

VERTICAL LIFT MODULE KEEPS AUTOMOTIVE PARTS MOVING

Zimbrick European parts department relocates and reduces storage floor space while increasing worker productivity by 70%.

By Lorie King Rogers, Associate Editor

Zimbrick European, located in Madison, Wisc., is focused on servicing quality cars like Mercedes-Benz, Porsche and Audi. The parts department is focused on providing quality service to its customers, including 23 service technicians.

When the Zimbrick European operation expanded into a new building, its original 2,300-square-foot parts department was only allotted 400 square feet on the first floor, with the majority of the parts storage in a second floor mezzanine area. “We need-

ed a means to move parts between floors, short of running up and down the stairs every time we needed to store a part or remove a part from inventory to sell it,” explains Steve Stepnock, parts and service director.

So, Zimbrick European installed a vertical lift module (VLM; Kardex Remstar, kardexremstar.com). Now, once parts are received and checked in by a clerk on the first floor, the system is updated to reflect accurate inventory levels. Fast moving, smaller parts are stored in the VLM on the first floor, while slow moving, larger parts are stored on the second floor mezzanine in bin shelving. Selectable access pick windows in the VLM link the two levels and facilitate part sharing in storage and retrieval operations.

When a service technician needs a part, he uses the computer in the workstall to transmit the request to the parts department, where an employee looks up its location and availability. If the part is stored in the VLM, the request is transferred and the machine automatically retrieves it. “It’s absolutely seamless,” says Stepnock.

If the part is stored on the second floor, a clerk retrieves it and uses the VLM to transport it down to a runner who delivers it to the technician. “The whole idea is not to have our technicians leave their workstalls to procure parts,” says Stepnock.

In its new space, the VLM has enabled the Zimbrick European parts department to support its technicians, satisfy its wholesale business by supplying parts to local Madison body shops, and service walk-in customers. It has also reduced floor storage space by 84%, cut labor and the risk of injury, and increased productivity by 70%. □



MOBILE STORAGE SOLUTION OPTIMIZES STORAGE DENSITY

Aveva DDS centralizes parts storage and optimizes floor space with the installation of a mobile storage solution.

By Lorie King Rogers, Associate Editor

Aveva Drug Delivery Systems, located in Miramar, Fla., manufactures transdermal drug delivery systems that provide medication to patients topically, through the skin. One of the most commonly known is the nicotine patch for smokers trying to kick the habit.

The FDA strictly regulates all aspects of Aveva's manufacturing process, even the manufacturing equipment itself must adhere to rigid guidelines. For example, if a machine needs a part replaced, it must be replaced with exactly the same part, explains Stephen Zakovsky, Aveva's inventory specialist. "And, it has to be done in the least amount of time or a batch of medication could be wasted—and that's expensive," he says.

Because the company's maintenance parts were not kept in a central location, rather stored in various places throughout its 117,000-square-foot facility, time was wasted when trying to locate specific items. Aveva's remedy was to install a space-saving mobile storage rack system (Spacesaver Industrial, spacesaver.com) to optimize storage density and floor space and provide 24/7 access to replacement parts and tools.

The storage system includes two static end cabinets and five rows of mobile carriages in between. Carriages measure 7 feet high, 36 inches wide, and 30 feet long, and can be configured with heavy-duty shelving, drawers and cabinets to accommo-



date a variety of parts and tools. An ergonomically designed handle and a mechanical-assist drive unit enables the carriage to move easily along the track. As it moves, a single 3.5-foot aisle within the storage system is created, which allows full access to any cabinet by one inventory manager.

With more than 10,000 unique part numbers coded and consolidated into one centralized space that measures just 25 feet x 40 feet, the storage unit has improved organization and all but eliminated the duplication of parts purchases. In addition, integrating lockable drawers and having the ability to compact the aisle and restrict access to certain part positions have increased security of high-value parts.

"With controlled inventory, we are much more proficient in every aspect of the manufacturing process," says Zakovsky. "We are able to find a place for everything critical to the operation and quickly service the needs of each department." □