

Pick-to-light opens doors for ASSA ABLOY

PickStar improves delivery accuracy and customer satisfaction





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The Besam division of ASSA ABLOY were facing issues with incorrect deliveries to their field engineers as a result of picking errors from their parts warehouse in the Czech Republic. These errors were costly from both a financial and customer relations perspective and in an effort to tackle these issues, ASSA ABLOY turned to Pcddata and implemented the PickStar pick-to-light system reduce errors and drive down costs. The implementation has been a success and resulted in a payback of less than 9 months. Radek Poskocil, Head of Production Quality and Engineering at the Czech facility says "The benefit has been felt not only by us as an organisation, but more importantly by our customers"

ASSA ABLOY is the global leader in door opening solutions, dedicated to satisfying end-user needs for security, safety and convenience. Comprising of operations in over 60 countries worldwide and with over 42,000 employees, they are uniquely placed to serve the global marketplace with a range of safe, convenient, secure and reliable automatic entrance solutions. The Besam division was incorporated into the ASSA ABLOY group in 2002 and are focused on pedestrian entrance systems for the commercial market worldwide. Quality is a key component in the success of this global organisation making it no surprise that they constantly look for ways to improve their production processes to unlock further gain in quality improvement. At their production facility near Plzen in the Czech Republic, ASSA ABLOY turned to Pcddata to improve their parts picking operation with the implementation of the PickStar pick-to-light system. The implementation has led to significant increases in delivery reliability and accuracy of parts picking and thus led to the most important goal – customer satisfaction.

The Cost of Claims

The customer is at the heart of the ASSA ABLOY supplier approach. This focus on quality and customer satisfaction was being let down by the reliability of some of the processes in place, particularly in the case of parts picking. Radek Poskocil, Head of Production Quality & Engineering at ASSA ABLOY says that delivery accuracy left a lot to be desired in the past.

He illustrates this with a file from his records: "This is a sample of claims received in 2011. Our analysis shows that 80% of the total number were directly related to missing or incorrect items shipped"

Resolving each claim also leads to significant cost. The additional cost of handling, returns, administration and additional visits by field engineers soon mounts up. "We calculated that with

all the 'hidden' costs included, a claim would cost us as much as €450. Put simply, it was costing far too much to deliver the guaranteed quality we were aiming for. Something had to change".

Maximum Flexibility

To tackle this issue, the project team at ASSA ABLOY looked closely at several potential options such as voice or RF Scanning but finally chose the pick-to-light technology of Pcddata. Radek explains some of the thinking behind their supplier selection process: "In our case pick-to-light is much more flexible than a scanning solution. With pick-to-light we can very quickly and easily adjust the order assembly area if required when we add new components. We do not need to worry about getting our suppliers to barcode label or RF tag every product. We also have a large number of SKU's which are very difficult to tag or barcode due to their size. We now have one solution that suits the whole assortment of products and future flexibility is guaranteed" Alongside the flexibility of the system, Radek explains that the fact Pcddata had successfully delivered a pick-to-light solution at sister company FlexiForce in Barnveld NL was also an important factor. "Although FlexiForce installed a more extensive system in the beginning, it was an excellent reference. They had already been working successfully with the technology for 5 years, had realised





the benefits and had a positive experience with the supplier. Due to this we were also convinced about the knowledge, quality and professional approach of Pcddata.”

Further Opportunities

Pcddata equipped two of the four production lines in the Czech facility with a PickStar pick-to-light system. Previously two separate picking areas, the PickStar implementation enabled them to be combined into one highly efficient picking module with 350 positions in total – with the PickStar solution combining intelligence, software and hardware all in one product. The solution has led to increased productivity and a significant reduction in errors originating in the picking process. Radek explains the transition: “We used to work with paper picking lists to pick each production order. This was a laborious and error prone method. Now we can complete the same volume of work with one less operator and even more importantly, claims have dropped more than 55%” Radek also believes there is more gain to be had from the solution: “If we were to use pick-to-light in the other production lines I believe we could make even more improvement. The speed of the ROI makes the investment very attractive. With the original implementation we had ROI from the system in only 7 months!”

Upgrade and Expansion

Before expanding the pick-to-light solution to other areas in the production facility, ASSA ABLOY are also considering upgrading the current system to take more advantage of the technology. One of the possibilities is to use the system for dynamic replenishment, reducing the possibility for items to be out of stock when picking is in progress. This is one of many possibilities when upgrading from PickStar to the more advanced Pcddata product, Distrib. “We are also thinking about introducing integrated weight control” says Radek. “The pick-to-light process is very accurate but some mistakes can still be made. The added control and reliability of weight checking could improve customer satisfaction even further”. PickStar is not designed to handle more complex tasks such as replenishment and PLC controlled check measures. However, when asked about the decision made not to implement Distrib first, Radek is clear: “While PickStar does not have all of the features of Distrib, it does contain 80-90% of all the key picking functionality. By going with PickStar first we could immediately take advantage of the benefits and start saving. In addition, PickStar is incredibly clear and simple to install and use, meaning that the system was installed within a week and a few days later it was operational”. Radek also believes that ASSA ABLOY are now much more experienced with the technology: “We now have a very good idea of what is possible and are in a much better position to specify a fully customized solution to meet all our requirements. And of course, our customers will benefit from this as much as we will!”



Radek Poskocil, head of production quality & engineering at ASSA ABLOY: “Thanks to PickStar the number of claims has been substantially reduced and we have maximum flexibility.”

The company

The company

Name: ASSA ABLOY

Activity: door opening and lock system solutions

Location: Pilzen, Czech Republic

Employees: 42,000 worldwide / 200 plant CZ

Amount of order lines: 70,822 per year only CZ subsidiary

First pick-to-light system

Name: PickStar

Amount of pick locations: 350

Amount of picks per day: 220

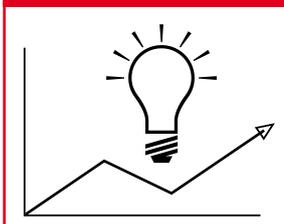
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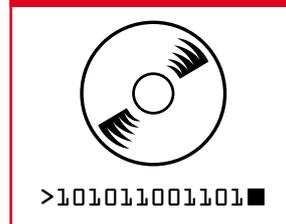
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