

CASE STUDY :

Marlin Industries use SMARTDrum™ to beat efficiency into the supply chain.

“SMARTDrum™ gives us the ability to monitor and track cable drums at all points in the supply chain. This brings cost efficiencies, time savings and environmental benefits to everyone through our exciting new joint venture between Coriel and Marlin Industries.”

**John Droog, Managing Director,
Marlin Industries.**



Marlin Industries is the UK's leading manufacturer of cable packaging products, management systems and services. Their aim is to improve the efficiency and maximise the cost effectiveness of their products through innovation. Marlin Industries also take their environmental responsibilities very seriously and they promote the management and recycling of their products rather than continuous use of new packaging.

The Challenge

Marlin Industries produces wooden cable drums and these are used to transport high value cable for use by utility companies and electrical installations. By their very nature, cable drums end up in many different locations and keeping track of them and their contents was a challenge for Marlin Industries clients.

With no real time recording of information about the drums and their contents, it was a challenge to control stock and monitor the location of drums. With a heavy dependence on paper based systems and manual data entry, there were many inefficiencies and inaccuracies in the long supply chain where cable drums can pass through a number of third parties before completing their life cycle.

Marlin Industries wanted to find a way to monitor, record and track cable drums and their contents more effectively. This wasn't possible with the current way of doing things where each cable drum was identified by either a unique serial number hand carved into the drum flange or a printed label attached by staples. Reading the hand carved numbers was difficult as the quality of the inscription wasn't always good, while the labels and barcodes often became damaged due to the harsh environments in which drums are stored. In addition to this, it was estimated that 20% of manually recorded serial numbers contained errors and this led to inaccurate stock records.

For more details see www.smartdrum.co.uk



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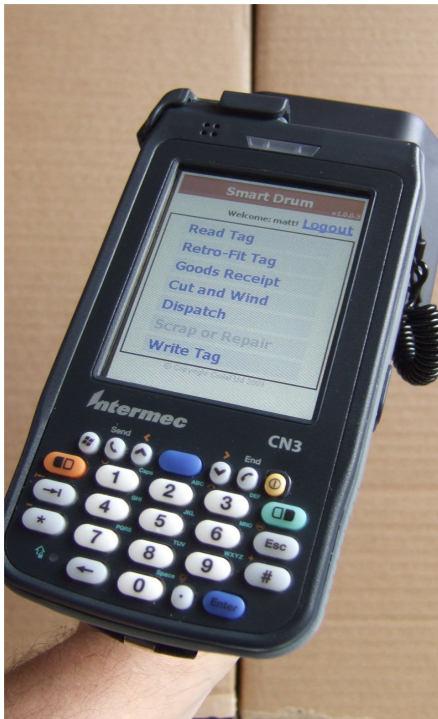
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Wastage was also a challenge as there was no way of recording accurately the amount of cable remaining on a cable drum. Very often, cable drums were returned with a significant amount of cable remaining on the drum.

The Solution

Coriel provided Marlin Industries with SMARTDrum™, a secure electronic tracking system designed specifically for the cable drum industry. SMARTDrum™ uses low cost radio frequency identification (RFID) tags, robust handheld readers and web based software to track the cable drums and their contents.

The RFID tags are embedded into the cable drum and these are read using handheld readers. Unlike barcodes, RFID tags work via radio waves and these can be read from a few metres away as they do not need line of sight to read. Transaction information can be included in the tag and this can record data on dispatch, receipt and payload contents throughout the supply chain. The system software interfaces to the clients existing stock inventory ERP system and provides real-time updates via a wireless or a mobile phone network



The Benefits

SMARTDrum™ delivers benefits throughout the supply chain and it has revolutionised the way that Marlin Industries and their clients collate data, process it and make decisions based on it. There are many other benefits of using SMARTDrum™ and these can be summarised as follows:

Centralised real time information

The location and contents of cable drums can be recorded and sent in real time to a centralised system providing greater visibility of drums and stock throughout the supply chain.

Tighter stock control

Stock levels are more easily determined at any point in the supply chain resulting in less wastage of cable on the drums and improved stock control processes.

Reduced costs

Operational improvements through the electronic recording of data, more efficient delivery and receipt processes, reduction in storage space and clearer control of project teams all helps to reduce costs throughout the supply chain.

Improved efficiencies

Maximising vehicle loads and eliminating paper-based and manual processes are just some of the efficiencies that have been achieved.

Environment

Improved visibility of drums and their contents leads to higher repeat usage and less wastage of drums and cables, bringing financial and environmental savings.

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