

## Absolute Technologies Case Study

# BARZ-OUT PRO helps Absolute Technologies meet customer requirements in a custom environment

Absolute Technologies is a precision manufacturer of parts used in the aerospace, medical, transportation and other industries. The company has thrived by producing machined parts to exacting specifications, but some of its business was at risk when a customer changed specifications for how parts were to be supplied.

“A major customer instituted a new requirement to attach a strictly formatted label that included a bar code to every box of parts that we ship to them,” said Andrew Sawley, IT manager at Absolute Technologies. “Without that label, and a properly placed and functioning bar code within the label, the parts would be returned.”

Customer labeling requirements are common, but common solutions won't work for Absolute Technologies, as the company quickly learned. The leading limitations it discovered in most bar code printing solutions were:

- Most off-the-shelf bar code software packages couldn't easily integrate with the custom-developed enterprise system that runs Absolute Technologies' business. A major drawback was the inability for the labeling software to automatically extract the customer information necessary to produce shipping labels;
- Absolute Technologies considered making custom modifications to integrate off-the-shelf software, but most packages lacked the documentation it needed to undertake the development work;
- Few options were compatible with the company's SCO UNIX host computer environment.

“With Absolute using a custom-developed software package to run the entire company, and the desire to make things as seamless to the users as possible, our bar coding solution had to be integrated into our existing UNIX-based application,” said Sawley.

Absolute Technologies successfully retooled its labeling with BARZ\_OUT PRO bar code output software from Unibar, which met all labeling needs with minimal custom integration requirements. Absolute Technologies downloaded a free demonstration version from Unibar to evaluate how easily the software could be integrated. The demo, plus Unibar's technical support, quickly convinced Absolute Technologies it found a solid solution for its specific requirements.

“Unibar was chosen due to software’s ease of use and implementation, availability of a demo, documentation, range of platforms, reasonable pricing and responsiveness of technical support during the trial period,” said Sawley. “Other vendors either did not provide a demonstration, were difficult to communicate with, or didn’t provide software for our legacy platform.”

BARZ\_OUT PRO installs on UNIX or Linux servers to provide bar code output on shipping labels, packing lists, purchase orders, invoices or other documents. It requires no other computer, printer or network hardware or software to run, and is transparent to the user. The software scans printer data for the trigger characters and replaces the data with bar codes in accordance with specified parameters. Many leading 1D and 2D bar code symbologies are supported.

BARZ\_OUT PRO provides PostScript conversion, so any PostScript-compatible printer can output bar codes from any version of UNIX or Linux without additional drivers, fonts, middleware or programming. It supports the CUPS (Common UNIX Printing System) standard and the Internet Printing Protocol (IPP) to provide advanced output management, networking, printer discovery and remote configuration features.

It took one person at Absolute Technologies less than a week to install the software, integrate it with the enterprise software on the UNIX host, and begin producing bar coded shipping labels that met the customer’s exact specifications. Absolute Technologies took advantage of the highly functional free demo version of BARZ\_OUT PRO to minimize the time and effort required for implementation. Absolute tested the demo extensively with its enterprise system, so there were no surprises and little additional testing required after the actual version was purchased and installed.

“Because of the integration work done, the interface for printing the labels is no different than any other report allowing for quick and easy access to printing the labels,” said Sawley. “The labels print pre-filled with all the relevant customer information from our database requiring no duplicate data entry and reducing the likelihood of errors and therefore returned shipments. The requirements for the label information and bar codes are particularly strict in their size and placement. The flexibility of BARZ\_OUT PRO allowed Absolute to create labels that met the specifications.”

Along with Unibar, Absolute Technologies not only met the specifications, it increased the company’s reputation for quality.

“After the implementation was complete, we received a number of phone calls from other suppliers to the same customer asking how we were able to produce the bar codes necessary for shipment to the same customer,” said Sawley. “We got the calls because we could provide better direction and suggestions than the customer itself.”

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