

Manufacturer of container handling equipment automates day-end processing for MRP system.



CASE HIGHLIGHTS

Profiled Organization:	Kalmar RT Center, LLC, Cibolo, Texas
Challenge:	To automate the routine but crucial running of the day-end process in their MRP system—including updating nightly reports—and free up employee evenings.
Solution:	Working nightly at a scheduled time, Automation Anywhere logs into the ERP and MRP systems to kick start the processes for updating the company's General Ledger.
Benefits:	Automation Anywhere has freed up the evenings for IT and Accounting personnel and saves the company about \$14,000 in work hours per year.

BACKGROUND

Established in 1999, Kalmar RTC specializes in the design and manufacture of the Rough Terrain Cargo Handler (RTCH). Unlike other cargo handlers, the RTCH (pron. retch) has a unique ability to handle both 20- and 40-foot containers hauling as much as 53,000 pounds over rugged terrain or pounding surf. At the end of a job, it can be driven into a C-17 plane for transport to another location and redeployed within 30 minutes of being unloaded. Such a versatile cargo handler naturally drew the attention of the U.S. Army and the company now has a multi-year contract with the Department of Defense.

Kalmar RTC is a division of Cargotec, a cargo-handling solutions provider based in Finland, which has established a brand new facility in Cibolo, Texas to manufacture the RTCHs. How many people does it take to make the 60-ton RTCHs with six-foot wheels? Around 150, including those in the accounting and IT departments. The latter employed Robert Rice as an IT report writer and programmer about two years ago and promptly tasked him with running the company's nightly day-end processes within the MRP system.

30 MINUTES OF PRIME TIME LOST DAILY

The day-end process, while not too complex, involved about 10 discrete steps and took up at least 30 minutes at the end of each business day. Initially, the process was done at 7:00 p.m. daily but had to be moved to 9:00 p.m. to ensure that all of the day's data was entered into the MRP system, the database was backed up, and most, if not all, users were logged off the system—a requirement for successfully posting to the General Ledger.

The process went something like this: Log into the ERP and MRP systems; disable all other users; lock the prior fiscal period if it appears unlocked; run the process; post the GL batch; open and refresh all relevant reports within Excel and save

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- Robert Rice, IT Report Writer and Programmer, Kalmar RT

them; create a dated folder to hold the refreshed reports for the day; run the subledger report from within the ERP system; unlock the prior fiscal period; re-enable other users; log out of the MRP and ERP systems.

Thirty minutes from start to finish, the process was just long enough to ruin anyone's prime time, so the job was rotated between IT and accounting to avoid inconveniencing any single person. So it came as no surprise to Rice when the accounting department suggested automating the nightly process. In fact, having done his share of day-end process duty for a year, he was highly motivated to find an automation solution as soon as possible.

IMPRESSIVE FEATURES + BIG NAME USERS

Although he had never used automation software before, diligent internet research plus testimonials and forums discussing various automation solutions helped Rice narrow down his choices to Automation Anywhere and a couple of other products. "I was impressed by some of the big names among Automation Anywhere users," he admits. Nevertheless, he downloaded trial versions of at least three programs to compare functionalities and test them in action.

Four features of Automation Anywhere immediately set it apart from the other products and clinched the deal for Rice:

1. The ability to add commands to a Task Actions list simply by selecting them.
2. Being able to create executables and deploy them to multiple workstations.
3. An impressive and versatile range of commands that the software can perform.
4. An extremely user-friendly interface.

Once the decision was made to license Automation Anywhere, Rice did not waste any time putting it to work and the software now runs off a workstation at a scheduled time every night performing all of the necessary tasks in the MRP's day-end process in about 45 minutes. If it seems to take a little longer than the manual process it's because Rice has built in some buffers (idle time) to accommodate unexpected delays.

SAVING \$14K PER YEAR AND COUNTING

The potential for Automation Anywhere within Kalmar is great and Rice is currently examining all scheduled routine tasks within the MRP system with an eye to automating them in the near future.

Automating the manufacturing schedule is most likely the next task Rice will accomplish. It would require logging into the same systems as the day-end process but would be run at the beginning of each day. Rice is also looking at automating the installation of software on the MRP and ERP workstations.

Breaking away from the manual day-end process routine will save Kalmar about \$14,000 per year in work hours, estimates the company's accounting department. But the benefit—in terms of employee morale—of not having to log onto the system every night is "priceless" as per Rice's estimates!

"I was impressed by all the big names using Automation Anywhere but even more impressive is the slew of commands the software can perform without losing its user-friendliness."

*- Robert Rice, IT Report
Writer and Programmer,
Kalmar RT*

PRODUCT INFORMATION: AUTOMATION ANYWHERE

Automation Anywhere is an intelligent automation software for business & IT tasks. No programming required. Features include state of the art drag and drop automation, remote deployment, Visualizer, Workflow designer, image recognition and much more. Free trial available. Read more about this product at <http://www.AutomationAnywhere.com> or call our sales hotline +1-888-484-3535.

