

RADIO BEACON



### Extra-Curriculum Activities:

RADIO BEACON helps Curriculum Associates automate their warehouse and keep up with increased demand.

### The Company

Curriculum Associates is a leading publisher and provider of teaching aids and supplementary classroom materials based in North Billerica, Massachusetts. Widely respected in the industry for creating and distributing quality product and backed by a thirty year history, Curriculum Associates bills themselves as “the teachers who publish” and provide

resources to teachers and school districts across North America.

When it came time for the experts at Curriculum Associates to consider automating their warehouse to meet increasing demand, they turned to the experts at Abel Integrated Solutions Inc. and Radio Beacon Inc. to provide them with an integrated warehouse management solution.



### Key Benefits

- Integration with conveyors and a proprietary order processing system
- Increased order processing and accuracy
- Cycle counting saves an estimated \$100,000





## The RADIO BEACON



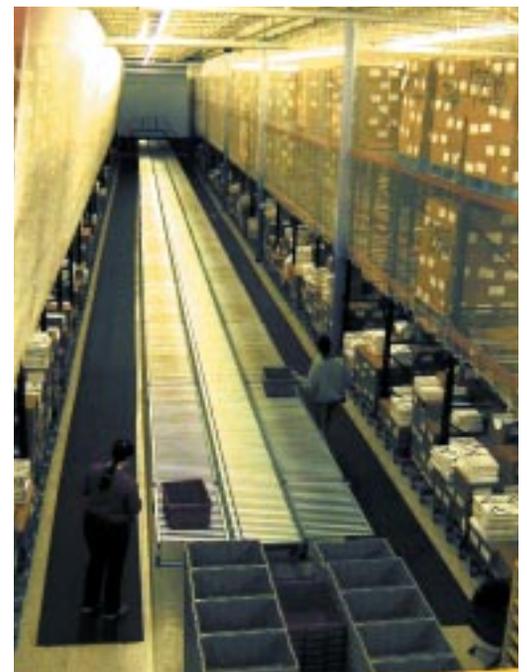
### The Challenge

Curriculum Associates had experienced significant growth, at an annual rate of 30%, for the last five years running. The combination of new teachers discovering classic product lines and an extensive list of new materials being created every year meant intensified order volume and an increased number of SKUs in the warehouse. These increases put enormous pressure on Curriculum Associates to fulfill the ever-growing number of orders arriving from schools and districts.

Beyond the need to handle an increasing number of orders and SKUs, Curriculum Associates needed a WMS solution that could deliver accuracy. The majority of orders are shipped in bulk, making order accuracy critical to avoid shortages and disputes. Curriculum Associates was also in the market for a system that could assist in increasing the accuracy and efficiency of the material handling process, particularly during the peak seasons in May and September.

A system that could cycle count while the warehouse was operational was also a critical factor for Curriculum Associates, who wanted to avoid the expense of having to close the warehouse to perform a wall-to-wall inventory count. Curriculum Associates also wanted to run their proprietary order processing system and off-the-shelf shipping system, and required a WMS that could easily integrate with both.

Factor in that Curriculum Associates just built a new warehouse a few miles down the road to meet their increased demand, and the challenge was complete.



## Solution

The first step was for Curriculum Associates to contact Abel Integrated Handling Solutions Inc. of Boston to come up with a comprehensive plan for automating and redesigning the warehouses. Abel's Mike Petinge led a team that designed all new warehouse layouts including racking and warehouse automation equipment. A major component of Petinge's strategy was to provide Curriculum Associates with a WMS that could deliver the accuracy and efficiency they required, as well as integrate with Curriculum Associate's proprietary order processing and shipping systems and the anticipated warehouse automation equipment, specifically Ermanco® conveyors.

Mike Petinge and his team selected RADIO BEACON WMS for the software's feature set and integration capabilities, and for its cost-effectiveness. RADIO BEACON also boasts a broad customer base in the publishing and literature fulfillment industries including installations at the United States Social Security Administration and the Internet division of Canadian book retailer Indigo.ca.

