

WEARABLES

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Using Technology to Manage Inventory

Software and other tools can manage your overhead and limit mistakes.

With the addition of 24-hour production capabilities from certain promotional product suppliers, inventory management has become much easier for many distributors, including Bruce Jolech, senior vice president of Pony Xpress Printing (*asi/297068*). “For example, we have inventory levels we monitor for each item that are often set in collaboration with our client,” he says. “I can place a reorder of a product with Leed’s (*asi/66887*) in Pennsylvania on a Monday. It would ship on Tuesday, and via FedEx Ground, we would have it on Thursday. That allows us to keep less merchandise in the warehouse.”

Order confirmation and shipping alerts are just part of what PXP offers. “Our inventory software tells us at any moment

in time the products we have on the shelf, which our clients can also look at,” Jolech says. “We also added a feature such that the merchandise in our company store can be printed as a pdf document on the fly, and that can also tell our client what we have in inventory at a specific moment.”

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BRUCE JOLECH, PONY XPRESS PRINTING (*asi/297068*)

Mark Ziskind, COO of Caliendo Savio Enterprises (*asi/155807*), has used a custom-made computerized inventory management system for over a decade. The program is based on a perishable-food model, which

allows Ziskind to keep his inventory fresh with new products; employees proceed as though the inventory, much like perishable foods, has a shelf life. “We don’t want it sitting around forever,” he says. “The software takes into account seasonability and trends when it comes to fabrics, performance and

economic changes. Since we’ve seen a dramatic move to under-\$5 items, it helps you adjust to people’s price points. You’re not laying into your inventory too heavy.”

The system allows Ziskind to ship over 97.3% of line items complete in less than 24 hours, turn his inventory 4.4 times per year, and average less than seven days to fill a backorder.

Barry Lederman, vice president of business development for Softengine USA, says the most valuable piece of software for promotional product distributors is one that allows them to get the order right every time. “The most expensive mistake a manufacturer or distributor can make is in order entry, since all those resources are wasted in the entire supply chain in getting the wrong product, color, size or pattern to the customer,” he says.

That’s why Lederman uses SAP Business One software that supports all of his company’s key business processes. “We enable accuracy through various validation tools, thus reducing mistakes and waste,” he says. “We arm the customer service representative with real-time available-to-promise figures and suggested delivery dates based on supply and capacity. It puts valuable information in the hands of the customer service representative to answer the customers’ questions and give realistic answers.” ■

Shane Dale is a contributing writer for Wearables.

THE BENEFITS OF BUSINESS-MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

Softengine USA’s business-management solution software allows the company to “create an environment in which day-to-day processes are under control, efficient and capable of yielding accurate, predictable results,” says Barry Lederman, Softengine’s vice president of business development.

Here’s a rundown of what this software can do, according to Lederman:

- **Integrate itself into all levels of business.** “It goes far beyond the typical stand-alone, disconnected silos of departmental automation,” he says. The cross-functional system has integrated e-commerce and Web CRM tools.

- **Model an event-driven process chain in real time.** “What this means is that

during implementation, in a series of workshops with the client’s team, we focus on improved and optimized processes, and then configure the system to fit those processes and utilize best business practices already built into the system,” he says.

- **Find and fix errors.** “If any errors or omissions are detected in the process step, the user gets an appropriate message to correct the error, and nothing is updated until the error is corrected,” he says.

- **Offer numerous data-capture functions.** Data can be tracked through a wide variety of mediums – everything from bar coding to voice recognition to regular Web sites and e-mail.

