



The Growing Automated Dispensing Industry: How Northern States Metals Helps Deliver a Highly-Specialized Product Reducing the Client's Operational Challenges

The automated dispensing industry is enabling a new level of service for retail, distribution, healthcare, warehousing and schools, just to mention a few industries. By coupling sophisticated cabinets and lockers with custom software, industries are able to dramatically increase inventory access, management and security for clientele.

For example, new automated lockers allow retail employees permission-based access to electronic inventory and pricing equipment whenever it is needed. The self-serve access reduces check in and out time, loss, theft and mis-use. Real-time reports capture analytics to more effectively manage day-to-day operations by reporting when, what and where. The critical data provides insights to create a more efficient operation and increase long-term profitability.

In the warehouse industry, time and accuracy are critical. Employees utilize handheld scanners, mobile devices and radios that need to be charged and available for daily business. If these essential tools are lost, broken or uncharged it represents losses in productivity.

The automated dispensing lockers come ready to go. Their dispensing system is easy to understand and requires little to no training. In addition to automated access, the lockers can be programmed to generate alerts for auto charging and maintenance for optimal operation. The powerful, smart

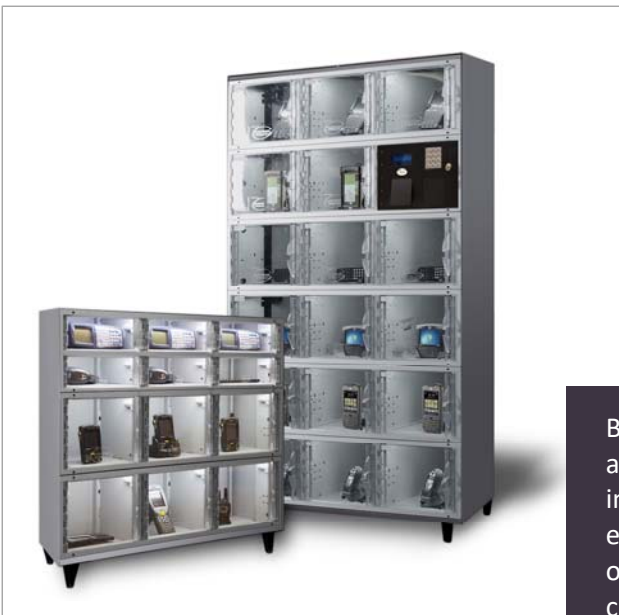
lockers can deliver quantifiable benefits to businesses in a very short period of time.

A leading automated point-of-use dispensing company, Apex recognized for helping tens of thousands of businesses run leaner smarter operations, approached Northern States Metals (NSM) with a technical challenge. We'll just say, "others before them had failed." Their automated self-serve lockers needed to be constructed with specially-designed parts that accommodated a variety of sensors, lighting and smart locker capabilities. NSM accepted the challenge. Their design engineers went a step further and made recommendations to improve the extrudability of the part design, an important component providing the security and durability necessary for the application. The final part needed to be extruded, cut, machined, welded, brushed, anodized and assembled. The complex handling of the many processes is a signature capability of Northern States Metals.

Ken Mack, CEO of Northern States Metals, commented, "It's gratifying to work with Apex, an industry-leading company that is revolutionizing markets with an innovative self-serve product."

Northern States Metals manages the elaborate production process of the aluminum components for the locker cabinet

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"Northern States Metals has consistently managed the complex production of our product from extrusion, through finishing, assembly and shipping - all while maintaining a high standard of quality."

- CEO,
Automated Dispensing Organization

By coupling state-of-the-art hardware and software, sophisticated automated locker devices are effectively transforming changes across industries. Northern States Metals provides specially-designed aluminum extruded components for the construction of the high tech lockers. As a one-stop service, NSM manages the complex processes, reducing the clients' logistics and dramatically simplifying their operations.



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doors through flexible automation for just in time delivery. In a step-by-step process, the finalized profile extrusion requirements were mapped for optimal cost efficiency. Once extruded, the parts are precisely machined through CNC mills. In a 24-hour operation, the aluminum parts pass through multiple stages that include a mix of systems requiring different preparation, set up and automated processes for drilling, welding, brushing and anodized finishing. The parts are inspected over and over throughout the process to ensure both, the aluminum parts and the final product, meet company standards for quality.

Northern States Metals has a powerful infrastructure to ensure the job is finished in a systematic and timely process for just-in-time delivery, saving the client significant operational time and costs. NSM handles the intricate procedures, shipping as many as 800 units per day.

With nearly 50 years of experience in the extrusion industry, this kind of execution is the hallmark of Northern States Metals.



Northern States Metals, a leading provider of aluminum extruded components and services, is a one-stop, full service organization. The company has a vast global network of aluminum extrusion services along with fully customizable, in-house facilities offering design engineering, fabrication, finishing, assembly and packaging. With nearly 50 years of experience in the extrusion industry, Northern States Metals' commitment to ingenuity, superior quality and customer service assure the most innovative solutions for their clients' most difficult aluminum design and extrusion problems. Customers choose Northern States Metals because they simplify business with single-point-of-contact accountability, deliver the highest level of quality, and the most cost-effective pricing. Northern States Metals is the best choice for all your aluminum extrusion service needs today and well into the future. Learn more at www.extrusions.com

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