

RADIO BEACON



The Perfect Warehouse Accessory

Radio Beacon helps leading distributor of optical, electronics and digital accessories reach new customer service heights

The Company

Toronto-based Gentec International (Gentec) is an importer and distributor of brand name optical, photographic imaging, digital imaging, wireless telecom and electronic accessory products.

Gentec provides its customers with products from leading brand name manufacturers including Sony, Roots, Planet Wireless and Optex, among others. The company supplies Canada's largest retail organizations as well as smaller independent retailers with photo lenses, digital storage

media, mobile phone hands-free sets, batteries, bags, binoculars, tripods and many other accessories, totaling 3,000 unique products.

Since the company's founding in 1990, Gentec has seen a 425 percent increase in sales and has become the leading accessory product supplier in Canada. Gentec is also Canada's only Canadian owned and operated distributor of optical, photographic imaging, digital imaging, wireless telecom and electronic accessory products.



Key Benefits:

- Order volume increased 15% without a corresponding increase in staff
- Order accuracy increased to 99+%
- Order picking times reduced by one-third

The Challenge

Gentec ships all customer orders from its 57,000 square foot facility, operated by 17 warehouse staff. The warehouse is a state of the art computerized facility which also acts as a distribution centre for the organization. With a fast growing customer base and rapidly increasing sales, Gentec relies on technology within the warehouse in order to meet customer demand and provide them with the highest levels of customer service.

The organization strives to get all customer orders filled and shipped within 24 hours and guarantees that an order placed with Gentec will leave the warehouse within 48 hours, making efficiency and accuracy a high priority. The need for efficiency within the warehouse is also key because some of the goods Gentec distributes are relatively low value items such as batteries. The organization needed a way to streamline its warehouse operations to reduce picking times for those items.

“Value of products within our warehouse can range from \$1 to more than \$500 and yet both products require the same effort to pick and ship,” Adat says. “Processing low value inventory, which is still a critical part of our business, makes it that much more important for us to ensure our warehouse operates as efficiently as possible.”

““ RADIO BEACON WMS has not only helped us ensure we maintain high levels of customer satisfaction while being able to efficiently manage our warehouse, but the level of service Radio Beacon Inc. staff have provided us with is outstanding. Radio Beacon staff are highly knowledgeable, respond quickly, and understand their customers’ business and what they need in order to succeed. ””

Retail demand is highly cyclical making it key for Gentec to have access to demand planning tools. Gentec also manages stock with the goal to eliminate back orders and based on the clients’ forecasts ensures availability of ordered items whenever the customers need them. Fill rates for customer orders have to be kept extremely high, because product shelf-life for some electronics items can be very short and retailers are likely to penalize the distributor if orders are not filled on time.

Order accuracy, particularly how the items shipped within an order are labeled, is also an important factor for the organization. Prior to the initial install of RADIO BEACON at the Gentec warehouse in 1993, Gentec shipped orders with paper slips outlining all shipped items, which was creating problems for Gentec. Customers were sometimes not able to recognize smaller items shipped as part of a larger order, leading them to believe the order was incorrect even if the items requested were in fact there.





The RADIO BEACON Solution

Gentec has successfully used RADIO BEACON WMS since the initial implementation in 1993, but as its business grew the organization felt it needed the more versatile version of the software to handle increasing order volumes and complexity. In 2003, Gentec decided to update its WMS and deployed RADIO BEACON WMS for Microsoft SQL Server within the warehouse.

The ease Gentec experienced integrating RADIO BEACON with its ERP system (WinSol from TecSys) allows the company to electronically process purchase orders in the WMS. Staff check received stock against outstanding purchase orders as soon as the goods arrive at the warehouse. RADIO BEACON then posts the receiving information into the organization's accounting system.

