

OUR LIVES ARE BEING TAKEN OVER. From the moment a digital alarm clock wakes us up in the morning to the time we fall asleep in front of a giant flat-screen TV, there is no escape. Little digits—ones and zeros—are everywhere! They constantly flutter over our heads, cloaked in the invisibility of a wireless network, cell phone coverage, or the brilliance of remote controls. Resistance is futile.

We are neck-deep in the information age, an era which is winning the battle against patience. We expect instant access to everything, from our credit card statement to details about our favorite celebrities' personal lives (thank you, *Twitter* for letting us know what Ashton Kutcher is having for dinner).

Waiting for information is no longer an option, and that is

changing outlets such as newspapers. People refuse to wait for a hard copy, delivered at the schedule of someone else's choosing, when the same information can be retrieved whenever one chooses. This theme resonates across industry lines, and has even found its way into the scale business.

Certificate Retrieval System™ (CRS) is a high-five to the information age. This electronic device has been developed to provide end users anytime-access to electronic certificates. The scale technician simply loads CRS onto a PDA, then follows the built-in calibration wizard to enter data. Once complete, the PDA is synched with a PC, the information is uploaded, and certificates in PDF format can be accessed by logging in at www.crscerts.com.

the stylus is mightier than



the pen

By Caleb Olson

DONALD SCELZO, WHO OWNS DIAMOND SCALE in Westport, Mass., has been using CRS for over four years because it helps him compete in his market. "In today's environment, you need an edge," Donald explains. "One of my customers recently hired a new purchaser who re-evaluated the cost of preventative maintenance on their scales. They decided that while other scale companies could do the preventative maintenance more inexpensively, the con-

venience of CRS enabled me to keep the account. That's what CRS does for me; it gives me that edge. It also results in more sales because those parent companies have sister companies who not only use us for preventative maintenance, but buy scales from us as well."

CRS is especially relevant to ISO-certified companies that adhere to strict record-keeping standards to maintain their accreditation. "The days of walking into a

plant and just putting stickers on a scale are gone," Donald says. "They need more. Once these companies are on CRS for a while they begin to rely on you. The auditors respond to CRS, which takes pressure off management's shoulders. That's huge for keeping an account. I know they won't go anywhere else."

Along with helping keep existing customers, CRS also enables Diamond Scale to obtain new clients. "When you perform a

first-time preventative maintenance for a client,” Donald explains, “they really don’t know what to expect. But when I show them how I use CRS, they are blown away. That’s a great feeling.” He continues, “It’s obvious to them I know what I’m doing and they can trust me. More and more people are going paperless and we’re ready for it. I don’t know what I would do without CRS anymore. I actually forgot my PDA one day and I felt lost. I had to write everything down on a piece of paper like the old days. It was awful!”

Diamond Scale uses another tool to impress customers. Most scale companies calibrate a scale with traditional cast iron weights. While perfectly accurate, if not properly maintained, these can become riddled with rust and look twice as old as they actually are. Diamond Scale uses stainless steel test weights, which meet the highest standards, even for food-grade environments. Frequently sanitized at customer locations with steam and chemicals, the mirror-finished weights convey the professionalism Donald demands. “When I show up with CRS and stainless steel weights,” Donald says, “I know the customer will understand that I am giving him the best value for his preventative maintenance dollar.”



VALLEY SCALE, INC., is a family-run business in Pleasant Valley, New York. Owners Robert, Kristi, Mike, and Paul Stolarski had been using CRS when they found themselves in the market for new cell phones. “We knew CRS worked on a typical Windows® PC, so we wondered if it would also work on a Windows Mobile cell phone,” Paul explains. “So, we bought the Windows Mobile phones and loaded CRS. It works beautifully!” While CRS was designed for PDAs and has not been officially tested on cell phones, Valley Scale has consolidated the two devices, using an HTC Imagio™ running Windows Mobile version 6.5, to streamline their certification process. “It’s great,” Paul continues. “I’m using CRS and if somebody calls me, I’ve got everything right there. I’m never out of touch with a customer. We’ve picked up several new accounts because

they need certifications for ISO. I’m uploading it and they can get the certificate the same day, whereas the previous technician would provide a handwritten paper copy within two or three weeks. When I go in and certify 25 scales for one of my customers—and on every report they want the ID number, the weights used, and the Weights and Measures certification number of those weights—CRS saves me time.”

It seems to be human nature to misplace things. From car keys to loose change to important documents, most of us cannot be trusted. When Valley Scale received a call from one of its larger accounts, frantically looking for a lost (printed) certificate, nobody should have been surprised. However, Valley Scale simply helped the client login to the Valley Scale website (which links to the CRS website) and they immediately retrieved the certificate. It is often not a matter of *if* someone will lose the paper copy, but *when*.

