Ingenuity was drawn to the simplicity of a Pick to Light solution offered by Pcddata USA, a global logistics systems leader for supply chain automation. Smith explained that Miller Ingenuity wanted a system that was basically ready to go right out of the box and was not cost inhibitive. The Pcddata USA Pick to Light system was simplified; it reduced the cost compared to other Pick to Light companies.





Smith described the flexibility to move or add racking or zones to an existing system were another attractive feature of the Pcddata USA's PickStar Pick to Light System. "Industries need to be flexible to the ever changing market. You need to be able to get what a customer wants and be accurate and quick about it. With Pcddata USA our company can add new lines without having to hire a specialist to install it. It can be done with very little training required. Most importantly, we experience practically zero picking errors."

#### Reduction of Kit Picking Times by 50%

After installing Pcddata USA, Miller Ingenuity discovered that kit picking times were reduced by almost half. Training other individuals to pick products using Pickstar is time efficient. The system incorporated easily with the company's ERP system using current bill of materials; if a bill of materials needs to be changed it is automatically updated to the Pickstar system.

Antonio Rodrigues, Senior Manager with Pcddata USA noted, "The issues faced by Miller Ingenuity are common and the Pcddata PickStar design is simple and translates directly into speed in deployment and maintenance, meaning that industry leaders can start bringing the benefits online quickly. The hardware components are modular and user replaceable, minimizing maintenance and support costs."

The PickStar Pick to Light solution now tops 550 systems installed globally and is considered by many as the most effective solution.

The PickStar features include:

- High visibility, robust order pick displays
- Flexible mounting method allowing the system to easily adapt/ grow with your operation
- Simple and intuitive Software
- Highly accurate order assembly
- Orders can be handled either by barcode scanning or manual selection
- Picking data can be interfaced back to ERP/WMS system providing real time visibility
- Hassle free user maintenance

#### Miller Ingenuity Demonstrates

#### Pcddata's Pick To Light

Randy Skarlupka, Vice President of Operations and Ryan Diepenbrock, Operator Specialist for Miller Ingenuity noted the ease of the Pcddata USA pick to light system. Skarlupka demonstrated the truck kitting system improvements, "We invested in the system to help the accuracy of our products, the customizability of the products, and the speed to market. Our new pick to light system brings innovation to Miller Ingenuity."

**To view the entire video, go to: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=duo\\_Ai33sHk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=duo_Ai33sHk)**

Ultimately the ingenuity and creativeness Miller Ingenuity utilizes on behalf of customers has given way to a wide variety of new and needed products including Controller Handle Parts, Coupler and Draft Gear Parts. Engine Parts, and Freight Car Parts.

Additional products driven by need include Handrail and Bracket Parts, LED Lighting Parts, Transit Parts, and Truck Parts.



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