

UNEX CASE STUDY

“We can put 4 days worth of parts on the Flow Cell and not have to replace material.”

– Mark Geer, Lead Engineer, Android Industries



customer: ANDROID INDUSTRIES

operation: Engine and transmission assembly plant

goal: Keep assembly lines moving to satisfy “just-in-time” demands at GM

solution: Flow-Cell Modular Flow-Thru Workstations from UNEX



Modular Flow-Thru Workstations Help This GM Supplier Deliver “Just in Time”... Every Time

Android Industries, a valued GM supplier since 1989, knows the road to a successful relationship and what it takes to keep pace with the renowned car and truck builder. At its seventh and newest facility in Shreveport LA, it takes top quality outfitting or “engine dressing” of close to a thousand GM engine/transmission assemblies per day, sequenced and delivered ‘just-in-time’... every time!

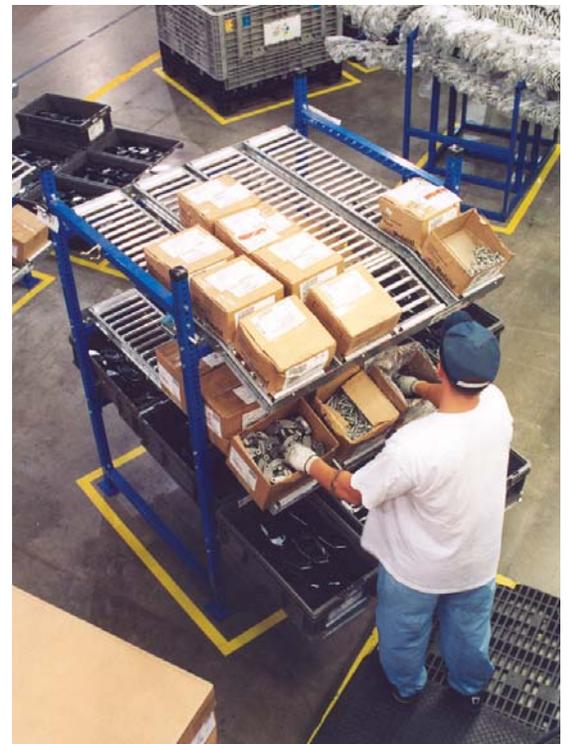
Big wheels keep on turning in Shreveport, LA – big 18 wheelers that is – as they make the one mile drive from Android Industries’ new assembly plant to GM’s sprawling manufacturing complex, delivering completed engine and transmission assemblies for ‘just-in-time’ placement onto awaiting truck chassis.

According to Mark Geer, Lead Engineer and member of the launch team for this new facility that went on-line in 2003, the company’s commitment to build in Shreveport was the result of being awarded a GM assembly contract to support the introduction of two new truck lines – the Chevy Colorado and GMC Canyon.

Not a Robot in the House!

It may come as a surprise to learn there’s not a robot to be found in the 226,000 sq. ft. Android Industries building, or for that matter in any of their other facilities.

But up and down the ‘line’ today in Shreveport, highly skilled Android Industries technicians are meeting and exceeding critical production targets. And right alongside silently assisting them are fully stocked UNEX® Flow Cell® Workstations from which components are quickly and easily picked and attached to the engine/ transmission assemblies at a steady, seemingly choreographed pace.



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In manufacturing operations, UNEX Flow Cell Workstations with full-width roller Span-Track® are typically used ‘line’ side, as they are at Android Industries, and perform a dual function: maintaining a ready supply of components and making them available for easy picking.

“We can put 4 days worth of material on the Flow Cell and not have to replace material,” Geer says.

Also, he explains that Shreveport is the first of their facilities to employ UNEX Flow Cell Workstations.

Geer anticipated outfitting the new Shreveport facility with equipment similar to that operating in their other plants. But when it came to workstations, he knew that the ubiquitous “pipe type” structures with plastic wheels was not what he wanted to continue being saddled with. “Bolt boxes don’t go down wheels very well,” he says. “The Span-Track full length rollers sections in the Flow Cell is what we needed.” Geer recalls “heaps” of pipes cut to every which size stored in other plants in hopes of someday being salvaged for reuse. Someday never arrived and the piles of pipes presented more work than value to Android.

Modular Flow Cell Units - Easy to Move and Refit

“We were doing the initial start-up and wanted to put a system in place with the greatest flexibility for change,” Geer continues. With employees on the ‘line’ working at various heights from the plant floor and assembly operations that could likely change according to new contracts, workstations he would purchase had to assemble and disassemble easily, be capable of being reconfigured as needed and be durable for movement around the plant.

Mark Geer found the workstations that met his company’s requirements when Blake DeFatta from Nelson Equipment Company, UNEX’s Shreveport distributor, recommended Flow Cell Modular Workstations. He found ease of assembly and disassembly, durability, mobility and flexibility.

According to Bill Edgy, UNEX Manufacturing’s Southern Regional Manager, “99% of the time assembly is done by the end user,” which is why Flow Cells were designed for quick, easy assembly. The rugged construction assures the cells

withstand the heavy duty, high volume pace of the manufacturing process and perform well beyond the Seven Year Platinum Warranty.

Nelson Equipment Company’s president and owner Mark Nelson indicates that his company has supplied a large amount of equipment to Android and as a result they have a good understanding of their operation.

“They counted on us to bring in a quality product that would help speed along their operations and Flow Cell was the appropriate choice,” he says. UNEX Flow Cell Modular Workstations are comprised of standard “Mix & Match” components that form an efficient, ergonomic station where parts and product are always ready and reachable. They include vertical posts, horizontal beams, and Span-Track full-width roller tracks that provide the flow from load point to pick point – even for hard to handle totes. Span-Track is easy to add and reposition within the Flow Cell.



“It does what it’s supposed to do and doesn’t take up a lot of floor space,” says Geer. “You spec it for what you need. We ordered 22 Flow Cell units and they all went together in one day. It probably took about 30 minutes to set up each Flow Cell and everybody that assembled the units out here were production line employees.”



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