



# Zebra and IST Help Whirlpool Increase Visibility at U.S. Distribution Centers

## COLLABORATION WITH WHIRLPOOL SOLVES COSTLY DATA ACCURACY AND DEVICE INVENTORY PROBLEM

Whirlpool Corporation is the world's leading global manufacturer of home appliances. The company employs 97,000 people worldwide and has \$21 billion in annual sales. The company manufactures home appliances such as washers, dryers, refrigerators, ovens, dishwashers and more. Its portfolio of brands includes Whirlpool, KitchenAid, Maytag, Consul, Amana, and Jenn-Air. With a vast network of manufacturing facilities and distribution centers, Whirlpool looks to technology to stay at the leading edge of the industry.

### Challenge

Whirlpool wanted to optimize mobile device management at its distribution centers. Leadership ran into problems with misplaced devices, battery life, the inability to update devices in a systematic way, and a lack of data metrics around device performance.

In the past, Whirlpool managed all these devices with spreadsheets. The company has 20 U.S. distribution center locations — some more than a half-mile long — to manage. Over time, data entry, accuracy, and tracking became difficult.

### SUMMARY



**Customer**  
Whirlpool Corporation  
Benton Harbor, MI



**Partner**  
Industrial Service Technology  
Grand Rapids, MI

**Industry**  
Manufacturing

**Challenge**

- Mobile device management
- Data integrity
- Proper device deployment

**Solution**

- Zebra VH10 vehicle-mounted computer
- Zebra XT15 mobile computer
- Zebra Operational Visibility Services
- IST Warehouse Management

**Results**

- 20 facility rollouts
- 18 remote deployments
- 63% ROI in 2+ months
- Make better, smarter decisions with OVS data



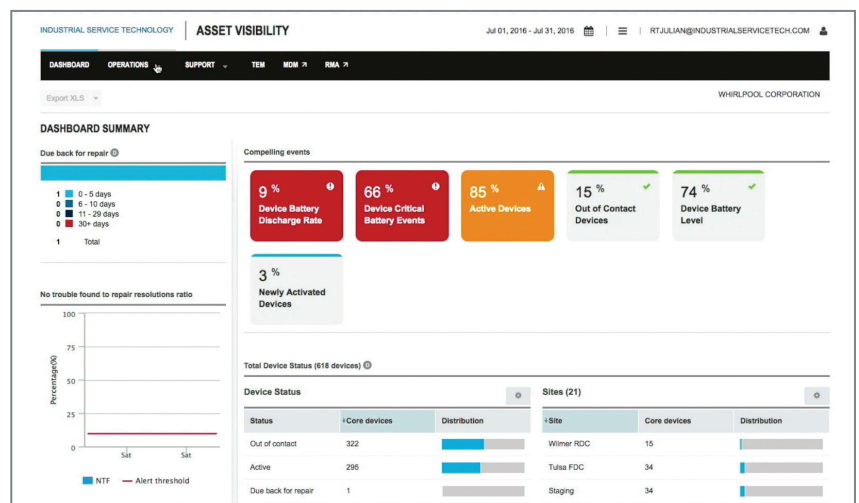
If the spreadsheet wasn't maintained, devices could be lost, and this led to more equipment purchases and overall inefficiency across nearly all the distribution centers. If a battery died during an associate's task, it hurt that associate's productivity because the size of the distribution centers made it difficult for the associate to quickly reach a central location where charged batteries were available.

Whirlpool wanted a centralized management system to track device health, productivity, location, and ensure proper deployment.

## Solution

Whirlpool has worked with Industrial Service Technology (IST), a Zebra partner, for almost 20 years and the relationship has grown to IST providing Whirlpool with hardware and software solutions for warehouse management, RF, and RFID systems. IST centers its warehouse management systems around Zebra hardware.

Whirlpool utilizes Zebra XT15 mobile computers, VH10 vehicle-mounted computers, and Zebra's Operational Visibility Service (OVS). The VH10 and XT15 are extremely rugged, reliable devices that suit the distribution center well. OVS helps Whirlpool and IST right-size equipment, understand needs of the pool, and understand site-by-site needs. This combination allows Whirlpool and IST to sense when there could



be a problem, analyze what it is, and act on a solution in real-time. That's something they simply couldn't do when the process was managed through spreadsheets.

---

**This combination allows Whirlpool and IST to SENSE when there could be a problem, ANALYZE what it is, and ACT on a solution in real time.**

---

"We're able to understand where those devices are, and we know the utilization so we can right-size. We don't need to buy equipment unnecessarily," Whirlpool Corporation's Senior Director of North America Logistics Alison Jones said. "In some cases, our distribution centers always want additional stock but now we're able to manage that more effectively."

OVS delivers data, analytics and visibility required to optimize critical asset investment. It allows someone sitting in a central location to see all the information coming in from the 20 distribution centers. The data then allows management to make better business decisions. Some of the data points provided by OVS include battery performance, device utilization, location, configuration, device inventory, and more.

"We can track actual utilization by device, that can be mapped back to an associate so we can understand the productivity of that particular associate," Whirlpool Corporation's Manager of Supply Chain Logistics A. Scott Baiers said. "We can understand device utilization within a building. From there, we can start to compare building by building, and we can share best practices from that."

"We can track actual utilization by device, that can be mapped back to an associate so we can understand the productivity of that particular associate."

**A. Scott Baiers,  
Manager of  
Supply Chain  
Logistics  
Whirlpool  
Corporation**





“With the combination of Whirlpool Corporation working with Zebra and IST, the technology future is unlimited.”

**Alison Jones,**  
**Senior Director**  
**of North America**  
**Logistics**  
**Whirlpool**  
**Corporation**

## Results

Results came quickly for Whirlpool and IST with OVS in place. One of the first returns came through remote deployment. IST rolled out 635 Zebra devices across 20 U.S. facilities, in a little more than two months. With the OVS implementation, 18 of the facility rollouts were done remotely. IST General Manager, Ryan Julian said between the months of November and early January, they recovered 63% ROI on the deployment.

Additionally, Whirlpool can ensure that each location has the proper mix of equipment. Whether a location needs more VH10's or more XT15's, OVS gives managers the visibility they need to make better, smarter decisions with device mix.

“One of the things that I really emphasize with my logistics team is to educate with data,” Jones said. “That means we can provide good information to all of our leadership teams so we can make timely decisions that control costs and make sure our performance is up to par. With the combination of Whirlpool Corporation working with Zebra and IST, the technology future is unlimited.”

For more information, visit [www.zebra.com](http://www.zebra.com)



**NA and Corporate Headquarters**  
+1 800 423 0442  
inquiry4@zebra.com

**Asia-Pacific Headquarters**  
+65 6858 0722  
contact.apac@zebra.com

**EMEA Headquarters**  
zebra.com/locations  
mseurope@zebra.com

**Latin America Headquarters**  
+1 847 955 2283  
la.contactme@zebra.com