

Bristol Hose Finds The Right Fit For Their Parts Distribution Center with Kardex Remstar

Bristol Hose integrated three Kardex Shuttles into their distribution center for a 30% increase in labor, 90% floor space savings and improved order accuracy.

WESTBROOK, MAINE, UNITED STATES, January 9, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Bristol Hose](#) is a specialized fitting and connector distributor based out of Melrose Park, IL. They are one of only three certified Parker Hannifin distributors in the greater Chicago area, and the sole local distributor 100% dedicated to fitting and connector group (FCG) parts. These parts such as hoses, hose fittings, hose adapters and quick couplers are used to convey fluid or air by municipalities, power and utility companies, refuse companies, the trucking industry.



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Tony Tuminaro, Director of Operations at Bristol Hose

Their Melrose Park facility doubles as a primary distribution center and storefront for over-the-counter sales. A combination of increasing order volume and rising on-hand inventory had Bristol Hose constantly reshuffling bins and rearranging inventory, decreasing efficiency overall. When Bristol Hose acquired a new 65,000 ft² facility to accommodate their growth they seized the opportunity and made the leap to automated storage during the transition.

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Labor efficiency, boosted

When Bristol Hose originally set out to automate, they had no intention of reducing their labor force. Tony Tuminaro, Director of Operations at Bristol Hose, commented, "We were not trying to reduce our staff. Before Kardex, we had three people constantly picking orders every minute of their shift. Now our pickers are done picking by three o'clock and they have time for other tasks – such as general equipment maintenance in the shop or auditing production and assemblies. Instead of hiring more employees to do these value added tasks, the VLMs have made our existing employees more efficient and prevented us from having to hire more people."

Not only are their existing workers more efficient, Bristol Hose's new hires are able to hit the ground running and be productive in their first few days on the job. Tuminaro described it as, "previously, when we hired a new person in the warehouse, it took them at least two months to learn the layout confidently... versus with the Kardex machines you hire people and on their first day they're already picking."

Like many places in the United States, a considerable portion of the labor market in the greater Chicago area does not speak English as a first language. Tuminaro commented that their bilingual warehouse manager can "teach anybody how to use the VLMs," as the language can be set by user, and how having such a simple learning curve has allowed Bristol Hose to access a wider swathe of the labor pool.

Floor space, optimized

In addition to improving the efficiency of their workforce, Bristol Hose saved a tremendous amount of floorspace. In their previous 30,000 ft² warehouse, approximately 50% (15,000 ft²) was dedicated to static shelving and storing parts.



By nearly eliminating picking errors, Bristol Hose is able to service their customers more effectively.



Bristol Hose's commitment to automating their storage system with Kardex has helped them continue to provide this service by improving the overall efficiency of their warehouse workers, saving them floorspace and logically organizing their warehouse for o

In their new 65,000 ft² facility, only 1,200 ft², a mere 1.5% of their total floorspace, is dedicated to warehouse parts storage. Bristol Hose was able to achieve a net floorspace reduction of 90% when transitioning their inventory from shelving to Kardex Shuttles.

They've also seen an increase in overall efficiency by using the space they freed up. Tuminaro commented, "Now we have centralized work cells and the warehouse has a logical directional flow. Parts come in the dock, go into the back of the [Kardex Shuttle](#) zone, get picked from the front of the Kardex Shuttle zone, and then on to shipping and receiving."

Accuracy issues, resolved

Prior to installing their VLMs, Bristol Hose was facing inventory management issues. "At any given time in our old system, there was eight to twelve people in the same bins without even knowing it sometimes. Now with the Kardex Shuttles orders must drive through our ERP to generate that pick ticket, so inventory is always accurate," said Tuminaro.

They also had order accuracy challenges common with manual order picking and replenishment processes. Tuminaro reported, "With the Kardex Shuttles we go six months without an error just because inventory is where it's supposed to be. It's very rare that I see errors anymore." These accuracy improvements are the direct result of the investment they made in automated storage.

Built for the next generation

In the face of an ever-corporatizing landscape of Chicago-based FCG distributors, Bristol Hose remains the last bastion of family owned and operated values in the area. Bristol Hose's commitment to automating their storage system with Kardex has helped them continue to provide this service by improving the overall efficiency of their warehouse workers, saving them floorspace and logically organizing their warehouse for optimum throughput, and raising order accuracy to ensure the customer always gets what they ordered.

About Kardex

Kardex is a leading intralogistics solution provider of automated storage, retrieval and material handling systems. With two entrepreneurially managed divisions, Kardex Remstar and Kardex Mlog, the Kardex mission is to provide solutions and services to increase the efficiency in storing and handling of goods and materials on a global scale.

The two divisions serve as partners over the entire life cycle of a customer's product or solution. From project analysis to realization and service, Kardex helps improve a customer's performance every step of the way. With three own production plants in Germany and one in North America Kardex ensures high quality solutions. To maintain and strengthen its competitive position within technological innovation and outstanding customer loyalty, Kardex is investing in research and development, its supply chain, the expansion of its service organization as well as in new technology via acquisitions. Kardex actively partners with global leaders who share the same values and complement the Kardex solutions including AutoStore, Rocket Solution, Intertex and

Sumobox.

Kardex employs 2,000 team members across 30 countries and has installed over 140,000 industry-specific solutions worldwide.

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