



PRESS INFORMATION

Fast Growing Bathrooms

Specialist Utopia Bowled Over with New Bito Live Storage Warehouse Installation

Quality and efficiency has been given a boost at fast growing bathrooms specialist Utopia. The pottery warehouse in Bilston, West Midlands, has invested in a dynamic storage facility from Bito Storage Systems as a focal point of their improved quality checking and handling procedures.

The warehouse supports the nearby production facility with pottery; basins, toilets, baths and bidets. These are moved daily to be made up by Utopia into their popular bathroom sets including taps and furniture. Completed bathroom sets are then supplied to retail outlets, builders merchants and house builders such as Barratt, Britain's best known house builder.

"We were running out of space," commented Nigel Southam, warehouse manager of the 30,000 square feet facility. "Demand for Utopia products is increasing rapidly and therefore effective use of space is of paramount importance."

"We needed to improve space utilisation," Southam continued. Utopia made contact with Bito Storage Systems. In partnership with storage and handling solutions company Dalvie Storage Systems, they set to work developing the solution. "They provided us with a designed solution and produced the plans."

The solution completely changes warehouse operations and includes three areas of dynamic live storage and one of drive in racking. Now with the new operation provided by Dalvie and Bito, stock that arrives loaded on pallets from suppliers, who mainly manufacture in European countries such as the Austria and Italy, is immediately placed in pallet live storage lanes ready for quality checking.

The live storage is up to seven pallets deep and allows product to roll forward under the power of gravity to pick faces on the far side of the racking. This is the quality control area, where product is picked for individual checking.

Quality checking itself is very thorough; for example each basin is checked for colour and finish, then tried in fitted units to ensure the shape is completely accurate. Once checking is complete, products are packed into Utopia's own boxes, palletised and placed in a second live storage area. This holds stock for picking and supply to the factory. Larger items such as baths have their own live storage area specifically designed to take longer items.

Order picking of faster moving lines is carried out by taking pallets from the live storage system and placing them in designated slots on the floor. Slower moving items are picked individually from the racking using a man up order picking truck. Picked product is manually loaded into roll cages for the short journey to the main factory.

Installation took just three weeks, while the warehouse was still fully operational. This included an area of drive in racking, Bito's first such installation in the UK, able to hold up to 147 pallets of slow moving bulk stock in a very small area. In total the live storage systems have 110 pick faces and now Utopia can store 1,100 pallets in less than half the area that would be needed for conventional racking. In addition, the live storage concept has proved itself in providing simple but highly effective stock rotation.

Southam is enthusiastic about the results; "This was the most practical thing to do. We were limited on space and Bito came up with this solution. It is working very well currently."

“Stock control is a lot easier now. We can check the products in quicker and get them into the area ready for despatch. We have also had our suppliers over and shown them what we are doing.”

Southam; “We now have stock ready before we need it. We know that our picking is precise, and our operation runs with few staff, but efficiently.”

Note to editors: BITO, based in Germany, market a comprehensive range of storage systems for use with anything from very small parts through to palletised and long loads throughout Europe, through a network of subsidiaries and distributors. Products are designed to FEM requirements and manufactured to ISO 9001 quality standards in 57,000 square metres of production facilities in Meisenheim. The full range includes pallet live storage systems, carton live storage systems, pallet racking, boltless shelving, plastic bins and containers, wide span and heavy load shelving, cantilever racking, and multi-tier shelving systems.

An electronic colour separation form and an electronic copy of this press release can be found at www.marketingman.co.uk.

For more information, please contact

Press enquiries:

Nigel Lloyd Parry

The Marketing Office

The business-resource.network

Whateley's Drive

Kenilworth, CV8 2GY

Telephone: 01926 748008

Fax: 01926 748001

bito@marketingman.co.uk

www.marketingman.co.uk

All other enquiries:

Edward Hutchison

BITO Storage Systems Limited

88 Albion Court

Attleborough Road

Nuneaton, Warwickshire

CV11 4JJ

Telephone: 024 7638 8850

info@bito.co.uk

www.bitoc.co.uk

Press enquiries: Nigel Lloyd Parry, The Marketing Office,
The business-resource.network, Whateley's Drive, Kenilworth CV8 2GY
Telephone 01926 748008 Fax 0870 132 7720 bito@marketingman.co.uk