



## HISTORY IN THE MAKING

Helping a century-old company explore the benefits of barcoding technology

What started as a scrap metal business in Chattanooga, Tennessee by Robert Hyman Siskin in 1900, is now Siskin Steel & Supply Company, Inc. (Siskin), a wholly owned subsidiary of Reliance Steel & Aluminum Co.

Siskin is a premier steel service center in the Southeast, with six locations in three states supplying carbon steel, stainless, aluminum, and other non-ferrous metals.

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## HEAVY METAL THUNDER

In a warehouse of 400,000 square feet, over 19,000 tons of on-hand inventory and over 4,000 SKU's, their Chattanooga location is the flagship operation of Siskin Steel. Their customers span 13 states in the southeast, with 40+ delivery trucks a day offering next day service to areas as far north as Kentucky and West Virginia, along with Atlanta, the Carolinas, and northern Alabama.

In addition to offering carbon, aluminum and stainless steel products, Siskin also performs services such as laser cutting, beam splitting, sawing and shearing to accommodate customer requirements. Handling steel products is no small task; not only is the material large and unwieldy, but there are hundreds of different shapes, sizes and types to track and manage.



## PUT THE PEDAL TO THE METAL

As the company grew, tracking and managing this growing inventory of materials became more difficult to perform using a paper-based process. Although their team was working faster to get product out the door, mistakes were slowing them down due to:

- Put-Away Inaccuracies
- Difficulty Viewing Racked Inventory
- Order Fulfillment Errors
- Costly Sales Returns

While looking for a way to improve productivity and reduce errors, they met with Barcom and came up with two solutions to streamline processes and increase order accuracy. Both involved barcoding to automate tracking of materials and record product data.

## CHALLENGES & SOLUTIONS

**! CHALLENGE:** Document Storage & Retrieval

**✓ SOLUTION:** Barcom developed a system to record and store material test report (heat number) data.

- Heat number data is an industry requirement, similar to a lot number
- Heat numbers identify the chemistry and origin of the material
- Material data was difficult to retrieve quickly using a paper-based process

This automated, barcode-driven system allows workers to scan barcoded material and retrieve information recorded in the database. Customer requests are satisfied quickly and with a high degree of accuracy.



**! CHALLENGE:** Inventory Management

**✓ SOLUTION:** Lost inventory can cost hundreds of thousands, even millions of dollars if not tracked properly. With transaction, Barcom's inventory tracking software, Siskin was able to automate management of their cantilever storage system.

- The cantilever area consists of vertical racks of steel of varying sizes, types and shapes
- Tall racks make it difficult to identify materials in inventory
- Easily identifying and locating materials improved the order fulfillment process

With a handheld or vehicle-mount computer, employees scan barcoded materials and work orders; giving them access to inventory location and stock quantities in real time. Every time material is picked, cut and shipped, their system is updated. Integration with Siskin's ERP system further optimizes fulfillment processes.

With the cantilever application up and running successfully, Siskin then decided to roll out this inventory tracking solution across their entire warehouse.

## STEEL THE SHOW

"Everything has a barcode now," said David Binder, IT Director at Siskin. "Material and work orders are barcoded. Scan the wrong material for an order, and the device will signal an alert," he added. "This tells the user the wrong item was picked, so they can select the correct item before the order is processed," said Binder. Improvements were realized almost immediately:

- Inventory items are easier to find
- Materials are pulled more quickly
- Work orders are filled more accurately
- Data is uploaded to the ERP system in real-time

"This process keeps worker productivity up because they aren't spending a lot of time trying to find materials or shipping incorrect product out the door," said Binder. The result is a nearly 30% increase in productivity, with an ROI of less than 12 months.

"We love working with Barcom," said Binder. "Not only did they help us dramatically improve operations with the right technology, but they continue to provide advice and support as we grow and evolve," he added.

**ROI was evident almost immediately after deployment.**

**Key benefits included:**

- Streamlined Processes
- Reduced Returns
- Increased Productivity
- Traceability of Materials

Barcode automation in the warehouse eliminates errors and time-consuming tasks associated with paper-based processes.



## COULD YOUR WAREHOUSE OPERATIONS BENEFIT FROM A MORE SOLID FRAMEWORK?

Contact Barcom today to strengthen your processes with automated technology.