



CASE STUDY: Safelite AutoGlass

SAFELITE AUTOGLASS ACHIEVES SIGNIFICANT LABOR PRODUCTIVITY AND EFFICIENCY GAINS WITH R-LABOR

Serving nearly 6 million customers per year, Safelite AutoGlass® is America's largest auto glass specialist. Safelite provides services to more than 97% of the U.S. population in all 50 states. The Columbus, Ohio-based company employs nearly 13,000 people across the United States and operates from a distribution network that includes distribution centers in Braselton, Georgia and Ontario, California, and a series of warehouses across the country.

Safelite has relied on Robocom's R-WMS warehouse management system since 2007 to optimize its operations and support its rapid business growth. A few years ago, the company once again turned to Robocom to maximize its workforce and further improve the efficiency in its warehouse.

Labor costs represent the largest operating expense in most warehouses today. Using Robocom's Labor Management System (R-Labor), Safelite has the tools it needs to help control labor costs by managing labor utilization and productivity. Through intuitive dashboards, supervisors and managers can monitor key performance indicators quickly and easily to understand how each employee is performing, how different shifts are performing, and where adjustments can be made to maximize productivity.

Prior to implementing R-Labor, Robocom conducted a site survey to help Safelite identify weaknesses within its current operations and how the company could best utilize R-Labor. Robocom then determined where adjustments could be made—from technology and resource allocation to process and physical changes.

Since then, Safelite has implemented a number of recommended changes at its Braselton, Georgia warehouse and uses R-Labor on a daily basis. As a result, the company has realized significant labor productivity and efficiency gains.

REALLOCATING RESOURCES INCREASES PRODUCTIVITY

According to Andy Scott, Operations Excellence Manager at Safelite AutoGlass, R-Labor has given managers and supervisors the information they need to make adjustments on a daily, or even hourly basis to maintain high performance levels. Each day, supervisors provide a shift report to their managers, and together they analyze what's working and identify potential areas for improvement.

SOLUTION SNAPSHOT

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Safelite AutoGlass sought to control labor costs by more effectively managing labor utilization and productivity.

ROBOCOM SOLUTION

The organization chose Robocom's Labor Management System (R-Labor) to determine where adjustments could be made—from technology and resource allocation to process and physical changes—to maximize productivity.

RESULTS

Managers and supervisors now have the information they need to make adjustments on a daily, or even hourly basis to maintain high performance levels. With insights from R-Labor, Safelite has cut startup time before shifts by about 50% and decreased transition time for its mixed picks process by 30%.

“I would absolutely recommend R-Labor. It has given us some great insight into areas of our business that we couldn’t measure before. With access to real-time information, powerful dashboards and reports, we have the vital information we need at our fingertips to make sure our business is running optimally.”

— Andy Scott
Operations
Excellence Manager
Safelite AutoGlass

One of the most significant changes Safelite made to the warehouse came from insights about the replenishment process. Historically, the company thought it needed three dedicated resources to manage the reach trucks. But based on the site survey Robocom conducted, it was determined the drivers were not nearly as productive as they thought, running at between 60%-70%. Safelite found that the drivers were spending too much time on non-value added tasks—time that equated to one eight-hour shift or one full person.

“With this insight, we went down to just two reach trucks, moved the third skilled machine operator to another area of the operation, and then brought in a temporary person to do the non-value added tasks. We felt confident at the end of this process that we had the right people doing the right tasks in the right locations,” says Scott.

OPERATIONAL CHANGES REDUCE STARTUP TIME

Another area where Safelite identified necessary changes was with the management team. “We determined that it was taking some workers 15-20 minutes to get their shift started, at no fault of their own. The cause of the problem was in our pre-shift routine,” explains Scott. “We had the managers modify some of their processes so that workers would know what their assignments were before their shift started. This change streamlined the process and enabled us to cut that startup time by about 50%.”

PHYSICAL CHANGES DECREASE TRANSITION TIME

Safelite also made changes to its mixed picks process. When a worker has picked a full pallet, he takes it to a pack floor where an audit of the pallet is conducted to ensure it has all of the appropriate items. The worker then closes up the pallet and prepares it for shipment. With the help of Robocom, Safelite determined that the transition time from when the worker took the pallet to the pack floor to the time they resumed picking was too long. By redesigning the pack floor, Safelite was able to decrease that transition time by approximately 30%.

LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD

Based on Robocom’s recommendation, Safelite now measures performance by level of efficiency vs. the previous units per hour (UPH). Scott explains: “We realized that UPH doesn’t always prove to be a fair measurement. For example, let’s say associate A is going to pick 100 units, and he has to go to 100 bins. Associate B has to pick 100 units, but he only has to go to 25 bins. It stands to reason that, just on travel distance alone, associate B should be finished a lot sooner than associate A. But if you go by units per hour, they are measured the same because they both picked 100 units. With R-Labor, we can now measure an individual worker’s labor using a calculation that takes into account all of the different variables.”

Rather than paying an incentive based on UPH, as in the past, Safelite now pays based on a percentage of efficiency. This has helped workers make the transition and they appreciate that they are now rewarded based on effort and performance.

In the future, Scott says they hope to expand their use of R-Labor to other Safelite locations. "I would absolutely recommend R-Labor," says Scott. "It has given us some great insight into areas of our business that we couldn't measure before. With access to real-time information, powerful dashboards and reports, we have the vital information we need at our fingertips to make sure our business is running optimally."

ABOUT ROBOCOM SYSTEMS INTERNATIONAL

Robocom Systems develops, licenses and supports Supply Chain Execution software solutions, including Warehouse Management, 3PL Billing, Transportation Management, Voice Technology and Labor Management. An Enterprise Transportation System and Enterprise Resource Planning System round out the Supply Chain Execution offering. Robocom's investment in research and development is keenly focused on the needs of the business leaders responsible for the day-to-day results in warehousing, distribution, third party logistics, transportation and trucking operations. For more information visit www.robocom.com

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