



CryoGas International

Reporting on the business and technologies driving today's global industrial gas industry

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A Vendor Managed Gas System

Wright Brothers Global Gas Offers Affordable Wireless Telemetry

By Agnes H. Baker

Wow! Diesel has climbed to \$4.00 per gallon. How can we serve this customer's location that is 10 miles outside our service area in a profitable way? Why did we have so many emergency deliveries this week? How can we appeal to customers when we can't be the lowest price in town? How can we prove to this customer that we won't let them run-out again?

If these questions are familiar to your operation, consider VMG (vmg.us.com), the Vendor Managed Gas System launched by Wright Brothers Global Gas (globalgas.supply.com) in 2012. VMG manufactures and offers the first affordable wireless telemetry monitoring solution at the high pressure cylinder/manifold level to the independent gas distributor as well as liquid cylinders, beverage, microbulk, and bulk gases.

Wright Brothers Global Gas, with headquarters in Cincinnati, Ohio, was spun off from Wright Brothers, Inc. CEO and President Ashley Wright Werthaiser explains: "Our venture's mission is to pursue national accounts for industrial gases by establishing unique partnerships with independent distributors across the country. With the company's partner network of over 800 locations, servicing several industry verticals, Wright Brothers Global Gas customers enjoy national capabilities with local flexibility."

Of top importance to Wright Brothers Global Gas is its commitment to customer service. Cyndi Blalock, COO of Wright Brothers Global Gas and the company's National Accounts Manager, points out why a system like VMG has special importance to their customers. "Our distributors supply high pressure gases to customers in a wide range of markets, including industrial, life sciences, research and development, national chain stores, novelty businesses, and more—markets in which gases are not part of the customers' core competencies. To make gas management easier and more efficient for these companies, Wright Brothers Global Gas launched VMG."

Werthaiser says, "We are very focused on the success of independent distributors. Our National Account Program brings business to independents from coast to coast and serves

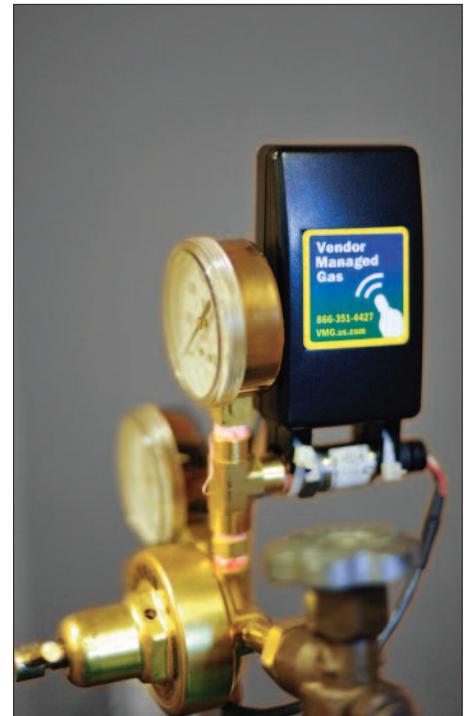
some of the largest businesses in America. We are sharing this technology to give independents an opportunity to be first to market and make their business stand out from the rest. We want to help grow an innovative independent community."

Developing an Affordable Monitoring System

Wright Brothers Global Gas identified the need for a low-cost solution for the remote monitoring of cylinder levels, level alerts, room temperature, and usage charts for HP and liquid cylinders. While there were telemetry systems that performed some of these functions, they were cost prohibitive for an operation with multiple cylinders. RFID tracking systems existed, but these provided only location information.

As part of one of the largest and most well-respected industrial gas distributors in the US and a distributor with national accounts, Wright Brothers Global Gas knew from an operations stand-point the kind of data that distributors required to run an efficient and profitable business.

Charlie C. Wright, CEO and owner of Wright Brothers, Inc., was part of the team that developed VMG. He explains, "What we did not have in-house was the technical expertise to build telemetry solutions. So Wright Brothers Global Gas, under my initiative and that of Mike Pinson, partnered with technology, software, and manufacturing companies to create the strong team that developed the turnkey VMG solution. Key to the success of VMG is our partnership with Verizon. We are the first in the gas industry to become a Verizon Vertical Solution Provider. This critical partnership with the nation's largest cellular provider enables us to offer a monitoring solution specific to the gas industry at an affordable price."



Scott Humphrey, Sales Director VMG, says, "Reactive or neutral business models are a thing of the past. VMG is moving the needle by enabling independent gas distributors access to real-time data that allows them to manage their packaged and bulk gas operations. Using affordable cellular technology made possible by our Verizon partnership, customers enjoy remote access to cylinder levels and other related data. VMG features and benefits include the ability to manage a continuous supply of gas with no loss of time and an effortless automated order and delivery system. With tracking and trending features, the number of cylinders a customer must keep in reserve is minimized, as is the floor space required to store cylinders, and the rent paid on reserve cylinders. With VMG, information for multiple cylinders can be aggregated as well as information on microbulk and bulk tanks."

