



UID CASE STUDY: OLDENBURG GROUP INCORPORATED



THE COMPANY:

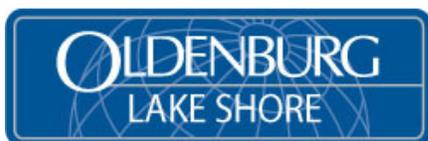
OGI is a diversified industrial manufacturing company based in Milwaukee, WI. In 1987 OGI acquired Lake Shore, Inc., a company founded in 1858 that had evolved from a supplier of mining and shipboard cargo equipment into a world leader in defense and commercial markets. With 625 highly skilled employees in five US facilities, OGI is ISO 9001:2000 certified and manufactures a wide variety of defense products including a floating causeway system.

THE PROBLEM:

A military contract for an OGI Causeway System required compliance with MIL-STD-130. Numerous items needed to be marked, serially managed, and registered with the IUID Registry, including items of widely differing materials that would be subjected to harsh and abrasive environments.

THE SOLUTION:

In the end, OGI found the expertise, the software and the training they required from A2B Tracking Solutions. That solution was hard won however, after a false start with another UID vendor that triggered intensive DCMA oversight.



THE INTERVIEW: A CAUTIONARY TALE

Susan Boulden, OGI engineering assistant and UID compliance specialist, offered this interview in order to spare others the frustration and costly mistakes incurred from starting down the wrong path to UID.

Q: Which OGI contract called for UID, and which parts needed to be marked and registered?

A: It was an army contract for our floating causeway system, which is composed of several independently operated modules. The modules are moved and positioned with a powered warping tug and roll on, roll off discharge platforms are utilized.

We were required to register serially managed items valued at \$5,000 or more, along with their sub-assemblies, components and parts and other items per customer request. The contract was vague. It said to be in compliance with MIL-STD-130 and that was it. After talking with the customer we found that many of the items we needed to mark were truly unique: 20- to 40-foot containers, 4x12- 5x10- and 6x12-foot fenders, flexors, pallets, man-lift baskets, the RHIB boat including the outboard motor, generators, fire suppression units, anchors, lighthouse towers and personnel shelters. There were definitely a wide variety of textures and materials.

Q: How did you become educated about UID?

A: I attended a UID Forum in Atlanta where I made some useful contacts. Getting started was challenging, partly due to the vagueness of the contract. I started my research on many websites. I must say it was overwhelming. The more I read, the more confused I became. I would open one standard and it would refer to what seemed like hundreds of other standards/documentation. I felt I was going in circles. Eventually I learned the importance of doing research before deciding on your supplier. That turned out to be the biggest part of my education.

Q: What steps did you take to begin your project?

A: The key was getting the right people involved - Project Program Manager Jeff Gregorich communicated with the customer and the Project Engineer Rick Shemanski helped to

sort out the part numbers, serial numbers, specs and standards.

We had already placed safety plates on our equipment and thought that would be the perfect place for the Data Matrix UID label. We decided on Construct 2.

Q: I understand you had a false start to the project. What went wrong?

A: Through one of my resources, I was referred to a well known supplier for UID. They thought the best way to approach this was with polyester adhesive labels. We explained that our equipment would be exposed to harsh elements including sun, mud, salt water, cold, hot, etc. and that the life of the equipment can be 30 or more years. Their label supplier assured us his label would work and that it was in compliance with the MIL-STD-130.

Those labels arrived just in time. We had railcars loaded with equipment waiting to ship. Jeff, Rick and I bundled up and ventured out to the rail yard. I believe it was -11° with gusty winds. We were told this temperature would be fine for securing the labels, but they would need extra curing time. After a full day of placing the labels on our equipment, we felt great relief. At last, we felt, we were in compliance with our contract demands for UID. I had frostbite, but that was a small price to pay.

After four days our in-house DCMA (Defense Contract Management Association) representative inspected the labels. To our horror the labels flicked right off, with just a light scratch test. We really had a dilemma! The labels were not sticking; the customer and railroad were waiting for us to ship and we were being charged daily for the delay.

We immediately contacted our UID supplier who in turn setup a phone conference with the label supplier. We tried a few different labels and performed tests, but nothing would stand up to our requirements. Their “guarantee” was that the labels would work and were in compliance with the MIL-STD-130, but we discovered they had never supplied these labels for lifetime expectancy beyond three years or for use in outdoor elements. It was extremely frustrating. All that research, back and forth, emails, phone conversations, time and money lost, and they wouldn’t back us up.

Q: Where did you turn for help?

A: We had no time to lose. I remembered talking to Peter Collins at the Atlanta Forum, so I called him. He listened intently to our dilemma, and then introduced me to A2B’s Brad Smith. We started working on solutions right then. His whole approach with our situation was significantly better than our first supplier. Brad was enthusiastic in helping and assured us that he and his colleagues would work with us to correct the situation.

Q: What changes were made in the project after working with A2B?

A: We found the value in working with a UID supplier that is an expert in the field and committed to finding a solution that works. We started by establishing a team. Brad set up webinars, and we worked together to find a remedy. We utilized A2B resources for testing. I shipped Brad our stainless steel safety plate, to which the UID mark would be applied. Brad had it tested with various adhesives. Meanwhile we performed simulation tests with tack welding and screws in-house at OGI plants. We had to be careful with screw placement and penetration when attaching the UID tags because our modules needed to be air-tight.

We concluded that the best product for our heavy equipment was small stainless steel plates that were screwed right onto the safety plates. We went with pre-drilled, anodized, stainless steel, Type 304 plates attached with washers and drive screws. The safety plates were already on a bump-out which gave us enough space to screw into without puncturing the modules. We shipped the pre-drilled plates to A2B, for UID marking. For other equipment we used a strong epoxy with a washer and tack screw. On equipment that could not be punctured and was stored out of the elements, we went with a very durable adhesive label. A2B also performed verification and validation of all the marks and supplied us with a Compliance Certification document.

By the time we had the plates we required, railcars of equipment had already shipped to Norfolk, VA. Our team followed and worked diligently for a full week attaching plates to the modules, containers and inventory within the containers. The end reward was passing the DCMA inspection. We handed them a copy of the Compliance Certification received from A2B, and OGI was finally in compliance.

Q: Where does the project stand at this point?

A: I believe Oldenburg Group Incorporated has met the requirements of MIL-STD-130. We have successfully attached all the labels to our first program and all labels have been verified and validated. Once we have customer acceptance we will upload the data to the IUID Registry using our UID Comply!® software. We are also ready for new contracts as they come along.

To learn more about UID Comply!™:

Call us at 800-733-7592 or email us at info@a2btracking.com · Visit our website: www.uidsolutions.com

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