



Case Study: Upgrade Current Shop Floor Data Collection



Customer Name:	Excel Industries, d/b/a Hustler Turf Equipment
Location:	Hesston, Kansas
Industry:	Residential and Commercial lawn mowers
Issue:	Upgrade its Shop Floor Data Collection
Implementation Team:	Senior Account Managers
Freedom Technologies' Solution:	Error Proof® Install

Background:

The small-town people of Excel Hustler set about the business of serving the needs of the commercial turf industry with one large question in mind: how might these mowers accomplish more work with fewer man hours day after day, year after year? Meanwhile, Excel Hustlers went to work every morning in the company of a rapidly growing number of landscape professionals who understood the immediate and the long-term value of a machine that could accelerate around obstacles, that almost never backtracked, that could trim as it mowed. In 1966, those earliest Hustlers were the first commercial-duty tractors mounting mower decks with offset trim capacity.

In 1983, the Hustler Range Wing™ essentially doubled wide-area mowing capacities, improving the reach and sweep and quality of cut of tractor-mounted systems - all at a fraction of the cost of adding another mower.

In 1985, Excel Hustler showed the world what a mid-mount Z-rider might accomplish. The Compact 250 it was called, and with the landmarks established over the first 30 years of its history, Hustler has invested the past decade in the refinement of long-proven designs and in the introduction to new markets of products bearing time-honored Hustler standards of functionality and durability. Most notably, these yellow mowers are now being parked in garages and backyard sheds across America, as Hustler has entered residential mowing with a vengeance. With that entrance to the homeowner marketplace has come a huge surge in the company's sales network. With dealers worldwide, Hustler has never been better positioned to serve specific market sectors, particularly since the arrival of new lines of walk-behinds, mini Zs and, most of all, the FasTrak, a design aimed directly at ranches, farms, and larger suburban properties.



Today, Hustler operates from a 190,000 square-foot facility that's grown by another 40,000 square feet as a new powder-coat paint system comes on line - all part of the company's strategy of pursuing markets with higher volumes than the industrial market in which Hustler first made its name. The strategy seems to be working: Excel Industries was recently recognized as one of the fastest growing companies in Kansas, it changed the way that landscape contractor's structured their mowing fleets.

Summary:

Excel Industries, Inc. (Hesston, KS), a major manufacturer of the Hustler residential and commercial lawn mowers has selected Freedom Technologies' Error Proof® software as their preferred data collection tool for its shop floor. In addition to selecting Freedom Technologies' Error Proof® application, Excel has chosen QAD's MFG/PRO™ as their corporate ERP software along with Symbol Technologies® for its bar code scanning equipment and wireless infrastructure. Freedom has really bridged the gap between our unique processes and our new ERP System (QAD). Through error proofing some of our processes before go live, we simplified training and reduced a lot of errors during the first few critical weeks on the new systems.



Situation:

Excel Hustler's data collection system was becoming obsolete and they decided it was time to upgrade its current software version or find another software application that would fit its growing needs. After talking to their current software maker, Excel Hustler found that upgrading its current application would cost them a great deal of money and time. Excel Hustler decided to research other data collection systems on the market and learn about some of the new technologies that were available.

Excel Hustler contacted RCM Technologies (Pennsauken, NJ) a consulting company that installs QAD and Freedom Technologies (Brighton, MI) a shop floor data collection company and discussed what types of applications they were looking to implement in their plant. Freedom Technologies offered representatives from Excel Hustler a tour of several of Freedom's customer plants which had installed Freedom's Error Proof® shop floor application.

Challenge:

Excel Hustler was looking for a front end system that interfaced seamlessly with QAD and offered Backflush, Transfers, Receiving and Shipping capabilities. Excel Hustler wanted to convert their current production process into an Advanced Repetitive (fixed schedule) production process as well. Having the option to print Work Orders on a daily basis was another hurdle Excel Hustler wanted to overcome.

Solution:

Excel Hustler selected Freedom Technologies' Error Proof® application for its Backflush, Transfers, Receiving and Shipping needs. Excel Hustler wanted some custom programming on its shipping module, allowing them to ship from both Sales and Materials Orders. In addition to the custom shipping script that Excel Hustler required, they also asked Freedom Technologies to create a custom Work Order travel tag report printing module. This new module would be based on a date range the customer enters.

In addition to these two custom modules, all the applications Freedom Technologies designed for Excel Hustler are Full Screen, Touch Screen and have RF Telnet capabilities.

Error Proof® provided Excel Hustler a configurable software application for monitoring, managing and controlling production line operations, ensuring the correctness of the manufacturing and shipping procedures.

The standard Error Proof® application includes a rich set of label printing, production tracking and automated data capture functionality, as well as a robust set of verification and validation functions that can be used to perform component part verifications; capture testing data; track part component genealogies (serial and lot traceability tied to each part); produce serialized part labels or direct part markings; interface with the programmable logic controllers (PLC's); count to container verification; and Earn-a-Label™ for shipping.

Benefits:

Error Proof® eliminates human error on the shop floor. This solves the problem of today's companies that must re-engineer their plant and warehouse to streamline workflows, reduce labor, increase inventory turns, lower inventory levels, maximize data accuracy and timeliness and conform to customer quality mandates. Error Proof® validates all your plants' processes using automatic data collection devices such as PLC's, scales, direct part marking systems and vision systems.

Error Proof® streamlines the data collection requirements that your ERP/MRP system requires, providing timely, complete and accurate data for your shop floor users. By eliminating human error on the shop floor, Error Proof® prevents, detects and stops defects from reaching your customers.

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