

Press Release: 28 June 2005

## **COLLINS AND HAYES LIMITED: THE TRUE SPIRIT OF STOCKTAKING!**

*Barcode scanning is particularly valuable for automating routine and labour-intensive (but essential) procedures such as stocktaking. Collins and Hayes Limited needed a barcode scanning system, and approached Spirit Data Capture, who recommended a Dolphin® 7300 mobile computer. This has made the whole process faster and more reliable.*

Formed over 130 years ago, Collins and Hayes is a leading designer, manufacturer and supplier of high quality upholstered furniture to the premium household furnishings market. The company holds a wide range of fabric and furniture at its warehouses, and therefore needs to have regular stocktaking sessions.

In the past, stocktaking has been carried out manually, with one person reading the data on the stock tickets and the other writing down this information. Pearl Hudson, Collins and Hayes' IT Manager, says: "With several teams of storemen calling out stock numbers and quantities in the same warehouse, everything became a little chaotic.

"In addition, transcription errors were inevitable. This meant that we had to carry out further checks at the end of the day to match the results with our stock levels on the

computer system. Once the data had been collated, we were involved in a further two days of manual checking.”

Collins and Hayes decided to automate the system, and started searching the Internet for a suitable PDA (Personal Digital Assistant) or programmable barcode scanner.

Pearl continues: “We wanted something that would boost the efficiency of our stocktaking. We needed to download the data onto a PC so that we could check the stock readings with data held in our MRP system. The device also had to be very robust and reliable, and not prone to breaking down if it was knocked or accidentally dropped!”

The company came across Spirit Data Capture, which offered a complete solution to its needs. Spirit suggested the Dolphin® 7300 from Hand Held Products, because it is very reliable and robust. The 7300 is a powerful portable computer with exceptional levels of performance. It is powered by Microsoft® Windows® CE 3.0, and has an Intel® StrongARM® processor. The device has a magnesium casing that can withstand five-foot drops onto concrete, as well as heat, cold and dust.

Pearl adds: “We also needed a bespoke program that would enable us to capture specific data. Spirit wrote this, which made the whole process of purchasing this solution much easier. Because they provided a complete solution, we didn’t have to worry about the compatibility issues which might have occurred if we had bought the device from one supplier and the software from another.”

The Dolphins are used to read the location, item number and sometimes the batch number of stock items. The user then inputs the quantity. Most of the company's stock has barcodes, but if these are absent, the user can key in the data. At each stocktaking, some 4,000 items have to be scanned.

Two types of items are involved in the stocktaking – fabrics and furniture. Fabrics have two barcodes: one for the fabric code and one for the piece/roll number. The bin number is also recorded. The furniture has just one barcode. Spirit had to write a different programme for each type of stock.

The data captured by the Dolphins are downloaded onto a PC and collated before being imported into Excel and compared against inventory data extracted from the company's MRP system. The result is a report which lists any anomalies that need to be resolved.

Pearl Hudson concludes: "Stocktaking is now much faster, and there are fewer anomalies due to the quality of the data being captured. Collecting the information electronically has enabled us to analyse it more accurately and quickly.

"Once we have loaded the data into Excel, we use a macro that was written in-house to compare and analyse the results in less than five minutes - whereas it used to take two days. The storemen love the new system. It is much quicker and easier for them, and the whole job of stocktaking has become less laborious."

ENDS

**Notes for Editors:** Spirit Data Capture is based in Preston Brook, Cheshire. The company is a totally independent mobile computing and data capture house, with in-depth knowledge of the latest wireless and mobile computing technologies which boost productivity and profitability. Its services include planning, design and development, implementation, and support.

For more information, please contact Katrina Evans. Tel: 0870 166 2440  
Email: [katrina@spiritdatacapture.co.uk](mailto:katrina@spiritdatacapture.co.uk)

For press information, please contact Phil Allcock at Allcock Public Relations, on: 02380 849953.