Collecting and Accessing Data in a Meaningful Way

Wright states the case for the VMG monitoring solution simply: "Today, managing a distribution business, or any business, is all about managing data. For a gas distributor that means easy access to critical action points that determine routing information, transportation costs, and inventory control. Importantly, VMG allows distributors to collect and access data in a way that is meaningful to them."

The ability to send data collected from numerous sensors via one transmission is what gives VMG its cost advantage over other solutions.

VMG can be used with inert, oxidizing, and flammable gases when fitted with the proper components. With the VMG program, Wright Brothers Global Gas supplies the distributor with the sensors and collector necessary for its operation. Figure 1 shows how the system works.

Sensors are installed on cylinders (or micro or bulk tanks) and are powered by a nine-volt battery that will last up to three years. They send data (the level of gas in each cylinder or micro or bulk tank) via radio frequency (RF) transmission to the collector in one-tenth of a second. (When changing out an empty cylinder, you do not need to disassemble the sensor.)

The collector is installed within 300 feet of the cylinders or tanks that have sensors and is plugged into a 110/120 AC outlet. As RF signals are essentially free, a customer can have a few or hundreds of cylinders sending data

to the collector, depending on the size of their operation. Using the collector's embedded Verizon (cellular technology) chip, data is collected from multiple sensors and sent as one signal to the VMG cloud site, where it is managed by VMG software. The ability to send data collected from numerous sensors via one transmission is what gives VMG its cost advantage over other solutions.

From the cloud, customers can access information from any internet connection or mobile device, such as a smartphone or tablet. Scott Humphrey describes the distributor-friendly design of VMG's data access: "The VMG program provides data and customizable email alerts that let the client know when cylinder levels are low. Because VMG is not a general solution that has been adapted to the gas industry, but a system that has been designed by and for a gas distributor, the information a customer

receives is in his language. For example, the dashboard (computer screen) a distributor uses to read and access his data from the VMG system is written in the language of a gas distributor. This customized design is part of what sets VMG apart from other solutions and makes it a game changer for industrial gas distributors."

The VMG team provides technical support at all points in the process. Mike Ahrens, VMG's Technical Team Leader, has been with VMG since its early concept stages. He has a comprehensive technical and chemistry background to ensure the VMG units are providing relevant and reliable information to customers. Ahrens believes that "VMG is a win-win for customers and distributors. Being able to forecast run-outs and keep route density maximized is invaluable to a distributor. For the customer, gases can be monitored remotely. Data collection, leak

