



RFID Tracking for North Sails

Case Study

THE CHALLENGE

North Sails is the global leader in sailmaking.

North manages over 150 sail lofts that repair sails around the globe. Sail repairs are a process which takes North anywhere from a few days to many weeks to perform. Sail repair and storage is also very seasonal, meaning that part of the year there is a significant influx of sails that require attention. Staffing needs to be managed and sail repair projects need to be accomplished with professionalism and world class accuracy and precision to meet customer expectations.

North Sails had a need to better track and trace the movement of customer assets (sails) as they take custody for fix and repair services. Included in North's requirement was the ability to better service and satisfy their customers by reducing customer wait times during the customer pick up process. There was also a need to track the transfer of custody in order to record when an asset had been delivered to the customer. North's goal was to reduce the time in which it takes to complete inventory within the loft.

The manual process of inventory previously took North Sails personnel two to three days to complete and has been described as a tedious process. North Sails required real-time tracking capabilities throughout their lofts to improve customer responsiveness. Between the production floor and storage areas within their lofts, North can manage up to 1000 sails per loft which requires precise tracking and real-time visibility.

North also needed visibility into the movement of sails in-between lofts as sails moved from different locations around the country. North realized that they needed a better system to transfer assets from one location or loft to another in order to maintain their high customer service levels in different parts of the country. Regionally sails can be transported from one loft to another for various reasons and RFID tracking provides North improved visibility of sails which translated to better customer service.

THE SOLUTION

A2B Tracking's RFID Asset Management solution provides North Sails the asset visibility needed to deliver an excellent customer experience while eliminating excessive wait times and saves significant labor when performing inventories. It also enables North Sails to determine when an asset has left its custody in order to support the tax auditing process.

A2B Tracking Technology includes:

- ✓ Samsung smartphones and Zebra Technologies RFID Sled operating with the A2B Tracking software platform and RFID hang tags on sails and sail bags. This mobile solution locates customer assets within seconds or minutes to expedite the customer pick up process. It also enables daily inventories of the entire loft, saving significant labor and improving sail loft inventory accuracy to 100%.
- ✓ Fixed RFID Gateway by Impinj automates self check-out with A2B Tracking software platform to monitor and trigger text alerts to North when a customer has successfully picked up their sails in the designated pick up area during off-hours when North personnel are unavailable.

THE RESULTS

North Sails has been able to achieve total asset visibility improving inventory accuracy to 100% with fast and efficient Mobile RFID inventories. They have exceeded customer satisfaction by eliminating excessive wait times and by providing self check-out areas with instant text or email alerts.

North has improved their audit trail and inventory records as customer assets are received, serviced, and returned to customers. They have also improved their preparedness for state audits and tax obligations as assets are transported from state to state.

With the help of A2B Tracking's RFID design, North Sails has a scalable RFID system that is easily capable of expansion to other parts of the company.



Our ability to locate customer sails has become exponentially better with RFID Tracking

Eric Wakefield, North Sails Service Manager



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