



Color Point Tracks Finished Goods Orders with 100% Accuracy

RFID system for order racking improves accuracy and saves money

Color Point, LLC is a bedding plant greenhouse operation located in Paris, Kentucky, that provides nursery products to several Lowe's, Sam's Club, Wal-Marts and other retailers in markets throughout Kentucky, as well as, in sections of Indiana, Ohio, Tennessee, and West Virginia. The company, owned by a family of 16 siblings, operates a 15-acre greenhouse, three acres of smaller greenhouses and a 50,000 square foot production and shipping facility.

Color Point grows and distributes their products via Full Truck and Pool Truck operations across a five-state area utilizing large, metal mobile carts, which act as racking of the product for delivery purposes and for in store positioning of the product. The company needed a reliable and accurate system of tracking each cart, as well as improve order accuracy and streamline labor efficiency. Each order is time-sensitive and has a significant monetary value that could make or break the operations if shipped incorrectly, or out of sequence. Color Point ships over 10,000 carts annually to its retail customers with a 25% non-return rate, which equates to \$1.5 million in lost assets. But factor in mis-shipments and products that are shipped to the wrong location, and that number increases dramatically. The challenge was to track each cart as it left Color Point's distribution center and provide real-time visibility throughout the supply chain.

Brad Slattery, IT manager at Color Point, met with a team from the Integrated Solutions Division (ISD) of SATO America to review the requirements and performance of using RFID tags on the metal objects (the mobile carts), which historically have always been a challenge to Color Point.

"After meeting with the SATO ISD team, we were immediately impressed with their people, as well as their technology," said Slattery. "It was clear that they were investing the necessary time and resources to take technology to the next level. They were already well beyond what anyone else was doing with RFID in our industry."

Shipping

Within weeks of meeting, the SATO ISD team was onsite developing and installing the necessary core components. Meanwhile, senior-level development engineers worked with Slattery and his staff to install SATO's iTRAK Warehouse Management Tracking software package for Color Point's ERP database and shipping applications. The iTRAK system now manages Color Point's orders and high-value mobile assets by customer and trailer, along with its network of RFID infrastructure including SATO RFID portals, SATO GL408e RFID thermal printers, and customized SATO RFID labels (tags), along with Motorola handheld devices and RFID readers and antennas.

Specialized passive RFID tags were developed and attached to both ends of each mobile cart, while fixed station RFID readers were mounted at the dock doors of its distribution center to provide the real-time visibility.





The RFID tags on the mobile carts are scanned as the carts are placed within trucks and shipped out to each retail customer. The cart serial ID number is then matched to an order in the SATO iTRAK WMS, integrating to Color Point's host system. The system then provides the correct load number and destination to the iTRAK system. The system takes the data and plots the cart on a color monitor that displays a planogram to the operator loading the order. This happens all within a split second and allows the loaders to move quickly and accurately when loading the trailers.

Receiving>Returns

Upon a cart's return to Color Point's facilities, each cart's tags are interrogated for their unique number and their return is documented against the customer's account. Each outbound truck has space for more than 40 carts. The tracking system helps Color Point create color-coded planograms for each vehicle so the carts are loaded in the order they are to be delivered. This helps ensure each customer receives the correct carts and makes loading and unloading easier for the drivers.

The handheld readers are used to improve visibility within the Color Point facilities. If a cart is not returned, Color Point can now invoice their customers for the missing assets, saving the company substantial time and money.



"Within a few months, we were doing things we had only dreamed possible prior to working with SATO," said Slattery. "Adding to that, the system is rock solid and we can purchase everything as a **turnkey package** from SATO, we are confident in moving forward and building on the technology platform."

AT A GLANCE

Color Point, LLC
Paris, Kentucky

Application: Order Management/Inventory Tracking

System:

- SATO ISD iTRAK Asset Tracking Software Package
- SATO RFID Portal
- SATO GL408e RFID Thermal Printers
- SATO RFID Labels
- Motorola Handheld Readers
- RFID Fixed-Mount Readers



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RFID Antennas

Benefits:

- * System reads each labeled cart as it is loaded for shipment with 100% accuracy
- * Creates instant planogram manifests so that the orders can be loaded in order of delivery.
- * Creates a complete record of missing orders and which customer received them
- * Enables Color Point to recoup the cost of non-returned assets
- * Provides instant order verification which results in 100% load visibility by trailer

Click the link to view the Application Video

<http://www.satoamerica.com/cms/Colorpoint+Video+/645.html>