Segment: Machinery

BENCHMARKBRIEFINGS

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SITE
Gurecky Manufacturing
Rosenberg, TX

APPLICATION
Manufactures Precision Parts for Oil & Gas Industry

EQUIPMENT
Two Shuttle® VLMs with Inventory Management Software and Pick-to-Light Technology

SUMMARY
Two Shuttle VLMs Provide 92% Floor Space Savings, 30% Additional Inventory Capacity, a 42% Increase In Productivity and Cut Mispicks In Half

"With the VLMs our warehouse is smart, organized and efficient - just like the job shop," says John Dorman, President/CEO.

VLMs Help Warehouse Keep Up With Precision Machining Job Shop

A modern, state-of-the-art job shop, Gurecky Manufacturing Service, Inc. produces reliable, high quality precision machined parts in a wide range of materials for the oil and gas industry. Continual investment in quality machining equipment and technologies has allowed Gurecky to provide cutting edge, made to order parts for over 30 years.

Utilizing the latest CNC lathes and milling machines, together with extremely talented machinists, and advanced distribution strategies Gurecky is able to produce and deliver multifaceted precision parts from prototypes to large volume production. The facility in Rosenberg, TX produces parts to customer specification and inventories these parts until the customer requires them.

As the job shop grew, warehousing the finished goods prior to distribution was quickly becoming a bottleneck. Workers would use paper pick tickets and ladders to access parts stored on shelving. "Distribution was a slow, tedious and tiring task that didn't work well with the cutting edge, automated job shop we were supporting," says John Dorman, President/CEO.

With no room to spare, Gurecky integrated two 13 foot tall Kardex Remstar Shuttle Vertical Lift Modules (VLMs) with inventory management software and pick to light technology. The VLMs have provided a 92% floor space savings, 30% additional inventory capacity, a 42% increase in productivity and cut mispicks in half.

More Parts In Less Space

Occupying only 320 square feet, the 2 Shuttle VLMs replaced 4,000 square feet of shelving, recovering 3,680 square feet of floor space. Further, the new VLMs inventory 10,000 SKUs compared to the 7,000 SKUs inventoried in the previous shelving. With the integration of the VLMs, the warehouse now occupies 92% less floor space and has the capacity for 30% more inventory. "We purchased the VLMs with a built in growth plan, there is still space to add inventory and continue to grow business," says Dorman.

Faster Order Fulfillment

With a 42% increase in productivity, Gurecky has gone from picking 10,000 parts a month to 17,000 parts a month and only had to increase their staff by one part time employee.

The TIC (transaction information center) located at the front of the access opening uses an alpha numeric display to pinpoint the exact location and quantity for the operator to pick from, eliminating any walking and searching.

"Delivering the parts to the operator has increased our productivity significantly, we can fill orders a lot faster, allowing us to fill more than we could before," says Ken Jurek, Warehouse Manager.

Picking The Right Part

Each storage location contains one part number with multiple lot numbers. Previously, the worker would locate the part and then have to look through multiple parts at that location for the correct lot number. Now, the Shuttle VLM presents the operator with the exact part to pick, eliminating them from searching for the correct lot number. This has increased pick accuracy to over 99%. "Our non-conformance report that identifies mispicks yearly was cut in half in the first year after we purchased the VLMs," says Jurek.

Safe Ergonomics

On cue, the Shuttle VLMs deliver the required part to the operator at an ergonomically positioned access opening, nearly eliminating the bending and reaching previously required in shelving. "The VLMs have provided a safe and ergonomic environment," says Dorman, "we've gotten rid of the ladders, and there is no more pulling heavy parts down from the top of the shelving."

The Automated Picking Process

Filling work orders is quick and easy with the VLMs. A bill of materials is entered into the ERP system (Virtual Manufacturing Software) and a work order is sent directly to the inventory management software. Each line within the work order is sorted by due date. The operator selects the lines to fill (up to 20 at a time) and the VLMs move to retrieve the parts required for the order and present them to the operator.

The TIC (transaction information center) located at the front of the access opening uses an alpha numeric display to pinpoint the exact location and quantity for the operator to pick from, eliminating any walking and searching. The Shuttle VLM presents the parts in FIFO (first in, first out) order ensuring parts don't sit in inventory indefinitely. The operator picks the quantity required and sends it to packing and shipping.

Inventory is restocked in the afternoon. Parts are delivered from quality control to the warehouse to be added to inventory. The VLM operator enters the part number into the inventory management software and the Shuttle VLM presents a storage location. The operator can override the storage location presented by the VLM if desired. The part is placed onto the tray and stored in the VLM until it is needed.

Smart, Organized & Efficient

The VLMs have enabled the warehouse to keep up with the growth of the job shop. "Without the VLMs we'd have workers running up and down aisles tripping over each other looking for parts," says Dorman, "With the VLMs our warehouse is smart, organized and efficient - just like the job shop."

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