

TCOM L.P. Gains IUID Compliance

Lead production planner Bryan Peiffer says, "Our first challenge was grasping what IUID is. We initially had small bits of lots of information but no definitive answers to the question." The next significant challenge was to marry the old with the new, namely to implement unique serialized item tracking (IUID) alongside the prevailing corporate culture of non-unique serialized tracking assigned through the legacy MRP system.



The Problem

TCOM, L.P. is the only company in the world devoted to the design, fabrication, installation, and operation of tethered, aerodynamically stabilized balloons called aerostats, used for surveillance and communications around the globe. In order to fulfill a U.S. Army contract as a sub-contractor to Raytheon, TCOM was required to become IUID compliant, meaning that some 300 embedded items within each aerostat had to be serially labeled and registered in order to comply with MIL STD 130.

The Plan of Attack

In order to satisfy their IUID requirements, TCOM, L.P. employed A2B Tracking Solutions UC! Web™ data management and IUID registration software.

Due to the complexity of the TCOM system requiring IUID and the large number of LRUs revision control is of utmost importance. In order to facilitate the required changes, a TCOM team of representatives worked together on a comprehensive implementation plan. The team was comprised of individuals from the contracts management group, sub-contracts group, program management office, configuration management, production management, quality assurance and materials management.

“Our need for configuration management is not outweighed by our need for IUID compliance,” says Peiffer. “We had to find a method of marking with both IUID and revision level in order to meet the needs of both, a requirement that seemed overwhelming.” That’s when he called on experts from A2B Tracking Solutions to come onsite. “They were great at understanding our situation and showing us how to create a custom label. And their ongoing phone and online support has been outstanding.”

The Results

In order to meet their rather demanding requirements, TCOM, L.P. utilizes a dedicated server to run A2B Tracking Solutions UC! Web™ data management software linked with BarTender® enterprise software from Seagull Scientific. The UC! Web™-controlled solution also incorporates Microscan Verifiers and Zebra Thermal Transfer printers.

When asked what advice he would pass along to others, Peiffer urges fully assessing needs before rushing into IUID implementation. “Take time to understand what is required and how your implementation is going to accomplish it,” he advises. With a parent IUID the size of a whale and a production facility that ranges over 100 acres, planning for visibility to increase productivity makes all the sense in the world.

“IUID seemed insurmountable two years ago. Quite frankly there has been a steep learning curve. Now it is working great, and I can see many distinct possibilities in our environment, such as tracking through the fabrication cycle. By using IUID we could get real-time information in logistics, in the shop, and in production, and we can become much more productive.”

- Bryan Peiffer