In late 2003, the organization also decided to improve its ability to meet the cyclical demand of their customers by deploying the Radio Beacon Demand Forecasting Module. The module, an add-on to the RADIO BEACON WMS, captures Gentec customers' and suppliers' order and delivery history, allowing the organization to accurately forecast upcoming inventory needs. Gentec can now strategically schedule purchase orders to suppliers and manage inventory budgets.

"This new RADIO BEACON tool has been instrumental in helping us prepare for peak demand times and to better manage our inventory in real-time," Adat says. "With the RADIO BEACON Demand Forecasting Module we can automatically identify optimal safety stock, reorder points and reorder quantities for every product in the warehouse, helping us ensure our customers receive the products they need whenever they need them."

Stock put away is streamlined with RADIO BEACON WMS. Warehouse staff are now able to put away goods into bulk locations since the software tracks the location of products within the warehouse and can direct staff to the exact location of the product they need when the pick locations require replenishment.

RADIO BEACON has increased the picking efficiency rates within the Gentec warehouse since the system delivers flexible picking tools including batch, product, and zone picking. RADIO BEACON WMS makes it possible for multiple pickers to work on a single order simultaneously, allowing Gentec to streamline the picking process and increase picking rates. Processing small unit pick items is made more efficient by RADIO BEACON's carousel integration.

Tight integration between RADIO BEACON and Gentec's Kewill Clippership shipping system provided by Evcor Canada has created a seamless shipping process for the company. Shipping is streamlined as the RADIO BEACON WMS provides the weight, number of cartons and address data to Clippership and uploads the costs and tracking numbers into WinSol, the organization's accounting system.

"Shipping orders is a much smoother process now thanks to the RADIO BEACON solution, with staff being able to scan products into a ready to ship box," Adat says. "With everything scanned into the appropriate order we have been able to reach accuracy rates of more than 99 percent."



RADIO BEACON

WMS



CASE STUDY GENTEC



RADIO BEACON

WMS

Benefits of RADIO BEACON

Operating the warehouse with RADIO BEACON WMS has provided Gentec with a high performance, flexible system that has been able to support the organization through major growth and significant order volume increases.

The organization is able to maintain high order accuracy rates with the tracking and reporting tools RADIO BEACON provides, significantly reducing the rate of customer claims from short orders. In fact, Gentec has been able to eliminate two accuracy control positions within the warehouse and allow warehouse staff to focus instead on more strategic tasks thanks to RADIO BEACON. Prior to implementing the system two full-time employees were dedicated to checking outgoing orders. Today a much higher volume of orders is processed automatically by the WMS, with no need for a physical re-check.

The organization is also able to ensure high levels of productivity within the warehouse thanks to RADIO BEACON. By leveraging RADIO BEACON, Gentec has been able to streamline its warehouse operations and design optimal work flow configurations that

made it possible for the company to support the 425 percent sales growth it has seen over the last fourteen years with minimal increase in warehouse staff number. Gentec's four pickers are able to process 200 orders per day, and about 2,000 lines per day with isle picking and close to 900 lines per person per day with carousel picking using the RADIO BEACON system.

"I have no doubts that without the RADIO BEACON system we would not be able to support our current volume. With the number of staff our warehouse employs, new hires would have been necessary," Adat says. "All of the processes that RADIO BEACON has automated for us were highly labor intensive in the past. I can't imagine operating our warehouse without the WMS now."

With the introduction of the RADIO BEACON Demand Forecasting Module the organization is able to guarantee the high levels of service that Gentec's customers count on. Since the technology allows Gentec to keep only the products they need to fill customer orders in the warehouse, the organization has been able to significantly reduce inventory storage costs, minimize the amount of stock outs and back orders and increase productivity.

"With RADIO BEACON WMS we can confidently offer our customers the guarantee that we will have the products they need in stock when they need them. With that guarantee we gain a significant advantage over our competition," Adat says. "The reporting, productivity and forecasting tools the RADIO BEACON system delivers make it possible for us to make more intelligent business decisions and ensure our success for years to come."



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