

**Milton CAT Takes
“Customer Friendly”
to New Heights**
with TECSYS' Warehouse
Management System

CASE STUDY

Milton CAT®

INDUSTRY

Heavy Equipment
Service Parts

THE CHALLENGE

Milton CAT recognized that to continue providing a high-level of responsiveness to both their customers and 13 dealership locations, they needed to revamp the central existing distribution facility and upgrade systems.

TECSYS' SOLUTION

After reviewing the functionality requirements and evaluating a number of solutions, Milton CAT selected TECSYS' Warehouse Management System to interface to their existing ERP system, conveyor system, and put-to-light system.

THE BENEFITS

After implementing TECSYS' WMS, visibility on inventory and orders has improved enormously. The system has also improved the business' overall accuracy. One of the most exciting benefits of implementing TECSYS' WMS is that it has helped turn Milton CAT's customer service vision into reality: a self-service center that would help customers get the parts they need and get on their way.

« From an IT perspective, TECSYS was able to customize their system to fit some of the requirements we had. Most warehousing systems just handle warehousing, not retail. We needed the capability to do both. TECSYS was able to make modifications to their system that they actually added to the core product. They were the only vendor that had the flexibility to do that. »

Rod Ford

Information Systems Director, Milton CAT



ABOUT MILTON CAT

With over 60 years in business spanning three generations of supplying machinery and power generation systems, the Milton family has built a company that has evolved into one of the largest Caterpillar® dealers in North America.

Presently operating a central distribution center in Milford, Massachusetts and 13 locations across six northeastern states, Milton CAT delivers heavy machinery, equipment and power systems as well as maintenance services and parts to a variety of industries including construction and paving, industrial sites, hospitals, and schools.

THE CHALLENGE

Milton CAT's customers — a wide assortment of major contractors, industrial sites and public infrastructure providers — require a quick turnaround on parts and machinery to stay productive.

As Alan Perry, Milton CAT's Vice President Operations, puts it, "Our customers are very impatient. They have to be. When equipment that costs \$500,000 or \$2 million is idle, the machine's not making money for them. So they don't want to wait for parts. They want to come in, quickly get what they need, and get back to work."

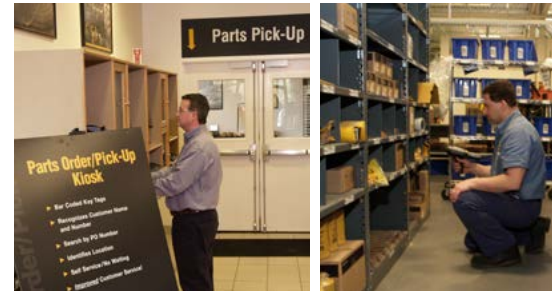
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HELPING CUSTOMERS HELP THEMSELVES

To deliver the responsiveness they had in mind, Milton CAT decided to do a major overhaul of their distribution facility which would include selecting a new location and new systems.

One of the key systems they sought to implement was a warehouse management system with the flexibility to interface to their ERP system, third-party conveyor and put-to-light systems.

In addition to updating their distribution center, Milton CAT also decided to take customer service one step further; they would design and implement systems to help customers help themselves. To achieve this goal, Milton CAT designed a self-service kiosk that would let their busy customers get in, get the parts they need, and get out, without waiting.



THE TECSYS SOLUTION

After reviewing the functionality requirements and evaluating a number of solutions, Milton CAT selected TECSYS' Warehouse Management System to interface to their existing ERP system, conveyor system, and put-to-light system.

As Milton CAT's Information Systems Director, Rod Ford, explains, "From an IT perspective, TECSYS was able to customize their system to fit some of the requirements we had. Most warehousing just handle warehousing, not retail. We needed the capability to do both. TECSYS was able to make modifications to their system that they actually added to the core product. They were the only vendor that had the flexibility to do that."

Demonstrating the importance of strong customer service, TECSYS professionals were on-site during the week of the implementation to provide training to Milton CAT's internal trainer and ensure everything was running smoothly. TECSYS delivered ongoing 24/7 technical support since the system went live and continued to visit the site periodically. Ford says, "The response from TECSYS' people has been very good."

For Milton CAT, revamping their distribution center was a major undertaking. But with the contributions of their professionals assisted by TECSYS' efforts, the switchover went smoothly. According to Alan Perry, "Given what we took on, things went well. This is the first time we had gone through an integration as significant and as large as this one. Not only did we relocate facilities, we moved into a facility with all new technology." Talk about nerves of steel: Milton CAT turned out the lights on their old distribution operation on a Friday and flipped the switch on their new more sophisticated center the following Monday. With tens of thousands of line items, their entire distribution staff, and new automated systems in place, it was back to business as usual...a major task, but the benefits were worth it.

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Alan Perry
Vice President of Parts Operations

BENEFITS

After implementing TECSYS' WMS, visibility on inventory and orders has improved enormously. "It gives us real-time information," Ford explains, "and it tracks orders electronically so we know the status of every single order coming in to our facility."

The system has also improved the business' overall accuracy. Alan Perry explains, "As far as accuracy goes, we've made major advances. It used to be that when errors happened, we reacted to them and moved on. We were dealing with multiple errors on a daily basis. Now, we don't deal with errors very often. It really is the whole package where everything inbound and outbound is tracked and scanned."

One of the most exciting benefits of implementing TECSYS' software is that it has helped turn Milton CAT's customer service vision into reality: a self-service center that would help customers get the parts they need and get on their way.

As Perry explains, "We really wanted to implement a customer kiosk. This is a new idea for the industry. We wanted to let customers pick up their orders on their own, without having to deal with anybody here. So now, when a customer places an order, assuming everything is in stock, it is ready in an hour or so. Customers can come to our facility, go to a kiosk, enter their account number, and it will display their orders. Once they print the order they are picking up, they receive a bin number for the warehouse and then go to the bin, pick up the parts and leave, without having to wait for anyone to help them."

This system has had a major impact on waiting times. According to Perry, "Our customers tend to come in all at once, and if you have only three or four reps serving them, that can mean waiting. But with this system, customers can get in, get out, and get back to business."

Rod Ford says that so far, customers have been responding to the system enthusiastically. "The feedback from customers is very positive. It's like checking in at the airport. We make people available to help customers use it, but it's pretty user-friendly."

In revamping their facility, Milton CAT also needed to be able to prioritize orders to serve customers who are waiting without delay. As Perry explains, "On average, 70 to 75 customers walk into our facility daily to place their order and wait for it to be picked. We need to move those customers through as quickly as possible, and the system we had been using didn't have the functionality to support that. EliteSeries was able to offer us a built-in interruption function so that "customer wait" orders take priority. Now, when a customer is waiting, the picker's task is interrupted to pick the order right away."

In addition to improving responsiveness to customers, Milton CAT has also been able to serve their internal clients better with the TECSYS WMS. When it comes to the branches, no news is good news, and the distribution center has been receiving very few calls about errors and delays. Milton CAT service people who are on the road, all of whom need their parts yesterday, appreciate the speed of the system as well.

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