

PISTON RING TOUTS THE PAPERLESS WAREHOUSE AS CONTRIBUTING TO BUSINESS EXPANSION



Executive Summary

Based in Winnipeg, Manitoba since its founding in 1953, Piston Ring has grown to more than 300 employees and over 350,000 square feet of distribution space. The company's targeted customer is the installer for whom an intense service focus is measured by delivery efficiency. From invoice creation to dock to customer, it's all about having the right product, quickly delivered. Piston Ring is

currently expanding its warehouse facilities to further accommodate large inventories, systems and customer support. The Paperless Warehouse® (TPW) supports the sense of time urgency and facility/staffing maximization that is the core of their service and a key strength in their marketplace.

Increasing Sales, Without Increasing Staff

Rapid expansion and acquisitions throughout the 1990s grew the company to its present makeup of 24 corporate and 16 associate stores in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Northwestern Ontario. Sustaining that growth is an ongoing challenge as the company struggles with space and staffing constraints. Even with an expansion in progress, physical plant limitations create an urgent need for increased efficiencies as well as the ability to meet increased demand without adding staff.

"Our motivation for acquiring TPW was to drive growth," reflects Warehouse Manager Kevan Johannson. "During our visits to warehouses using TPW, we were pleased to discover opportunities to increase efficiencies and reduce error rates. We saw potential to improve other aspects of our operation and decided to implement TPW."

Improving Warehouse Accuracy and Efficiency

TPW quickly delivered measureable results for Piston Ring. Kevan continues, "Our capacity to meet growing demand has been significantly enhanced by TPW primarily in the areas of shipping efficiencies and accuracy. By the third month of use, we had already cut our stock order error rate in half, down to .015%."

"We have increased picking efficiency," Johannson adds. "Now that we pick electronically instead of from paper, we save a great deal of time. We put some of that time into hotshot orders and are now able to get expedites into the hands of jobber stores and customers much faster. We haven't even implemented TPW expediting yet. It's still a manual process! We also use time saved in the picking process to redirect order fillers into stocking and return processing and have improved our performance in those areas. We process and issue customer credits every day to provide better customer service."

PROFILE

Headquarters: Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

Sales Breakdown: 85% wholesale, 15% retail

Number of Employees: Over 300

Locations: 1 DC, 24 company stores, 16 associate stores in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Northwestern Ontario

Founded: 1953

Affiliation: The Alliance

"Based on TPW's impressive functionality, we are optimistic that we can meet future growth requirements with minimal additions to our staff."

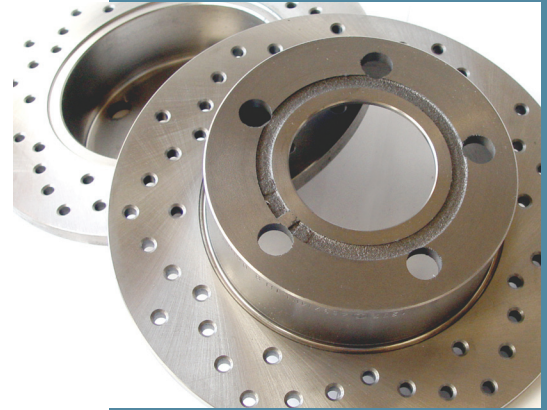
TODD TOUTANT
GENERAL MANAGER
PISTON RING

Another improvement Piston Ring gained from TPW is increased receiving accuracy. Before TPW, we had time only to red flag some manufacturers for item-by-item check in. Today, TPW's in-scanning capability enables the check in of all receipts, without adding any time to the process.

TPW is an Essential Management Tool

Piston Ring measures everything. General Manager Todd Toutant asserts, "The operational performance information that TPW provides is very important. We now track lines picked per hour. By sharing this data with employees, they help identify opportunities for improvement."

"We calculate that we have only implemented around 75% of TPW functionality so far. We are optimistic that we can meet future growth requirements with minimal additions to our staff. We needed to expand and TPW helps us do that," concludes Todd.



By the third month of using TPW, Piston Ring had already cut their stock order error rate in half.

ABOUT ACTIVANT

Activant, a leading technology provider of business management solutions serving small and medium-sized businesses, offers customers tailored proprietary software, professional services, content, supply chain connectivity, and analytics. Activant's systems are designed to help customers increase sales, boost productivity, operate more cost-efficiently, improve inventory turns and enhance trading partner relationships.

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