



Horizontal Carousels Add Speed, Efficiency and Confidence to Aftermarket Parts Picking Operation

Features and Benefits

Doubled Picking Efficiencies

Increased Accuracy Rates

Shortened Customer Order Turn Around Time

25% Less Pickers

Industry Group: Order Fulfillment Solutions (OFS)



This distribution company provides aftermarket parts for a secondary equipment company. It is critical to their operation that they get part orders shipped the day they are placed by the customer, often using overnight or two-day shipping service. Therefore it was time to think outside of the box; changing their order picking process from picking orders to picking parts.

Back to Basics

Previously, the distribution facility used standard mezzanine shelving, pick carts and paper tickets to fill orders. Order pickers criss-crossed the warehouse, moving from storage location to storage location searching for parts to fill an order. When the order was complete they would bring it to shipping and start on another order, often times retracing steps over and over.

To increase efficiency and productivity, six horizontal carousels were installed to pick the smaller, faster moving SKUs. The carousels were configured as two zones, called pods, of three carousels each, double stacked. Also utilizing pick-to-light technology and batch picking capabilities in the two horizontal carousel zones, the daily picking volume has nearly doubled.

The Results Are In

The horizontal carousels store over 47% of the total SKUs and over 60% of the parts picked for an order come from these zones. The new zone picking system only requires 22 order pickers, 25% less than the previous order picking system that required 29 order pickers. Of the 22 order pickers now needed, each horizontal carousel zone requires one order picker each. All of the changes made to this facility have impacted the most important benefit which is a decrease in order pick time, dropping to an average of about 20 minutes per order.

“Improvement in order picking efficiency is a never ending journey and we see the horizontal carousels providing a means of continuous process improvement,” Terry Hunsinger, inventory control manager, said. “Today, we never worry about getting an order picked on time for shipment.”



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