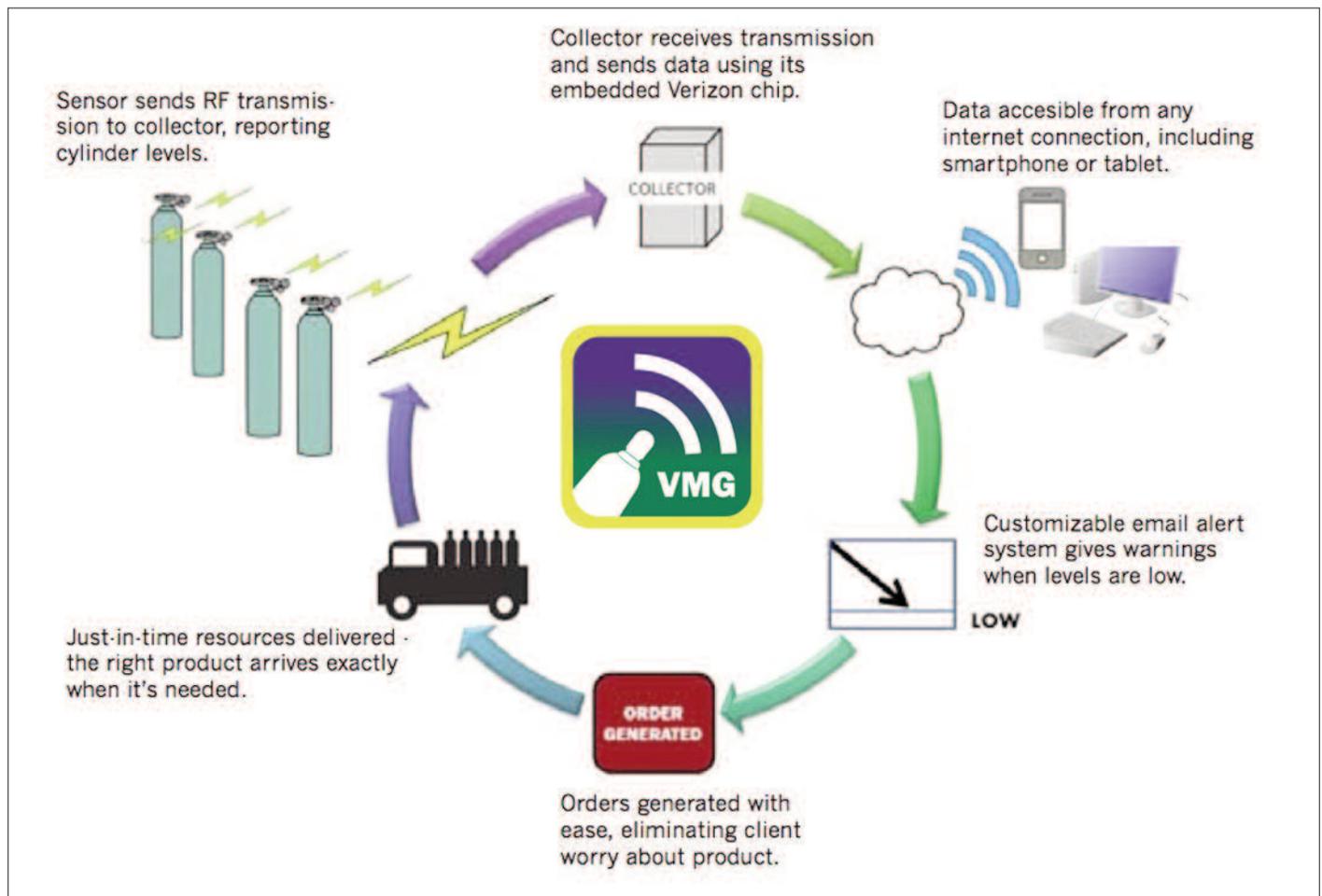


Figure 1 Source: Wright Brothers Global Gas

VENDOR MANAGED GAS
America's First Affordable Cylinder Gas Telemetry System

The VMG system developed by Wright Brothers Global Gas provides remote access to cylinder levels, level alerts, temperature, and usage charts for high pressure, bulk, micro bulk, beverage, and liquid cylinders. VMG uses RF & cellular technology at an affordable price eliminating the need for phone lines and expensive cellular contracts.

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VendorManagedGas

Customizable solutions are deployed across the country to give distributors and manufacturers alike the ability to make better executive decisions on how they run their businesses.

detection, and inventory control are among VMG's many benefits, all of which insure that downtime is minimized."

Armed with real-time and accurate data on cylinder levels, distributors and customers are able to generate orders with confidence and ease and client worry over running out of product is eliminated. With VMG, customers enjoy the benefits of just-in-time resource delivery of the right product, in the right amount, at the right time.

Be sure to see the instructional videos of VMG's simple set-up at vmg.us.com

What Our Customers Say

Wright Brothers Global Gas did months of extensive testing of the VMG system with Norco, the nation's largest privately owned welding, safety, medical and gas supplier, at their NorLab specialty gases facility. Tests included ease of installation, ruggedness, and accuracy.

Charles Eckman, Laboratory Director, describes NorLab's experience: "During our testing we made several suggestions and requests for changes in the software presentation, all which were incorporated into the final product. Important aspects of the VMG program to us are its flexibility to be employed in more than one general application and the VMG support team's ability to incorporate changes where appropriate. Support is not a secondary priority here. The VMG team gets the job done."

Wright Brothers Global Gas also asked Arcet Equipment Company, the largest independently owned and operated distributor of welding products and industrial gases in Virginia, to try out VMG. Arcet tested the system with a customer using helium on a critical application. After a month, Arcet's response to the VMG trial run was "You can't have it back."

Nick Kaplan, Specialty Gas Manager for Arcet, says, "Now we monitor both helium and zero air with VMG. When a cylinder goes empty, an email is sent to the store the account belongs to and the delivery is scheduled. The graph function allows us and the customer to review the history and current usage. This

gives us the ability to identify changes in gas usage or potential issues. Arcet is currently pleased to be offering this system to its customers with critical gas applications."

And There Is More to Come

Humphrey's telling of the speed of development of VMG is impressive. "The first product was shipped in January of this year and the VMG team is now working on the third generation of the system," he says. "VMG's core technology foundation of a sensor and collector allows other solutions for liquid gases and bulk tank applications to plug and play in virtually any gas environment and non-gas environments. Essentially, we have the ability to monitor any device that outputs low-voltage radiometric signals."

VMG is developed and continues to evolve with many solutions in mind. For now, it is the enhancement of data in the gas industry manufactured by people who work and live in this industry. Customizable solutions are deployed across the country to give distributors and manufacturers alike the ability to make better executive decisions on how they run their businesses. By providing information in a real-time wireless format, provider needs are aligned with customer needs allowing both parties to save time and money. This moves the customer service model into occupying a space that only VMG can provide.

Wright Brothers Global Gas is certainly a company to watch as there is more to come. Looking ahead, Ashley Werthaiser says, "We are continually adding to the capabilities and services offered through the VMG program and have some really exciting things on the horizon. In a world driven by data, we continue to develop the best solutions for the independent gas distributor to manage their business."

VMG is an outstanding example of the kind of tool a distributor needs in a 21st century company tool box.

For more information on Wright Brothers Global Gas Program contact Scott Humphrey, Sales Director VMG, at 513-478-9104 or visit vmg.us.com.

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