

homestyle

Home Furnishing Products Ltd
Corby, Northamptonshire
England

www.homestyle2000.co.uk

Industry:
Window furnishings

Aspin products and services:

- MiniPick PC server
- MiniPick handheld

MiniPick modules:

- Warehouse manager
- Warehouse reports
- Customers
- Product
- Order picking/goods out



Homestyle look to the future with MiniPick

Homestyle Furnishing Products Ltd is a market leader in the window furnishing industry. Based in Northamptonshire, they operate nationally throughout Great Britain and Ireland, offering an excellent service which is controlled from headquarters in Corby.

In order to provide this level of service Homestyle operates a large warehouse, picking hundreds of orders each day. Much the stock is sourced from the Far East, and with relatively long reorder lead-times the ability to be able to accurately forecast stock requirements and pick the correct products is a key requirement.

Homestyle initially implemented Aspin's MiniSell sales force automation software in 2005 to speed up the field sales order taking process. After successfully rolling this out to the sales reps, they realised that other areas within the company could reap the benefits of mobile technologies and barcode scanning.

Prior to the introduction of MiniPick, the warehouse team used paper delivery notes generated by the company's Sage software to drive the picking process. Once an order had been fully picked the customer services team would update the completed 'pick' information into Sage to generate the invoice. This process lacked any form of barcode scanning / automated product verification relying on the pickers to visually verify the products being selected.

There were a number of inherent problems in this approach. Using the paper delivery notes in the warehouse meant they often became covered with hand-written instructions. Not only did this make it difficult for the packer to decipher order line information, but it also meant that the customer received the same copy that had been circulating the warehouse, complete with notes and crossing outs!

Furthermore, without a bar-coding system it was difficult to accurately pick the correct product and as a result pickers often picked the wrong item, this either being identified when the order was packed or more generally when the customer contacted Homestyle to tell them they had received the wrong items. This would then result in further delivery/uplift costs and delayed payment for the entire order.

MiniPick provided the ideal solution to these problems. The MiniPick server communicates directly with Homestyle's Sage system, importing sales orders and then generating electronic picking notes for the handheld devices. Once an order has been picked on the handheld, the order is sent back to the MiniPick server and then transmitted back to Sage for invoice update.

The MiniPick server application also provides the warehouse manager with an overview of all the orders that need to be picked and their relevant status along the dispatch process. This provides visibility of the current workloads and allows the warehouse manager to either automatically or manually allocate batches of orders to individual pickers.

Typically using Symbol PPT8800 rugged handheld terminals, the MiniPick handheld application provides the pickers with a clear order-picking schedule, including stock item details, pick quantity and item locations. Upon arriving at the correct item location, the picker scans the product barcode (and optionally the location), and the picking schedule is automatically updated.

Cont.

Page 1 of 3

aspin**Tom Mann, Homestyle's financial controller comments:**

"MiniPick has streamlined our whole dispatch process. We now experience less returns as fewer mistakes are being made by the warehouse staff. The knock-on effect is that far less credits need to be issued.

Another really noticeable benefit is that our delivery notes go out the door with the correct information, rather than being covered with scribbles and annotations. This allows Homestyle to provide the same level of professionalism to our dispatch process as in the other areas of our business. Many customers have commented on how much easier it is for them to receive clean delivery notes telling them exactly what has been delivered.

Our Sage software is now updated automatically without any need for re-keying. Every process in warehouse is recorded, so we can accurately predict our ordering requirement.

Aspin handled the MiniPick project with a high degree of competence. We were already confident in their ability to deliver and the MiniPick implementation was no exception. From the early stages Aspin worked with us to fully scope out our requirements, at no stage have we met any obstacles which have not been overcome.

Importantly, Aspin also provides us with a high level of after sales support; even now after the software has been bedded in they are keen to ensure that we get value from our investment."



Cont.



MiniPick overview

MiniPick is a warehouse management package that runs on Pocket PC handheld devices. The warehouse processes are automated in the following modules:

- Goods received processing
- Goods out processing (order picking)
- Stock take
- Stock location transfer
- Product and location searching

The interaction between the handheld device and the main network can be either wireless or batch-based.

There are three components to the MiniPick application; the MiniPick PC server, the MiniPick handheld devices and the Host order processing application. MiniPick can be implemented with any Host that can import and export data.

The Host order processing application provides the customer and stock data to the networked MiniPick PC server, which in turns allocates data to the relevant MiniPick handheld user either automatically or via driven by the warehouse manager.

Communication between the handhelds and the MiniPick PC server is managed using standard wireless networking (802.11) or via a cradle attached to the MiniPick PC server (a standard network PC).

The MiniPick handheld software guides the user through the relevant process and confirms back to the Host what has been processed or any changes that have occurred. Barcode scanning is utilised to ensure maximum speed and accuracy.

Care has been taken to design a user interface that is intuitive and requires minimal training. This means that extra workers can easily pick up and use the software during periods of peak demand.

Aspin Overview

For over 20 years Aspin has provided software solutions to distribution businesses.

Our speciality is the processing of orders whether this be on a handheld device, on the Internet, via EDI or at your head office / warehouse. Our solutions are tried and tested, and in daily use by successful distribution operations around the world.

For more information on MiniSell and our other products and services, please call us on:

Tel: +44[0]1794 500 200 or visit www.aspin.co.uk

United Kingdom

Aspin
3 Horsefair Mews
Romsey Hampshire
SO50 9EQ
Sales: +44 (0)1794 500 200
Fax: +44 (0)1794 500 210
Email: sales@aspin.co.uk
Website: www.aspin.co.uk

Australia

Amsolve Software Pty Ltd
21 Aristoc Road
Glen Waverley
Victoria 3150
Sales: +61 (0) 3 9550 1808
Fax: +61 (0) 3 9560 3008
Email: amsolve@onthe.net.au
Website: www.amsolve.com.au