

TriFactor Solution

3 LEVEL PICK MODULE, CASE CONVEYOR AND WCS

Case Study

Company Description

Central Pet is a national pet supply distributor with six regional warehouse facilities strategically located in the U.S. The company services 41 of 50 states with more than 40,000 products from 400 pet supply and pet food manufacturers. The company's business is exclusively the wholesale distribution of pet foods and pet supplies to pet retailers, and is the only pet supply company in the country with a national distribution network. Central Pet is a subsidiary of Central Garden and Pet, headquartered in Walnut Creek, California.

Situation

The company's Tampa, Fla. distribution center was using an outdated and manual picking system. The distribution center lacked a conveyor system and orders were being picked by hand with order sheets from pallets. Orders were then manually taken up to the shipping area in carts. Without a slotting system, product was scattered throughout the warehouse with no sense of flow. To further complicate matters, and add to the inefficiency, none of the pick areas were in sequential order.

Assessment

Working closely with Central Pet, TriFactor performed a complete analysis of their existing facility and operations, gaining an understanding of their vision for future operations. The result of this analysis was a TriFactor-engineered solution that facilitated increased throughput and efficient operations in their distribution center. Additionally, TriFactor also addressed the need for a warehouse control system (WCS) to interface with Central Pet's product order, inventory and tracking information.

(over)



System Summary

Company:

Central Pet Supply

TriFactor Provided:

Design
Engineering
Project Management
Installation

Size:

150,000 Square Feet

Facility Type:

Distribution

Products Handled:

Pet Supplies

Markets Served:

Pet Supply Stores

Completion Date:

June 2006

Products Utilized:

Conveyor
Sortation
Scanning Equipment
Racking
PC/PLC Controls
Warehouse Control System (WCS)
Pick Modules



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Solution

The decision was made to implement a 3 Level Pick Module with a pick and pack roller and gravity conveyor system running through the levels. Utilizing an order pick divert system, the proper-sized shipping cartons with bar coded labels were conveyed to each of their respective areas. Using pop-up wheel diverters, the pack cartons were automatically diverted to the specified picking areas (either carton flow or pallet flow) as controlled by the WCS. The packages were then conveyed to the new sorter and redirected to the proper shipping lanes. TriFactor's design reduced picking costs, and improved pick accuracy and throughput.

Result

The TriFactor team completed the project on time and on budget. The new system allowed Central Pet to reduce the number of pullers in supply from 45 to 10. However, the major advantage was improved productivity, with throughput increasing from 25-30 lines per hour to 100 or more lines per hour. Employees who had been working 14-16 hour days were now working four 10-hour shifts.

ROI

Less than one year.

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