TEKLYNX
Barcode Better

CASE STUDY

EIS Uses SAP Integration To Speed Up Label Production and Develop Labels in 24 Hours

Solution: CODESOFT
Industry: Electronics

Background

EIS, North America's leading supplier of electrical, electronic, and mechanical process materials, found the labeling software they needed. EIS sells to customers like SquareD, General Electric, and Emerson Motor. To handle those sales, EIS uses the SAP enterprise software sales distribution module. EIS must produce package labels to meet the unique labeling demands of those big companies and many other customers. It serves a total of 400 different customers with magnetic wire, wiring cable, and insulated film. Average label generation is between 100 and 200 daily, sometimes all one style, sometimes in many different types.
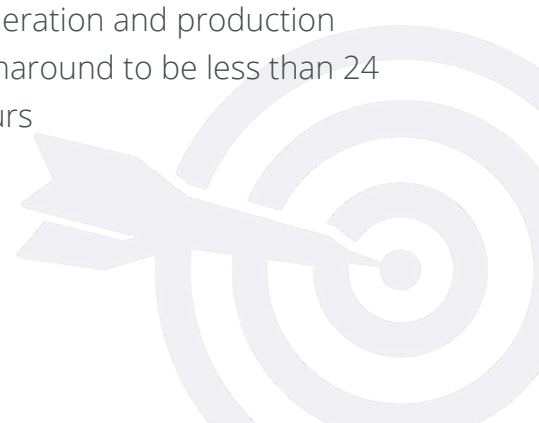
So, EIS, a subsidiary of NAPA parent Genuine Parts Company, required a labeling solution that would run off the SAP system on its IBM AS/400 mid-range computers, rather than the PCs used in many labeling environments. EIS worked with Atlanta-based IMCorp Inc*., a connectivity solutions specialist utilizing barcode labeling and other automatic data collection methods to find a solution.

Challenges

- Produce package labels to meet unique labeling demands for 400 different customers
- Labeling generation and production time is long and inefficient
- High volume of labels required daily multiplies inefficiencies

Results

- Labeling program generates SAP script that runs off the SAP system rather than the PC's
- New labels made quickly and easily
- SAP integration reduced label generation and production turnaround to be less than 24 hours

Solution

IMCorp met the challenge with CODESOFT label design software program and an IMCorp-designed template developed via CODESOFT's printer object file (POF) manager. Working with EIS, IMCorp created a template with both fixed and variable fields. The resulting template, a POF file, filters the output into code that can be directly copied into an SAP script, says Bob Lehman, president of IMCorp.

It's made label generation an easy process at EIS. "It allows us to turn label production around quickly— within 24 hours—once we get the requirements from a customer," says Joyce Edgens, EIS developer. Since CODESOFT is a graphical user interface (GUI) program, EIS users simply design a label on the screen and see exactly the label they're designing. "They use the power of the software as a graphic design tool. They don't have to tweak individual commands. It keeps them from having to get into the bits and bytes of a command language," says Lehman. "They can design labels that meet the needs of their business."

"Then they tell the system to save it as a POF using our template. They can just copy that into SAP, automatically generating the SAP script to create the label," says Lehman.

This label design software program, adds Lehman, "gave us more end user flexibility in formatting the output and it's much less expensive" than the few other systems available with similar capabilities. "With its POF, you are not printing out of a PC, but from a host-based application. So, instead of using CODESOFT as a tool to print directly, it is used to design labels and then automate a portion of the program creation process to make them print from a host."

Labels are printed on Brady and Datamax printers at 53 EIS distribution sites throughout the U.S. and every printer communicates with the SAP system in Atlanta. The ability to communicate with multiple brands of printers was extremely important. Without it, EIS would have had to write commands to format the output for each printer.

Many of the labels produced this way are used in the EIS automated inventory management program called AIMS. This vendor-managed inventory system uses Symbol Technologies PDT3100 hand-held scanners at the customer site to scan inventory and electronically send EIS an order when stock must be replenished. General Data's Datalogger Gold software is used to run the vendor-managed inventory system. IMCorp recommended the software to "give EIS control of its own destiny," says Lehman.

"Our objective is to solve people's problems without necessarily making them dependent," says Lehman.

Results

Simply using a flexible label generation system capable of communicating with the SAP sales distribution module at EIS benefits the electronics distributor. CODESOFT saves tremendous time and money in label creation and generation. Without it, "depending on the complexity of the label, each label could take up to three days to create, test, and move into production," says Edgens. Now it takes only four hours to do the same thing.

The label design software program provided other benefits, too. "We've really saved costs in training personnel," says Edgens. No training is required to create the label since it is all What You See Is What You Get (WYSIWYG) and because the IMCorp template makes SAP script generation automatic.

Without the TEKLYNX and IMCorp system, EIS would need two people proficient in SAP script to keep up with labeling demands. EIS would have to pay $1,500 per person for SAP supplied, three-day training classes to obtain that proficiency. Instead, the only training required involves how to use the customized EIS system to print the designed label", says Edgens. Also, Edgens notes, "it's reliable and fairly inexpensive."

In the typically challenging SAP environment, those are big benefits. For EIS, they're not imaginary. The SAP-script generating label program is a standard part of doing business efficiently, inexpensively, and daily.

*IMCorp was acquired by Atlanta-based Inovity in 2019 to expand their eastern U.S. presence.

> SAP barcode label printing software from TEKLYNX relies on a straightforward integration that makes labeling changes easy, fast, and error-free.

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