

Case Study

Effective Supply Chain Integration

Solutions involving people, automation and I.T. can be tricky, especially when they are part of a critical supply chain operation. Here's how Alba Controls can effectively design and integrate the right solution for you.

Sensible Solutions

At Alba, we understand the range of business and control systems and we know what works well and what doesn't. We provide sensible solutions that DO work by selecting the right technologies to solve your problem. That can only make sense for your business.



The Challenge

Alba Controls were selected to improve the operation of a critical product filling line. The production lines outputted different products to identical containers. It was essential each one was filled with the correct product, minimise error and record all transactions. The solution itself needed to sensibly consider and integrate: -

- Automation – PLC/SCADA
- Supply Chain ERP
- IT – SQL Database
- Cost
- Customers
- Users and Operators

The customer wanted: -

- Improved Usability
- Reduce Scope for Error
- Include cross-checking
- Integrate with Automation

The Solution

We examined all the options including our preferred choice, using innovative RFID technology. However, over two thousand containers were already in supply chain circulation around the globe therefore upgrade to RFID in the timescale was not practical.

We established a solution using a robust system of wireless portable laser barcode readers. The containers already had a unique ID barcode plate fitted so this was the perfect answer. We seamlessly integrated the device into the existing control system, effectively solving the problem and improving the way the operators worked.



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Protect by Design

Thanks to Alba's clever design and integration, many benefits have been realised.

- Product mis-matching has been eradicated.
- Container/product data and final filling reports integrated into existing SQL database structure.
- Automatic material/station cross-checks interlocks have been added
- Barcode graphics and alarms fully integrated into existing SCADA software.
- Operator input errors by incorrect tare and product quantity are removed.
- Operator has a much more efficient loading procedure. No more disrupting data entry.
- Less waste handling
- Higher yields by more closely targeting filling weights
- Most importantly ensure the customer gets the correct product ordered

Looking Forward..

As a result of our investigations and recommendations, our customer is currently liaising with their supplier to include RFID tag technology during manufacture of their containers

The Bottom Line

It's important to realise that at Alba we care about your problems and your people. We don't throw in technology for technologies sake and we *will* find the right solution that for you. By carefully studying the whole picture as well as the current problem means we can provide complete integration... that works!

thinking globally,
acting locally



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