Because CRS stores everything outside of the customer’s building, they cannot permanently lose a certificate. The certificates are available for download 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. “It makes their bookkeeping much easier,” says Robert Stolarski. “They’re used to waiting a couple of weeks for a guy to fax or mail the certificates. With CRS, they can have them whenever they want. Clients are amazed I can do certs on my cell phone.”

DEAN HAITA, OF SCALE SERVICE & SUPPLY CO., Inc., has a unique client. This customer weighs high-performance, high-value material and continually needs their scales to be certified to avoid costly errors. An ounce here or there means a lot of money when you are



Donald Scelzo, Diamond Scale, uses CRS and stainless steel weights to give customers ultimate value.



Dean Haita, Scale Service & Supply Co., has seen a 50 percent increase in efficiency since implementing CRS. Office shelves previously stacked with paperwork are now almost vacant—the lone survivors of the desertion are Rice Lake catalogs and literature.

dealing with this material, not to mention the legal requirements. Many of the on-site scales are being used to fill drums which are shipped directly to the customer. To maintain Legal-for-Trade status, these critical scales need regular certification. This need is especially time-consuming because of the number of scales involved. “They have over 250 scales to be tested every month,” Dean explains. “That used to produce a lot of paperwork. It was taking longer to do the paperwork than the actual test.”

In 2006, Dean was writing scale certifications by hand, which was no easy task. The facility demands that everything be explosion-proof, and certain non-technician-friendly precautions are therefore required. “I have to wear special gloves,” he continues. “So I would get the weights in place, try to write the values down, move the weights, write another weight down, and so on. And then the pen wouldn’t always work, or the paper would get stained.” It was around this time that Scale Service & Supply moved to the CRS system. Dean’s dexterity dilemma disappeared! “Now, I just have to *tap tap tap* on the PDA, and I can do it as I’m calibrating the scale,” he explains. “Our explosion-proof PDA has replaced an entire office they had set up for certification storage.” That office used to consist of a fully stocked filing cabinet (one folder per scale), a computer, and a desk—all devoted to certificate storage.

It was not only the convenience of CRS that prompted Scale Service & Supply’s adoption of the technology—the client demanded it. They were moving to ISO 17025 certification and had a misplaced-certification incident during an audit. Thus, one of the requirements was a system to file all calibration certificates electronically. “We initially invested in CRS to keep the account,” Dean states. “What we didn’t know was how much time would be saved.”

One building took Dean four days to complete—sometimes more. That is almost a full work week blocked off on his calendar every month, and 25 percent of his time. Today, it takes him two days to finish that building, and the client often has the certificates on the same day testing was performed. CRS paid for itself after the first month; now he can use those extra two days to work with other customers. Since the amount of time spent on each scale is less, Scale Service & Supply’s profits for this large account have increased.

The 50 percent efficiency increase prompted Scale Service & Supply to move more customers to CRS. Today, all of their customers are on the CRS system. Office shelves previously stacked with paperwork are now almost vacant—the lone survivors of the desertion are Rice Lake catalogs and literature. Dean emails a PDF of each certificate to his clients, and there is always a backup stored online in case a hard drive goes down.

A particularly useful component of CRS is data tracking. When a scale is out of tolerance, a client or technician can go back and see how that scale has performed over the course of time. If that scale is routinely out of tolerance, the paperless trail makes it easier to gain approval for a new scale purchase. An email with six PDFs, for example, can simply be sent to the company’s quality control representative—showing the scale’s performance (or lack thereof) over the past six months. Scale Service & Supply’s clients have been so impressed with CRS that it has opened the door for other Rice Lake products. Dean recalls one Legal-for-Trade scale that always needed adjustment. “Every month—I would tell them it needs to be replaced,” he recalls. “They moved to Rice Lake’s RoughDeck® floor scales and 320IS indicators and now there aren’t any issues at all.”

Since the move to CRS, Scale Service & Supply’s clients have never had a problem with their audits. They simply go online to get certificates. Because everything is organized and smooth, Dean feels his clients would be reluctant to move to something (or someone) else. CRS has secured a long-term working relationship with his clients.

What’s next for Scale Service & Supply? They are trying to further streamline their testing procedures. Time equals money, and the more time saved—the more money can be earned. That is where the value of CRS really counts. ■



CRS is installed on an explosion proof PDA for intrinsically safe environments.

Tell us a story

We are looking for great stories about Rice Lake equipment and service for this magazine.

Have you recently made an interesting install or service call? Even a funny thing that happened on the way makes a good read. Do you have a customer using Rice Lake equipment who would welcome a positive people and product story going to more than 60,000 readers?

Please email a brief summary to rlmagazine@ricelake.com.

It was a dark and stormy night...

