



Color Point Tracks High Value Assets With 100% Accuracy

RFID system for asset tracking improves visibility and saves money

Color Point, LLC is a bedding plant greenhouse operation located in Paris, Ky., that provides plants to several Lowe's, Sam's Club and other retailers in markets throughout Kentucky, as well as, in sections of Indiana, Ohio, Tennessee, and West Virginia. The family owned company operates a state-of-the-art 15-acre greenhouse in addition to a production and shipping facility that occupies approximately 28,000 square feet.

Color Point grows and distributes plants via truck to major retailers 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. Each of their more than 6,000 carts is valued at \$400 and will be shipped between seven and nine times annually to its retail customers. The challenge was to accurately track each cart as it left Color Point's distribution center and to provide real-time visibility throughout their 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 concerns of using RFID tags on 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 this technology to the next level. They were already well beyond what anyone else was doing with RFID in our industry."

Within weeks of meeting, the SATO ISD team was onsite developing and installing the necessary core components while a senior-level developer worked with Slattery and his staff to customize SATO's iTRAK Asset Tracking software package for Color Point's ERP database and shipping applications. The iTRAK system manages Color Point's high-value mobile assets and creates superior accuracy, efficiency and flexibility in its dock loading operations. Its RFID network infrastructure includes an RFID portal, GL408e RFID thermal printers, and RFID labels (tags), all from SATO America, along with Alien RFID readers and antennas.

Specialized passive RFID tags were developed and attach 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 as required.

The RFID tags on the metal carts are scanned as they are placed within trucks and shipped out to each retail customer. 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 customers account. Each outbound truck has space for more than 40 carts.



The tracking system helps Color Point create color-coded plan-o-grams for each vehicle (displayed on monitors at each dock for load staff) so that the carts are loaded in the order they are to be delivered. This helps ensure that each customer receives the correct carts and makes loading and unloading easier for the drivers.

“Within a few months, we were doing things we had only dreamed possible prior to working with SATO,” said Slattery. “Adding to that the fact 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 this technology platform.”

AT A GLANCE

Color Point, LLC

Paris, KY

Application:

- High-Value Asset Tracking

System:

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

Benefits:

- System reads each labeled cart as it is loaded for shipment with 100% accuracy
- Color Point can create plan-o-gram manifests so that the carts can be loaded in order of delivery.
- Creates a complete record of missing assets and which customer received them
- Enables Color Point to recoup the cost of non-returned carts