



Automated Order Fulfillment Increases Distribution Center Productivity by 80%

Features and Benefits

99.9% accuracy in order picking

80% increase in productivity

Picks up to 625 lines per hour/per operator

Ergonomic picking & storing for operators

Industry Group: Automated Storage/Retrieval Systems (ASRS)



With carousels and Vertical Lift Modules running on inventory management software, order picking accuracy exceeds 99.9%.

In order to fulfill medical device orders on a Just in Time basis prompted a Massachusetts medical device manufacturer's distribution center to rethink their order fulfillment processes. Implementing vertical and horizontal carousels as well as Vertical Lift Modules (VLMs) has allowed this 92,000 square foot medical distribution center to fill the shipping needs of three affiliated manufacturing companies.

99.9% Accuracy in Order Picking

The majority of orders at this distribution center are turned around in the same day because a surgeon may place an order for a medical device one day and operate at noon the next day. Filling the orders for next day surgeries requires the facility to have a very high degree of accuracy in the order picking. With carousels and Vertical Lift Modules running on inventory management software, order picking accuracy exceeds 99.9%.

80% Increase in Productivity

The distribution center has three operating shifts daily which select orders from 14,000 active stock keeping units (SKUs). They ship out an average of 2,200 shipments per night, of which 70% to 80% are for overnight delivery. The use of horizontal carousels in the facility has made this possible. The

center has three horizontal carousels grouped together that hold approximately 3,800 SKUs. Previously five people picked 500 orders in three to four hours overnight; in the new system one person now picks the same 500 orders. This is an 80% increase in productivity for the company and has allowed the company to pick up to 625 lines per hour/per operator.

Ergonomic Picking & Storing

The VLMs used at the distribution center hold kits of surgical instruments. 150 to 250 kits are pulled each day with the same amount being stored per day. The Vertical Lift Modules allow for ergonomic picking and storing of these kits as well. This results in little fatigue for the operators. Order selection from the VLMs is easier than searching for these kits on shelving.

All of the automated storage and retrieval systems utilized have allowed this Massachusetts medical device manufacturer's distribution center to meet strict quality control guidelines. They have been able to satisfy the requirements of FDA's Good Manufacturing Practices. The systems have also enabled the distribution center to meet ISO certification status.

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