

FACTIVITY

CASE STUDY

Customer: *American Trim*

THE COMPANY

Based in Lima, Ohio, American Trim is a leading provider of metal components for the appliance, heavy truck and automotive industries. It specializes in the forming, decorating and coating of metal and composite materials. A large part of its business involves the creation of metal components for major appliance manufacturers, such as the control panel and end caps for a kitchen range.

THE CHALLENGE

When a product is mislabeled, the wrong part may get shipped out and you risk shutting down a customer's production line. To prevent this from happening, American Trim needed a solution to help eliminate human error in keying in the wrong part number during the production process as well as to ensure the correct labels are placed on the right product to ensure accurate shipping.

THE STRATEGY

American Trim instituted an "Earn-a-Label" system into its production process that utilizes FACTIVITY's MES (Manufacturing Execution System) software. American Trim had been using FACTIVITY's Shop Floor Workbench product since 1994. In 2008, American Trim and Factivity teamed up to enhance the software with an "Earn-a-Label" solution that requires operators to report production in order to print a label. The system builds on FACTIVITY's human friendly interface, adding part specific details so that the correct number of labels is printed based on operator production reporting. The operator "earns" their serialized label through production reporting.

Prior to using this system, it was common for operators to print large batches of labels in advance of their job. Leftover labels from one job could be inadvertently placed on the next job. Another issue involved operators accidentally "keying in" the wrong part number as label generation was managed through a separate system with no tie to production. One wrong digit and you get a label for a completely different product.

THE RESULT

"The Earn-a-Label discipline has eliminated batch printing of labels prior to production, which has greatly reduced customer mislabeled product," said Paul Pellegrini, Director of IT, American Trim. "Prior to implementing 'Earn-a-Label' we were experiencing several customer rejects per year due to mislabeled product. In the past three years there has only been one reject due to mislabeling where we have Earn-a-Label in place."

When an operator reports production in FACTIVITY, an appropriate label is printed, based on the job being reported.

“The FACTIVITY solution provides immediate and streamlined communications,” Pellegrini said. “It has helped us to improve inventory and labor reporting accuracy and is very easy for those on the shop floor to use.”

TAKING IT ONE STEP FURTHER

Building on the success of Earn-a-Label, American Trim is in the process of taking evolution to the next level leveraging product labeling further upstream in the production process. They now use the FACTIVITY Material Lots capabilities to ensure the correct product is at the line during production. When a part comes into a work cell, it is scanned into the FACTIVITY system to ensure it is the right material.

“This is especially helpful when working with rolls of steel of different thickness where a new employee may not realize they have the wrong material without caliper measurements. Now we can confirm the material before loading it to the dereeler,” Pellegrini said. “Without scanning the expected material into Material Lots the FACTIVITY system will not let you report production and ‘Earn-a-Label’ for your product. You must provide a correct serial number that represents the expected materials. This is also providing material traceability through multiple operations.”

American Trim added the Material Lots functionality to one of their facilities the fall of 2013 and is already seeing the benefits.

“The system enforces correct inventory consumption and improves inventory accuracy. When the shop floor is finished with their production, they can correct or zero out remaining balances, which significantly reduces cycle count efforts and avoids unnecessary job setups as inventory is now accurate. No more small negative counts or tiny coil counts exist.”

Learn more about FACTIVITY and its software solutions for the factory floor at www.factivity.com or call (800) 369-6377 to determine if FACTIVITY can help your shop floor work leaner and become more efficient.