



American Panel Corporation Parts Inventory Management is More Efficient with Barcode Solutions from OCR Canada.

American Panel Corporation, headquartered in Ocala, FL, is a trusted manufacturer of walk-in coolers, freezers, combination cold rooms, and blast chillers. Since 1965 the family-owned company has provided its customers, including grocery stores, schools and stadiums, with the made-to-order equipment they need to meet their cold storage, blast chilling, and shock freezing needs.

Business Challenge

American Panel's manufacturing operations require keeping a large, diverse inventory of parts, and prior to deploying barcode technology, employees would conduct a hand count at the end of each month.

"It was very labor intensive and involved shutting down the supply cage for a day or two," Jacob Grubbs, American Panel's Information Technology Manager, explained. "We wanted to transition to a label-based system and bring our inventory program into the 21st century," he said.

The Solution

After American Panel selected software for its inventory management system and label printing, Grubbs researched compatible barcode scanning and label printing options and decided on Zebra Technology products.



Company: Manufacturer of walk-in coolers, freezers, combination cold rooms, and blast chillers

Application: Mobile computers and barcode technology

Challenge: Upgrade from parts inventory hand cycle counts to a label-based system and spot checks

Featured Solution: Zebra Technologies MC3300x mobile computers and Zebra ZT411 industrial label printers

Key Benefits: Time savings, greater accuracy, employee buy-in, and quick ROI

American Panel

American Panel contacted OCR Canada for the handheld computers and barcode label printers the company would need to create an efficient new inventory management process. Grubbs worked with OCR Canada to find devices with specific features that would enhance workflows. For example, he wanted a handheld computer with a full keyboard so employees could easily enter additional information when needed. He also looked for printers that would print high-quality labels for accurate reads and enabled USB and internet connectivity to use them at different locations in the warehouse.

OCR Canada helped Grubbs select the handheld computers and printers that met his specification, providing American Panel with seven Zebra Technologies MC3300x mobile customers and two Zebra ZT411 industrial label printers.

American Panel also chose OCR Canada's TrueSupport plans, which include configuration of the mobile computers, technical support, repair triage, and service management. "TrueSupport gives us peace of mind," Grubbs said. "If there's a problem, OCR Canada can remote in and get it squared away."

American Panel began its barcode solution implementation in 2022, following a step-by-step process. After installing the software, the company expanded Wi-Fi coverage to support the new hardware and began building its database and designing barcode labels. OCR Canada helped with a label design, working with the American Panel team to create a label that contained both human-readable and coded information. "It was a quick turnaround," Grubbs commented.

American Panel's systematic approach continued by rolling out the solution to one team, training them and ensuring the system worked as intended. The company continued cycle counting during the transition to maintain inventory data until the new system was operating at scale.

Benefits and Results

With its new barcode inventory management system, American Panel eliminated the need for a one- or two-day parts cage shut down for a hand count. Instead, the team now performs spot checks to ensure inventory data matches the parts on hand.

From the early days of the solution's implementation, Grubbs says the American Panel team was "heavily onboard."

"They know the time it takes and were happy with the new system and the time savings," he says. He adds that the barcode system will also increase inventory accuracy. "We'll see ROI quickly," he comments.



Implementing a barcode inventory management system with the help of OCR Canada was one of the best experiences we've had. Everyone was straightforward with us, and we were able to get answers quickly and the help we needed every step of the way.

—Jacob Grubbs, American Panel's
Information Technology Manager



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