

RFID access control to production workstations

Our client, like many, was faced with the daily challenge of effectively matching labour resources to a frequently changing production schedule. We devised a smart card system that greatly improved management visibility, control & productivity.



The problem

Like many discrete manufacturing companies our client, an oil & gas equipment manufacturer was faced with the daily challenge of matching skilled labour resources to a frequently changing production schedule.

Whilst it was possible to establish who was working where, on what and when, a lot of effort was expended on a daily basis, to make sure that labour supply was closely matched to production requirements in order to minimise downtime and maximise output.

Furthermore, whilst significant efforts were made to prevent staff from carrying out tasks they did not have a valid certificate to perform, this was difficult to police and sometimes unfortunately, it resulted in expensive scrap & rework.

To help alleviate these problems thus freeing supervisory effort and reducing the cost of scrap and rework, our client asked us to develop a labour tracking and task authorisation module to

be incorporated into the company's OEE data capture & reporting system. One requirement of the new module was that it should make use of the existing staff RFID access cards.

The solution

Using inexpensive NFC card readers, staff now register at production stations and onto jobs using their existing RFID access card. Supervisors and managers are able to see, in real-time, how labour resources are deployed and where shortages may be causing downtime.

Where a certificate is required to perform a task but the certification has expired, the member of staff registering is advised of this issue. This non-conformance is also broadcast to others registered at the production station and the line manager is also notified of this discrepancy by email.

Whilst the above is clearly not rocket science, for our client and many like them, this is seen as simply taking advantage of tried and tested technology, where the benefits are clear, and then leveraging this operational improvement for competitive advantage.



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