

CASE STUDY

Barcoding Automates Azteca Foods' Ability to Track and Trace Pallets



Background

Founded in 1969, [Azteca Foods, Inc.](#) is a family-owned and operated leader in the Mexican foods category. Azteca offers a wide variety of products that meet the needs of consumers, chefs and manufacturing partners through retail, food service and industrial businesses—both domestic and global. Products include softer and fresher tortillas and ready-to-bake salad shells under the Azteca brand. Azteca is headquartered in Chicago, where it operates in a 100,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art manufacturing facility, which employs more than 135 people.



AT A GLANCE

Background

Azteca Foods is a family-owned and operated leader in the Mexican foods category. Headquartered in Chicago, where it operates a 100,000 sq. ft. warehouse.

Challenges

Azteca sought a way to track pallets of goods moving throughout its warehouse. Needed to assign unique identification numbers to pallets as they come off the line. Eliminate manual data entry processes.

Solution

Barcoding's barcode scanning system: handheld computers, a customized mobile software application, an internally hosted web service, and network extenders.

Results

Achieved full traceability of pallets moving into its finished goods warehouse. Eliminated time-consuming manual data entry processes and increased accuracy. Earned Barcoding, Inc.'s 2014 "Innovator of the Year" Award for its impactful implementation.



Challenges

Looking for opportunities to become more efficient, accurate and connected in its day-to-day operations, Azteca sought a way to track pallets of goods moving throughout its warehouse. Azteca wanted to assign an unique number to each pallet that came off the line. Then, it could use that identifier to enable traceability of its pallets. Also, Azteca wanted to eliminate its manual data entry processes—operators had to write down what they produced and what they received in order to balance finished goods data at the end of a shift.

Solutions

Azteca turned to [Barcoding, Inc.](#), a Baltimore-based leader in supply chain efficiency, accuracy, and connectivity, for a solution. Barcoding recommended and implemented a barcode scanning system, consisting of Zebra MC65 handheld computers, a customized mobile software application, an internally hosted web service, and network extenders to give Azteca maximum wireless coverage inside its facility.

For the software portion of the solution, Barcoding created a customized mobile application with its CaptureSoft eXpress™ platform, and loaded it onto the handhelds. Now, when pallets come off the line, warehouse operators scan a barcode and the application then queries the web service for information such as the shift, the line, the product and the number of cases on that pallet. Using this data, the application generates a unique pallet identification number and links it to the specific information it collected. The application stores the data and transfers it to Azteca's back-end system.

Results

By generating and assigning unique pallet numbers, Azteca has achieved full traceability of goods moving into its finished goods warehouse. The company knows not only the location of a pallet, but also how many items it includes, which shift or line created it, and even which pallet to ship to which customer. By eliminating time-consuming manual data entry processes, there

is less room for human error and the pallet information Azteca collects is more accurate.

Also, by integrating the data it collects with its back-end database, Azteca can run reports in just seconds to make sure production data is balanced on a shift-by-shift basis. Azteca has also saved money by opting for network extenders, rather than creating new access points within the plant.

Looking forward, Azteca plans to expand the solution by introducing printers that create pallet tickets. In turn, the company can use the tickets to track product in the shipping process. Azteca is also planning to connect its database with its ERP system to integrate production information with other business functions.

“Barcoding did an excellent job of coming in and figuring out how to best make our scanning solution work. They were careful to understand all of our requirements and created a customized solution that will help drive our efficiency, accuracy and connectivity well into the future.”

— **NANNETTE ZANDER**
VP of Information Technology, Azteca Foods

Nannette Zander, Vice President of Information Technology, Azteca Foods, Inc., said, “Barcoding did an excellent job of coming in and figuring out how to best make our scanning solution work. They were careful to understand all of our requirements and created a customized solution that will help drive our efficiency, accuracy, and connectivity well into the future.”

Azteca's successes earned the company the first-ever Barcoding, Inc. “Innovator of the Year” Award, presented at Barcoding's 2014 Executive Forum. This award recognizes a person and/or company who has implemented a mobile or automated data capture solution that has greatly impacted the business's efficiency, accuracy, and connectivity.

About Barcoding, Inc.

Barcoding is a supply chain automation and innovation company that helps organizations be more efficient, accurate and connected. With extensive subject matter expertise in data capture, labeling and printing, and mobile computing, we are trusted to build and manage solutions for some of the best IT and operations teams in the world. Founded in 1998, Barcoding is headquartered in Baltimore, Md., with offices across North America (Chicago, Houston, Seattle, Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver). For more information, visit www.barcoding.com.