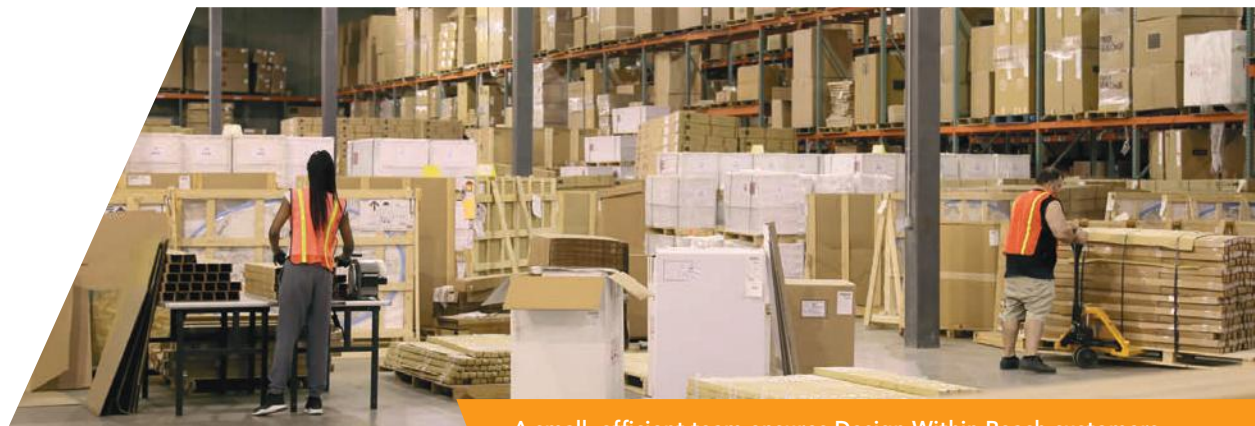


# DESIGN WITHIN REACH FINDS CONTROL WITHIN REACH



A small, efficient team ensures Design Within Reach customers receive the level of quality and service they expect.

**Managers had no way of ensuring scanners were returned after each shift.**

When Design Within Reach (DWR) launched its catalog business in 1999, no other company was offering high-end designer furniture direct to consumers. As the company grew, it added retail studios and e-commerce, and now has about three dozen locations. Today, homeowners, designers and even Hollywood set designers rely on DWR to curate the best in high-end modern furnishings from names such as Eames, Le Corbusier and Herman Miller.

All orders are shipped from its distribution center in Hebron, Kentucky, which includes the main 300,000-square-foot facility and two smaller buildings nearby. Associates are cross-trained in all tasks to provide flexibility and minimize outages. The focus is on smart, efficient processes that make the most of available resources and ensure that every Design Within Reach order meets stringent quality standards and is shipped accurately.

## Common Habits That Lead to High Costs

Like many distribution centers, DWR once struggled to manage handheld scanners. The devices were stored on a shelf near the entrance, so associates could quickly take one as they arrived. Although this “free-for-all” system was fast, managers didn’t know who was using which device. They also had no way of ensuring scanners were returned after each shift. As a result, they would often be left out on the floor or go missing, a problem that’s familiar to many DCs.

According to Dawn White, Senior Director of Distribution, “I’d go to the scanner shelf at the end of the day and sometimes there’d only be three scanners brought back. Other times, people would hide their favorite scanner on their day off so they’d be sure it was waiting for them when they got back. Once we had an associate who took his scanner home when he left for a week of vacation.”





They'd often spend the first 10 to 15 minutes of their shift scrambling to find a scanner that was charged and working. White was seriously concerned about the lost productivity and high costs, and was looking for a way to get control.

### Better Control Within Reach

In 2016, White upgraded DWR's warehouse management software and purchased 30 new scanners at a cost of nearly \$4,000 each. And she was determined to protect that IT investment.

White soon discovered the Asset Management Solutions from Apex Supply Chain Technologies®. She learned that they're specifically designed for managing handheld devices like barcode scanners, RF equipment and voice-picking headsets. Managers get 24/7 visibility of devices and usage in the Trajectory Cloud™ platform, so they always know who checked out each scanner and when it's due back. If someone's device isn't returned on time, they receive an alert so they can quickly follow up with that person.

White decided to implement an AXCESS™ 6100 36-door locker to manage DWR's new scanners. And almost immediately, she saw a big increase in employee accountability that had a significant impact across many areas of the business.

### Unchecked Damage and Neglect

The problems went beyond hiding, however. Associates felt little accountability for these expensive devices and sometimes got careless. Damage was increasing.

"I'd walk into my office and there would be a smashed \$3,500 scanner sitting on my desk, with no note about who did it or what happened," said White. The problem was growing, and since service contracts don't cover deliberate or neglectful damage, so were DWR's out-of-pocket costs. Soon, they were spending more than \$14,000 a year just on replacements.

With so many devices missing or damaged, associates would sometimes show up for work only to find that no scanner was available.

“  
I'd walk into my office and there would be a smashed \$3,500 scanner sitting on my desk...”

— Dawn White, Senior Director of Distribution



Associates quickly scan their badge and the next available compartment door opens.

### A Faster, More Productive Start Each Day

With full manager visibility into who checks out each scanner, virtually 100 percent of devices are checked back in at the end of each shift. That led to one of the most biggest benefits to the entire team – associates no longer have to worry about whether or not they'll find a scanner to use.

Today, they simply walk up to the AXCESS 6100 locker, scan their timeclock badge, and the next available compartment door opens with a scanner inside. Batteries charge in a dock next to the locker, so it's easy to replace one if needed.

### A Dramatic Decrease in Scanner Damage

Another benefit of cloud-based visibility is a drastic reduction in damage and neglect. White immediately found that associates were taking much better care of the valuable scanners, since they knew they were personally accountable for them. In fact, White said, "In the two years since we've had the AXCESS locker, we haven't had to send out a single scanner for repair due to neglect."



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— Dawn White



## REAL RESULTS

### Lower Costs and Increased Accountability

**555**   
HOURS/YEAR RECOVERED  
» 10 min/day x 16 associates

**\$7,770**   
ASSOCIATE WAGES REALLOCATED  
» 555 hours x \$14/hr

**ZERO**   
SCANNER REPAIR COSTS\*  
» \*First two years following implementation

**\$14,000**   
ANNUAL SAVINGS  
» Average replacement costs

White also gets insights into any problems associates might be having with their devices. When they check their scanner in at the end of their shift, they mark its condition as “good” or “bad,” so White can keep track of any needed service or software updates.

### Newfound Savings Invested in Employee Retention

White admits that at first, some associates were not happy about having to adapt to a system that changed how they work. But soon everyone was on board, and White is making sure they experience the benefits of carefully managing their handhelds.

Thanks to significant savings in scanner repairs, she’s added several new employee perks, including monthly food truck lunches and occasional ice cream socials. Not only are they good for morale, but they’ve also helped DWR in the uphill battle of finding and keeping good DC associates.

In the coming year, DWR will be moving to a new 600,000-square-foot facility in nearby Batavia, Ohio that will accommodate all its operations under a single roof, with potential to grow. Based on White’s success with the Apex Asset Management Solution, she plans to enlarge that program as well as incorporate other Apex automated solutions when DWR moves to the new facility.



To learn more about handheld device management from Apex Supply Chain Technologies, visit [ApexSupplyChain.com/AssetManagement](https://ApexSupplyChain.com/AssetManagement), email us at [info@apexsupplychain.com](mailto:info@apexsupplychain.com), or call 1.800.229.7912 to visit our Customer Experience Center.

Technology That Counts™



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