



Automation Provides Assembly Expansion While Adding Part Capacity

Features and Benefits

Reclaimed 1,600 Sq. Ft. Floor Space to Expand Production

Increased Parts Inventory By Over 40%

Maintained 98% Picking Accuracy

Industry Group: Automated Storage/Retrieval Systems (ASRS)



“The installation of the VLMs allowed us to free up approximately 1,600 square feet of floor space to use for production, rather than storage,” Wolf said.

To succeed in a continually evolving manufacturing environment today requires more production space and stocking more part numbers than ever before. Looking ahead, a leading narrow web printing manufacturer determined there wasn't enough room for the growth they needed to keep up. Incorporating three Vertical Lift Modules (VLMs) into an existing manufacturing process allowed the manufacturer to add additional assembly area and increase inventory while maintaining current productivity and accuracy levels.

Adding Production Space

The existing shelving was condensed into three VLMs and the recovered floor space was used for a value generating print module assembly area while the parts were kept close at hand. “The installation of the VLMs allowed us to free up approximately 1,600 square feet of floor space to use for production, rather than storage,” manufacturing engineer, John Wolf, said.

Increasing Capacity

“Our goal was to increase our storage capacity by 40%,” Wolf said. “We found that using tray dividers in the VLM trays significantly increased the storage density and exceeded our 40% objective.” The

added capacity allowed the manufacturer to increase the inventory level of fast moving parts as well as add new parts.

Maintaining Efficiencies

The print press manufacturer is still using only one operator to pick all part orders, but due to the increased capacity the VLMs provide, that person is now responsible for more than before. “We are still using one person in that picking area, but they are performing additional duties like picking parts that were not in that area in the past,” said Wolf. “We’ve also maintained our 98% picking accuracy, which is imperative to our operation.”

Making It Work

The VLMs automatically locate and retrieve stored items with the push of a button, eliminating the time previously spent walking and searching through shelving. The operator picks the parts required from the VLMs and places them into an existing picking board designed specifically for that manufacturing cell. When the pick board is fulfilled it is delivered to the sub-assembly area where the print module is assembled.

By installing automated storage and retrieval systems and software, they have not only been able to create additional assembly area, they have been able to manage their parts inventory more efficiently.



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