Ease of Implementation: An Overview of the Apex Solution

Point-Of-Work Technologies

Apex Makes Implementing an Automated Inventory Management System So Easy

Overview

This white paper focuses on the implementation Apex Supply Chain Technologies Point-Of-Work (POW) automated inventory management systems – specifically in this case, the Edge 5000. Alternatively, POW Systems are called "Point-Of-Use" (POU) Systems. We will use the terms interchangeably in this white paper.

The Edge 5000 provides an easy-to-use, affordable solution for the control and distribution of direct and indirect materials for manufacturing and other industrial sites. Apex has streamlined its technology and processes to enable a quick, painless implementation that doesn't place an onerous burden on our clients' suppliers or staffs.

The Past

Point-Of-Use technology traditionally has been complicated, time consuming, and expensive to implement and install. The initial implementation installation price of each machine could be as much as $3,000 to $4,000 per machine, or more. Historically, lead time for acquiring a POU device could run 8-12 weeks.

Depending on the product mix, it could take several days to install. This would involve both specialized installers and involvement of the distributor or end user for multiple days. The Windows-based systems in each machine needed re-booting, and would require hands-on support from either the MRO distributor and often support from the user's IT department. Service calls were costly and downtime could potentially be unacceptably long.

As a result of these installation and ongoing service obstacles, this technology was slow to be adopted in large quantities within one organization or widely across the world.

The Present

After reviewing the serious shortcomings of these antiquated systems and technologies, Apex developed a solution that is easy to use, easy to implement and, most revolutionary, easy to afford.

Why Is It "Easy To Implement"?

Installation of the Edge 5000 is now completed in a matter of a few hours (includes both physical and website training.) The reason is simple – Apex assigns each client a Project Coordinator (PC) to walk them step-by-step through the entire implementation process.

The Apex Project Coordinator becomes the single point of contact before, during, and after the installation. The PC requests all information necessary for the software, including employee badges, product information, and IT needs well in advance of the installation.

Once the client has provided this information, the data is entered into the software and all of the set-up details are configured. The machine is then built and shipped directly to the client. The installation and training are scheduled around the client's work day.

Let's break it down step by step to show just how easy it is to get started . . .

Step 1: Decide What to Dispense

Determine a list of products you want in your POU machine. Typically, the best items for automatic dispensing have at least one of the following attributes: High Use, High Cost, and Mission Critical.

The Edge 5000 is highly versatile and can accommodate items of varying widths, heights, and thicknesses. Up to 60 different items can be dispensed in one Edge 5000.

Once you have your list of items together, e-mail it to Apex and you will receive a quote stating either the purchase or lease rate and the best configuration to maximize your machine space and item usage.

Step 2: Issue a Purchase Order

Send Apex the signed approval for purchase. Machines can be leased or purchased depending on your company's financial goals and objectives.

Step 3: Complete the Pre-Implementation Packet

Send Apex the completed Pre-Implementation Packet. Depending on the size of the organization, this step should take about one hour or less to complete. This packet includes:

- A worksheet requesting primary contacts for your facility, shipping and receiving, IT department, and personnel in charge of stocking product.
- A worksheet containing employees' names, departments, and method of access for the machine (employee badge reader type, if any).
- Site Readiness Worksheets including IT information and physical site questions. There is no software to install on your network; however, it is your responsibility to provide an AC electrical connection and an unobstructed path to the Internet. You will also be responsible for providing a 10-foot CAT 5 Ethernet cable. The electrical connection must be within four feet of the machine installation location. Extension cords are not permitted.
- Your Project Coordinator will review the information provided, take notes for any special circumstances, and call to schedule a Customer Kick Off meeting (CKO).

Step 4: Finalizing Plans

The CKO is a teleconference between the end user, the supplier (if one is involved), and the PC. This call will last about 15 minutes and is used to: establish the installation date and time and the software training schedule; confirm that the power outlet and Ethernet plug are ready for the machine;

go over any special needs of the installer; and get a final list of those who will be involved the day of implementation. Any questions regarding installation should be answered during this call.

Step 5: Installation Day

Installation averages two to three hours for the first machine and one hour for each additional machine. One to two hours for software training is typically all that is required and can be completed at the time of installation or at a later date/time. If a supplier is involved, they should be present for both the physical machine and software training.

Step 6: Measure Your Savings

One of the benefits of installing Point-Of-Use Devices is the numerous ways you may be able to realize savings. These include eliminating downtime, employee labor costs traveling back and forth to tool crib, overuse/lost product, and more.

The Edge 5000 software will allow you to track and monitor your savings. This information is used to demonstrate the cost savings and productivity improvements you have realized by implementing your Edge 5000 Industrial Vending System and/or AutoStore or you may want to use the information to identify further process improvements.

Summary

As you can see, the Apex Edge 5000 installation process is time friendly. Total time to implement the POU devices should run less than 5-10 hours for your first machine. Additional machines can take as few as two hours depending on product mix and additional software training.

When you consider the quick and easy implementation and the savings that begin immediately, the choice is clear. The Edge 5000 is a cost-saving, productivity-enhancing tool that will help you stay lean and competitive in the months and years ahead.

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