

**Vermeer Manufacturing's Bar Coding System Keep Things
On The Move
Unibar's BARZ_OUT Saves Vermeer Time and Money**

Vermeer Manufacturing Company in Pella, Iowa, has grown from a start-up equipment operation to global proportions over the past fifty years, manufacturing its quality heavy equipment for a worldwide marketplace. The family-owned business is responsible for designing, producing and marketing more than 100 agricultural, industrial and environmental equipment products for its broad customer base.

The company's manufacturing and parts facilities occupy over 1.4 million square feet in its Pella headquarters. As in all large operations, physical size of the facilities and volume of work can be the source of time-costing errors.

But the Vermeer folks have avoided any problems there with the industry's favorite time-saver, bar coding. Using a UNIX-based bar code printing software program that runs with the facility's ERP software, converting processes to the use of bar codes was a simple step to efficiency. The bar code printing software, BARZ_OUT, from Unibar, Inc., runs on top of the ERP software and prints bar codes on any documents where one is needed, by simply putting a tilde (or other designated symbol) in front of the information to be bar coded. Thus, bar codes could be added to any steps in the operation.

The Vermeer Parts Distribution warehouse, which processes 400 orders daily, uses UNIX-based Glovia ERP software. This large building is divided into several different zones for picking efficiency. When an order is placed, the Glovia software sorts the parts by location and prints a picklist at the zones on 11 HP Laser Jet 2100TN series printers based around the building. The picklist includes all the parts for the order that are located in that zone. The picklist number is bar coded on the picklist using Unibar's BARZ_OUT software running on top of the Glovia software. Then, when the parts have been pulled, the zone operator scans the bar code on the picklist. All the parts included in that specific picklist are shown on the zone operator's computer screen, and he or she confirms the picklist with a couple of simple key strokes. Then, the Glovia software moves the parts within its system from the shelf location to a PACK location.

"We are using the bar code produced by Unibar's software to confirm our picklists for two reasons," said Karl Ribbens, Continuous Improvement Manager at the Parts Distribution Center. "It save times time by eliminating the need to key in the six digit picklist number. And the bar code also ensures accuracy. These picklist numbers could very easily be keyed incorrectly, and people would confirm they picked parts that have not actually been picked yet."

BARZ_OUT is also used for printing a barcode on the packlist. When orders are complete, a packlist is printed on the network's five Genicom 3810S Impact printers. Glovia software assigns a packlist number to the completed order, and that number is barcoded on the packlist.

Once items have traveled efficiently through the parts distribution center, Vermeer's bar coding system also saves valuable time in the shipping area. Eliminating the need to key in information has brought processing time down to seconds per package. Currently Vermeer's UPS and Federal Express shipping systems have scanners that read the packist number and automatically populate all the fields that are required to process the package. The fields include Store number, Dealer name and Address, Shipping address, Zip code, Service type as well as some less used other fields. Along with eliminating the need to key all the information into those fields, the bar code guarantees accuracy, preventing costly errors of shipping to the wrong location.

"We ship approximately 300 UPS packages and another 100 FED-Ex packages daily," said Ribbens. "With this bar code system, it literally takes 10 seconds to process a package."

Once again, bar codes contribute to the bottom line, and Unibar's easy installation on a UNIX system keeps it simple.