

RADIO BEACON



## Finding the Perfect Blend

RADIO BEACON WMS Helps Caribou Coffee Company  
Improve Operating Efficiency and Customer Service

### The Company

Founded in 1992, Caribou Coffee Company Inc. (Caribou Coffee) has grown to be the second-largest specialty coffee company in the U.S., with more than 300 stores and nearly 4,500 employees. Caribou Coffee stores can be found in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Ohio, Georgia, North Carolina, Michigan and Maryland, Virginia, Washington, D.C. and Pennsylvania. The company's coffee can also be found at major grocery stores across the U.S., and is served in-flight by several U.S. airlines.



### Key Benefits:

- Integration with Microsoft Business Solutions Great Plains 7.5
- Real-time visibility into inventory levels
- Short roll-out time and minimal training requirements

“With the implementation of RADIO BEACON WMS, our warehouse staff have powerful but easy-to-use productivity tools which allow them to be more effective in their jobs. And the excellent service and support we’ve received from Radio Beacon and Business Automation Specialists of Minnesota allowed us to make the transition smoothly, with no disruptions to our business.”

*Jon Christensen,  
Director of Distribution and Contract Services,  
Caribou Coffee Company Inc.*

## The Challenge



Thanks to its passion for great coffee, Caribou Coffee has expanded quickly, averaging annual growth of 30 per cent. The company's rapid progression has made the automation and management of its warehouse a high priority. Caribou Coffee opened a new 109,000 square foot facility containing a 42,000 square foot distribution center in February 2004. At this time, the company wanted to upgrade its financial management solution to Microsoft Business Solutions-Great Plains 7.5. Its existing WMS was unable to support the upgrade, leading Caribou Coffee to search for a new system.

Caribou Coffee also sought a new WMS because its aging system required warehouse staff to process orders using paper pick lists. The company's fast growth meant the warehouse was becoming increasingly busy, with orders reaching 500 per week. Caribou Coffee was running into productivity challenges due to growth, which was resulting in extended work hours for warehouse staff.

“We distribute all of our coffee and supplies to support our retail stores, commercial customers and manufacturers,” says Jon Christensen, Director of Distribution and Contract Services,

Caribou Coffee Company Inc. “We wanted to streamline the process for our staff, and knew that the right WMS system would help us improve workflow.”

The right WMS system would also allow Caribou Coffee to carry multiple bins of the same product within its facility and track lots at the pallet level.





## The RADIO BEACON Solution

When Caribou Coffee decided they wanted to upgrade their accounting system to Great Plains version 7.5, Microsoft suggested they contact Radio Beacon, who directed them to Business Automation Specialists of Minnesota Inc., a Minnesota-based full-service, value-added reseller that provides solutions to manufacturers and distributors. In 2004, Caribou Coffee began working with Business Automation Specialists who played an integral role in implementing the solution, helping to ensure a smooth transition to the new system.

"RADIO BEACON integrates with many accounting packages, which made Caribou Coffee's decision easy. They were able to focus on the improvements to warehouse efficiency and processes because they were already familiar with their Great Plains accounting software," says Ron Ketterling, President, Business Automation Specialists Inc.

RADIO BEACON WMS is designed to act as the hub of any supply chain solution, integrating accounting, order and shipping software systems, electronic data interchange (EDI) systems, Crystal Reports software, radio frequency and barcode hardware, and warehouse automation equipment. The solution provides Caribou Coffee with an integration to Microsoft Business Solutions-Great Plains. This integration helps Caribou Coffee gain complete visibility into its supply chain performance by providing access to key information that helps the company make more informed business decisions.

Caribou Coffee staff can now perform their day-to-day tasks with leading mobile computing hardware, rather than paper and pen. Order processing is made easier and inaccuracies are minimized with Symbol PDT 6846 Long Range Terminals, Symbol WSS1060 "wearables" for order processing, and Zebra Z4M direct thermal printers.

"We were focused on finding a solution that would support our current operations and easily integrate into our existing IT infrastructure but would also be flexible enough to grow with us," says Christensen. "We knew RADIO BEACON WMS would meet those needs, allowing us to continue providing the highest levels of customer service to our clients for years to come."



**RADIO BEACON**

WMS



## CASE STUDY CARIBOU COFFEE

Introducing RADIO BEACON WMS to the Caribou Coffee warehouse has given the organization real-time visibility into its supply chain, allowing the company to better manage its warehouse operations.

With support from Radio Beacon Inc. and Business Automation Specialists, the company introduced the new WMS system in only 3 months. The implementation was completed on budget and ahead of roll-out schedule.

### Benefits of RADIO BEACON

Warehouse staff now have powerful new tools at their disposal, which have helped increase picking rates. As RADIO BEACON designs the optimal picking route for warehouse staff, Caribou Coffee and Business Automation Specialists have been able to improve warehouse workflow and reduce the amount of time staff spend traveling within the facility.

"We were able to suggest warehouse layout changes to Caribou Coffee, and these improvements have resulted in a 33 per cent travel reduction," says Ketterling. "They created a cross-through tunnel between their fast-moving items and their slower-moving commercial product. This allows pickers to significantly increase their order fill speed."



# WMS

RADIO BEACON WMS also makes it easy for Caribou Coffee to support multiple bins of product within the warehouse, as well as offering pallet lot tracking. The organization has gained new shipping processing capabilities. With a fully integrated shipping system, orders can be pre-rated and manifested before they are even picked, helping Caribou Coffee to increase operational efficiency.

Thanks to the integration with Microsoft Business Solutions-Great Plains, Caribou Coffee is now able to accurately track warehouse performance in real time.

"With the new tools at our disposal we can track inventory levels in real time, as well as gain other performance information which helps us make better decisions and improves our ability to manage the warehouse," says Christensen. "We're extremely pleased with what RADIO BEACON has allowed us to do in such a short time. We are looking forward to fully exploring its features, such as the host of reporting tools, very soon."



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