

CASE STUDY



Port of Palm Beach Automates Secure Entry for Shippers

Visitor Management Tracking Solution

Challenge of Maintaining Port Security

In the wake of world events, the topic of transportation security has grabbed center stage. And there are few arenas in which this is more critical than the many ports that dot the coastline—where shippers with millions of dollars at stake need to transact business in a secure setting. To that end, the state of Florida passed the Florida Seaport Security Standards Statute 311.12, mandating that all state run ports accurately manage daily visitor activity—and that no one gain port entry more than 5 times in 90 days without a permanent identification badge.

One innovative port, the Port of Palm Beach (PPB), seized the opportunity to not only create a visitor management system, but to improve its operations overall with a comprehensive biometric identity solution. Palm Beach County-based PPB is one of 14 deep-water seaports in Florida. It specializes in servicing the Caribbean market and is the eighteenth busiest container port in the country. To comply with the new “5 in 90” rule, PPB required a high-performance visitor management system that would support its efforts to comply with the state security standards.

Satisfied with the performance of its identification system to create temporary

visitor badges, it was natural for PPB to turn to Cross Match Technologies to support its visitor management strategy. “Cross Match’s trustworthiness and technical knowledge were invaluable in helping us create a customized biometric identity management solution,” says Carl Baker, special assistant to the executive director of the Port of Palm Beach. “And by working with Cross Match, we knew that its team could manage the project for us—allowing us to realize our time-to-market objective for complying with the Florida security statute.”

Solution to Authenticate Visitors Quickly

PPB was familiar with the process of biometric data capture from using its Cross Match ID 1000® system for background checks to create permanent identification badges for its employees. The strategy was to bring that level of security to an affordable, high-performing system that could quickly capture and manage daily port visitors’ fingerprints and reduce the dependency on claimed identities. “This is a mission-critical solution for us,” states Baker. “The visitor management system must be available 24x7x365 and it had to be far superior to our old method of collecting and tracking information by hand—a time-consuming manual process, which was error prone.”

Port of Palm Beach Business Benefits:

- Improved port security
- Increased efficiency in processing port visitors
- Enhanced visitor management and system reliability through automation
- Reduced training time for personnel

Solution to Verify Visitors Quickly (continued)

Cross Match worked with PPB to determine its needs and requirements for the visitor management solution. “They sent programmers down to our guard gate and watched how we tracked seaport visitors—with paper and pencil,” recalls Baker. Providing a name, driver’s license number, vehicle license plate number and destination was standard procedure for each port visitor. Port security would manually match the data against log entries from previous days. If it was determined that a particular visitor had already been to the port 5 times in 90 days, then the visitor was denied entry—a cumbersome process indeed.

Upon evaluation, Cross Match and PPB deployed the Cross Match VisTrak™ visitor management system—a robust, software-based solution that utilizes live scan fingerprint technology, a digital camera and badge printer to accurately manage visitors to PPB. VisTrak enables PPB to use a digital fingerprint capture scanner to automatically capture four fingerprints in one step—increasing system matching accuracy and speed. Once scanned, fingerprints are stored as templates prohibiting recreation and ensuring privacy. The system logs all fingerprint entries and automatically creates a badge.

“Cross Match’s trustworthiness and technical knowledge were invaluable in helping us create a customized biometric identity management solution.”

- Carl Baker, Special Assistant to the Executive Director of the Port of Palm Beach

For added flexibility, PPB uses the Cross Match MV 100™ mobile fingerprint workstation. The mobile, fingerprint workstation boasts a full-featured, forensic-quality fingerprint scanner, Pocket PC, digital camera and magnetic stripe card. The MV 100 enables port personnel to process port visitors on-the-spot using data from the VisTrak system—delivering maximum power in a minimal amount of space. “Other ports have visitor management systems that are much more invasive—including large scanning wands and heavy hand-held devices,” remarks Baker. “Our Cross Match system is much more compact, giving our users an incredible amount of power and information right at their fingertips. Now, we can quickly process the more than 100 daily visitors to the port.”

Benefits of Improving Port Operations

Today, the identification and badge creation process moves swiftly at PPB. Long port entry lines are a thing of the past, now that PPB can identify visitors and manage them in real time. And with fewer port personnel focused on visitor management, they can now direct more attention to other port procedures. “The people who use the system like it because it’s easy to use. The port visitors like it because they get a badge in 30 seconds instead of 3 minutes or more. And our IT people love it because they don’t have to tweak the system—it’s like a refrigerator—it just works and everyone loves it,” Baker notes.

Since installing the system, PPB can accurately manage visitors using self-generated reports from the stored fingerprint data. Data analysis that used to take up to 90 minutes daily is now done in seconds. According to Baker, “It only takes about 20 minutes to train port personnel how to use

the VisTrak system and then they are usually comfortable enough to not only create badges but to run reports on the fly.”

Security has increased too notes Baker, “With this solution, we don’t have to second guess the information on a driver’s license or license plate because it is secondary to the biometric fingerprint data we capture.” Facilitating high levels of port security helps distinguish PPB as one of the most efficient ports in the nation. Baker concludes, “Our partnership with Cross Match is far reaching, providing the technology and support that will help us achieve our goal of creating a secure and efficient facility in which shippers can conduct business.”



The Cross Match VisTrak system helps the Port of Palm Beach accurately manage daily visitors.