

Sector : Healthcare/manufacturing/warehouse

Customer : Joerns Healthcare

Product : Warehouse trucks & Racking system

Handling change – a lesson in transforming logistics to boost competitive advantage and control costs.

Joerns Healthcare is in the business of lifting, and its materials handling partner TCM dealer, AMVAR Handling Solutions has just helped them to get better at it with a new solution for their warehousing and logistics operation.

In fact, the 'lifting' in Joerns business is all about people. They design and manufacture a range of personal handling products to help hospitals, nursing homes and individuals to carefully and safely lift and move people. Perhaps better known under their market-leading Oxford brand of professional lifts which are found in all kinds of care settings, supporting people with disability or infirmity.



Operations manager, John Pritchard

As the news constantly reminds us, there is continually increasing demand on health and social care providers, so the healthcare products sector itself is growing. So too is competition, which in turn places extra competitive pressure on the business and is driving it to re-evaluate its cost platform to ensure it's as lean and efficient as possible.



Alongside that they are continually investing in new product development ensuring that continual innovation keeps them ahead of rivals and focused on meeting customer expectation.

The healthcare market is inevitably very demanding. Customers expect short lead-times and a spares and support service that never fails. Maximising and extending the competitive edge and drive for greater efficiency with a keen eye on cost reduction led to a decision to redesign their warehousing and distribution operations.

The idea was to relocate and consolidate their warehousing of finished goods and spares on their Pershore, Worcestershire facility. This site is also where production and all other business services now reside as Joerns main UK operation centre.

It required a degree of creativity to work out the optimum configuration of space utilisation, racking layout and warehouse equipment to solve the puzzle.

According to Joerns Healthcare MD, Nathan McWattie they took on a fairly large project with a challenging 6-month timescale. "We were looking to inboard our logistics from our previous 3PL partner to give us greater control and flexibility and to reduce costs. AMVAR Handling Solutions gave us the vision of how we could achieve that and become more streamlined and efficient". The project was achieved to deadline and realised a 28% saving, with the expectation that this could be extended further to gain more efficiencies and cost reduction.



The key factor was space as products and parts require around 1000 pallet spaces within a warehouse significantly smaller than their old one. Minimising space has obvious economic benefits, but you can also add efficiency gains too, as product can be stored and accessed more rapidly.

Operations manager, John Pritchard who managed the project explained how TCM dealer, AMVAR designed a completely new warehouse facility using a very narrow aisle layout. “They were extremely proactive and were able to provide a complete integrated solution, from warehouse layout and design to supplying all the racking and new TCM warehouse lift trucks, all within our seemingly impossible timescale”, explained John.

AMVAR’s ability to provide an end-to-end solution that delivered the warehouse capacity and capability within a tight footprint was, according to John Pritchard, matched by the level of service and support they provide. “Being relatively local helps, but their ability to offer a high level of engineering and service support is a decisive factor. As a medical product supplier, we cannot let our customers down, so our support partners have to give us faultless back-up”.

At the core of the handling operation are new TCM very narrow aisle (VNA) warehouse handling trucks. As the warehouse handles a mix of products including components for manufacturing, finished goods of varying sizes and spare parts the warehouse trucks need to be suited to every task.



As an importer and exporter of products the site regularly handles shipping containers which, to avoid cost penalties, need to be emptied or filled within specific time-frames.

The TCM brand RTS swivel reach truck has increased the efficiency of container emptying as its work cycle times are around 15-20% faster than free-range trucks, a critical factor in container loading and unloading. It features a 180 degree fork rotation incorporated into a narrow aisle stacker. It's perfect for use in guided aisles as those now built into the new Joerns warehouse. But with free-range ability outside the guided aisle its speed and flexibility truly hit the sweet spot as a loading and unloading truck. The load can be raised as soon as the truck is in the aisle providing the performance gained from diagonal lift and swift travel. It also allows the operator to concentrate fully on the job of stacking as the truck is guided in the aisle by floor mounted rails.

"We found the TCM products to be faultless", is how John Pritchard described them. "Tough and durable but with smart technology designed for efficiency and safety, he said. "We also experienced really thorough commissioning and training as new products came to site and the project took shape".

Dynamic Cornering Control (DCC) is one piece of smart technology that provides the best combination of increased safety and high performance. Fitted as standard it automatically adjusts cornering speeds to allow maximum performance whilst also maintaining the highest level of safety.

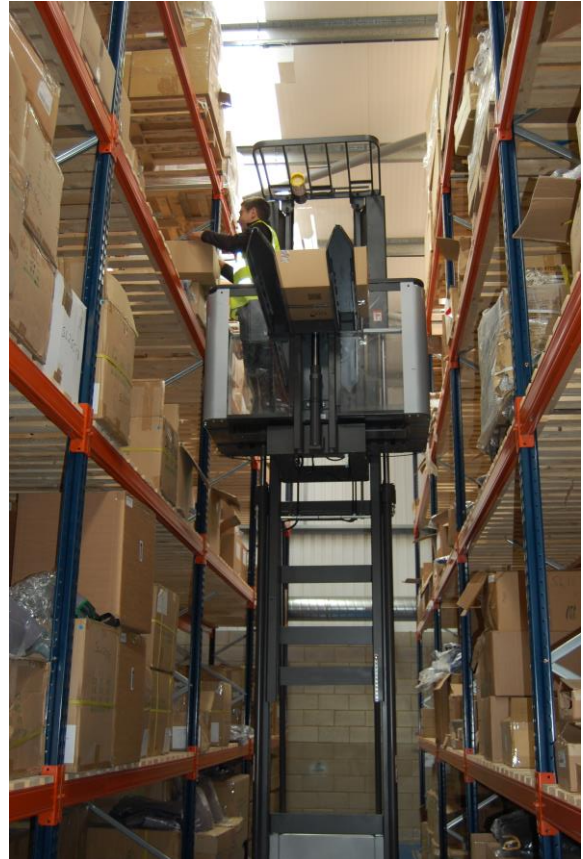


The TCM RTS swivel reach truck works seamlessly in combination with high level order pickers like the HOM high level truck from TCM which gives Joerns the capability to manually order pick at height when picking multiple spare parts orders. The truck has excellent lifting and driving performance. Productivity is further enhanced with safety gates and ergo-lift forks, ensuring a safer and more ergonomic medium level picking operation.

As the health and social care sector responds and expands to support more people at home or in care and nursing home settings, medical equipment designers and manufacturers like Joerns Healthcare are gearing their product development and operational efficiency to rise to meet future challenges.

Having made a step change in its logistical competence and cost management, they are also confident that their operation is working hard to provide customers with a high level of flexibility and responsiveness.





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