Improving Operational Efficiency With IB McIntyre

The IB McIntyre Team

At IB McIntyre innovation is a process that involves thinking about their business every day and looking for opportunities to improve. Jonathan Dawson, Commercial Director, says *"In today's world a business must be chameleon like constantly adapting to changes in the environment."*

IB McIntyre makes it a priority to question things they have always done so they can better understand and implement improvements in productivity and service delivery.

Regan Lamb is a Management Accountant at IB McIntyre whose duties include finding ways to streamline processes related to stock management, packaging and customer order fulfillment. Last year Regan identified an opportunity in their dispatch process that saved the company more than 90% in overtime while increasing throughput by 20%.

This is where it starts to get really interesting. Regan and Jonathan have established a relationship with a technology consultant named Eduard le Roux who helps them bring their ideas into focus and assists in their implementation. Eduard has consulted to manufacturing businesses for almost 10 years where he has designed and implemented solutions pertaining to Scanning, Shop Floor Data Collection, Inventory Accuracy, Material Requirements Planning, Production Planning, Forecasting and other ERP related solutions.

Project Beginnings

Jonathon, Regan and Eduard make a powerful team. Their approach is to examine each part of the business starting with receiving and inspection of bulk raw materials, carrying through packing and manufacturing to the finished goods store where the order fulfilment and dispatch process begins. They started by taking a critical look at the physical realities of the business and soon realised that they first needed to reorganise their plant infrastructure before they would be able to automate and implement some of the technology tools that could help them.

Optimising Product Movement

Regan and Eduard began by evaluating the way product moved through the business which led to a re-think about the configuration of their racking. The first step was to rearrange racking in receiving where bins were optimised to the packs they were receiving and barcode labels were affixed to each bin. Following that a similar analysis was completed in the manufacturing/packing floor and the finished goods store. By the time they finished this phase there were already apparent benefits in terms of stock handling.

Tracking Stock Movements with TransLution™ Technology

Once the racking was organised and labeled, Eduard introduced a software package called TransLution™ that operates on wireless barcode scanners and they began tracking stock movements electronically giving them better control over stock and enabling them to more easily find items in the store. The software is easy to use and was configured to meet the exact requirements for this facility and it integrates directly into the companies SYSPRO ERP software which was an added bonus improving efficiency and accuracy.

Optimising order fulfillment and dispatch

Getting better control of stock in the store and in manufacturing laid the groundwork for the next part of the operation which was order fulfillment and dispatch. Once again the project started by walking the floor and understanding the physical attributes of the dispatch area to learn where the bottlenecks were. Regan's understanding of how things actually work in practice combined with Eduard's knowledge of the technology tools led to an automated scanning process that improved productivity, increased customer order accuracy and saved the company more than 90% in dispatch overtime compared to the prior year.

New Opportunities

One would think they are finished and can now sit back with pride at the improvements they have implemented but that isn't the way things work at IB McIntyre. They find they have come full circle in terms of the stock management cycle and they are beginning to see new opportunities, learned along the way, for improved efficiencies. This philosophy of constantly seeking a better way is systemic at IB McIntyre and is one of Eduard le Roux's credos. Perhaps that is what makes them such a good team and that is in part why IB McIntyre continues to grow and prosper.

Lessons Learned

Jonathan, Regan and Eduard agreed to share what they see as keys achieving great results:

- Continually question what you are doing in search of a better way
- Use a practical approach and understand the physical realities of the business.
- Measure your results and let them guide you.
- Think of technology as a tool built on your experiences.
- Don't get trapped in designing the "perfect" solution.
- Remember whatever you do with systems, people operate them so keep it simple.
- Allow your staff to be part of the solution. Motivate them to accept change and don't skimp on training them to achieve the desired result.

About

IB McIntyre, established in 1966, boasts leading brands such as Mackie, Security Pro-Series brands & Partnerships with International brands such as Master Lock. Innovation and service excellence constitute the company's mission statement and its key to success.

Eduard le Roux holds a National Higher Diploma in Cost and Management Accounting and has been a consultant to manufacturing businesses for the past 10 years. He owns RSA Enterprise Software Solutions where they specialise in extracting value for clients through analysis, planning, integration, tracking by implementing technology solutions.

TransLution Software, based in Atlanta, Georgia, focusses on assisting clients to automate manufacturing and distribution processes to achieve improved stock accuracy and optimize productivity. We pride ourselves on our understanding of the unique operational and stock movement processes in our customers' businesses, as well as their relationship to financial management and control issues. TransLution Software integrates seamlessly with ERP software, business systems and production equipment, enabling the collection and presentation of shop-floor data in real time, as well as the automation of warehouse and production functions.

TransLution Software is made available worldwide through a global network of specialist implementers and resellers, working together to ensure great results. The knowledge, commitment, and depth of experience of our team enable us to tailor effective solutions to add maximum value. We have over 300 clients and have been helping manufacturing clients automate and digitize their businesses in N. America, Europe, Africa and Australia since 2002.

North America

TransLution Software LLC

Tanyard Oaks Office Park, Suite 901B, 327 Dahlonega Street, Cumming, GA 30040
Email: info@translutionsoftware.com | Website: www.translutionsoftware.com

Africa

TransLution Software (Pty) Ltd
Johannesburg, South Africa

Europe

TransLution Software BV
Rotterdam, Netherlands

Australia

BJM Business Solutions Pty Ltd

North Victoria, Australia
www.bjmbusiness.com

United Kingdom

K3 Syspro

Manchester, United Kingdom
www.k3syspro.com

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