Museum Manages Inventory with DataSplice

FACILITIES INVENTORY

One of the most esteemed art museums in the United States has thousands of visitors explore its art, buildings and grounds every year. The museum has two warehouses to support events and business operations, which store a wide variety of items including books, benches, chairs, furniture for exhibits, air conditioning units, audio visual equipment, shelves, brochures, merchandise, computers, light bulbs, janitorial supplies…and more. The facilities department needed an inventory management system and found one in IBM Maximo®.

THE CASE FOR MOBILE

Beyond Maximo, however, facilities management identified the need for a mobile inventory system. For example, the warehouse used work orders, notepads, sticky notes - any form of paper - to document inventory received. Eventually, someone would enter those notes into Maximo. Facilities recognized this process was cumbersome and believed that a handheld device would solve several problems.

Facilities imagined how mobile could help them: as an item arrived at the warehouse, staff could enter the data into the handheld device, which could propagate to Maximo immediately if a data connection was available or later when a connection was established.

THE SOLUTION

A separate museum department had been using DataSplice for eight years to manage work orders. When the need arose for mobile inventory management, the warehouse managers recognized that DataSplice could also be configured to provide exactly what they wanted. Before long, they were up and running with an end-to-end warehouse inventory system.

BENEFIT HIGHLIGHTS

- **Transparency and Visibility Improved.** Prior to installing DataSplice, the warehouse managers met weekly with facilities; however, everyone agreed that with inventory transactions conducted on paper, there was a high level of uncertainty regarding the location and status of items managed by warehouse staff. After implementing DataSplice, warehouse and facilities staff gained real-time visibility of all inventory transactions within both warehouses - where items are located, to whom items are assigned, how long items have been stored in the warehouse, as well as other critical information. The insight DataSplice provides has increased communication, trust, and collaboration, and has improved inventory management processes.

- **The Application is User-Friendly.** The DataSplice application looks and functions the same whether on iPad, iPhone, Android or a desktop computer. Its design proved intuitive for the warehouse staff to learn. Also, DataSplice works the same with or without an internet connection. In remote areas of the warehouse where network connectivity falters, the staff knows that they can continue working to update inventory with confidence because once they are back within wireless range, their device will sync with the server and update Maximo.

- **Receiving and Storage Improved.** Prior to DataSplice, museum staff members would drop items at the warehouse door. Warehouse staff would not always know who dropped off the item, when it was dropped off or where to store it. Now when items are dropped at the warehouse, staff can use a hand-held device to photograph the items as they are entered into DataSplice. They can also use an email feature within DataSplice to contact the items' owners and request updates on the need for the items. "You left this chair in the warehouse one year ago and you haven't requested to use it. Can we sell or dispose of it?" This feature helps them manage the premium warehouse space.

- **Item History is Easily Accessible.** Once a year, the museum performs cycle counts and inventory. When it was time to reorder an item, they had to physically locate and examine an item's history before purchasing. With DataSplice, the item's history is a screen tap away, with every detail including warranty information, when and where it was bought, who to contact if it breaks and even the item's wear level. Staff can edit information and update inventory in DataSplice, also capturing bin location, description, owner and count for each item in the warehouse.

THE RESULT

DataSplice makes asset management and warehouse storage easier to administer and coordinate. With warehouse space at a premium, managing the receiving, storage and plans for inventory is a challenge. But now, warehouse managers and facilities managers know what is being stored in the warehouse, how long inventory has been there and to whom items belong. With email connected to their system, they can contact an item's owner and plan what to do with the item once it has been in storage for a long period of time. Process improvements like these make DataSplice a required tool in this organization's inventory management plan.

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