The team from Abel worked with the Professional Services group from Radio Beacon Inc. to design Curriculum Associates' new warehouse and re-engineer the old warehouse for space optimization and to handle the volume of orders. The smaller of the two warehouses is situated at a distance of about two miles from the main warehouse and one server is used to run both operations on a TCP/IP interface. The two warehouses are run as one warehouse with lettered or numbered zones being used to differentiate one warehouse from the other. Both warehouses are now visible

in real-time for improved inventory control and management.

The remote warehouse is used as the primary fulfillment center and the location for high turnover inventory, with the main warehouse being used to replenish stock or to provide inventory for orders that cannot be fulfilled at the remote warehouse. A Curriculum Associates vehicle shuttles inventory to and from the remote warehouse as necessary.

The remote warehouse is a fully automated operation, with RADIO BEACON interfaced to the conveyors. The supervisor at the remote warehouse waves the orders to the floor by zones and a pick to tote system is utilized. When an order is released to a picker in a particular zone, the picker scans the barcode and affixes it to the tote. The order is picked, placed in the tote and the tote placed on the conveyor. A similar process takes place in any other zones required to fill that same order. Once on the conveyor, the totes pass a scanner near the packing station. The scanner, based on the information it has received from RADIO BEACON, will determine if the order has been picked complete. If the tote is part of an incomplete order, it will continue to loop around the conveyor until the scanner has read that the order is complete. Once the order is complete, the scanner releases the totes to an open packing station. The order is then checked and repacked into cartons, the requisite paperwork included, and sent to shipping.

Through a successful integration with conveyors in the remote warehouse and an efficient directed walk process in the main warehouse, RADIO BEACON has helped Curriculum Associates keep track of and monitor its inventory, and assist the warehouse

workers in finding, retrieving, and accounting for all of the inventory that leaves the warehouses.

RADIO BEACON also provides Curriculum Associates' customer service staff with the tools to track and trace orders. Because it is web enabled, RADIO BEACON offers customer service reps a "window into the warehouse" whereby they can monitor the status of orders without ever leaving their desks. RADIO BEACON integrates fully with Curriculum Associates' proprietary order entry system and shipping system, so the entire process from receipt of an order, through processing in the warehouse, to shipping the order out is seamless and efficient.

RADIO BEACON's contribution to increasing Curriculum Associates' order and inventory accuracy, improving their material handling and operational efficiency, and empowering their customer service team has helped Curriculum Associates meet their increasing order and customer demand. Curriculum Associates understands that the key to success is to continue to provide their customers with new and improved materials, and to continue to grow and meet demand.

In RADIO BEACON, Curriculum Associates knows they have a system that will support their growth. "With extensive experience from installations in the publishing industry, we were confident that Radio Beacon Inc. would deliver a system that would meet our requirements," says Anthony Giordano, director of operations at Curriculum Associates. "The RADIO BEACON system not only meets or needs today, but can be configured to meet our needs tomorrow as we continue to grow."

## CASE STUDY CURRICULUM ASSOCIATES



RADIO BEACON

VVMS

### Quantifiable Benefits of Installing RADIO BEACON

Curriculum Associates recently conducted an audit to determine the time required to process and ship out orders. The audit indicated that with RADIO BEACON in use, over 50% of customer orders were shipped out the same day they were received, and over 80% of orders were shipped out by the next business day. Without the need to shut down the warehouse to perform the wall-to-wall inventory count, Curriculum Associates estimates that they save over \$100,000 in lost revenues associated with the down time and subsequent backlog.

Fred E. Ferguson, CIO and Vice President of Corporate Development, says that support from Abel and RADIO BEACON made the installation successful. "The transition to RADIO BEACON was not without some bumps, but it was greatly smoothed by outstanding support from the President of Radio Beacon Inc. on down. This was a major implementation, impacting CA's core business and IT infrastructure, and it would not have been a success without their guidance and technical support."



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