



PRESS INFORMATION

BABY BOOMERS

Avent Install Bito Storage and Picking Solution To Efficiently Cater for Booming Growth and Exports

Market leading baby feeding products company Avent had operational headaches caused by increasing demand around the world. Their advanced manufacturing and distribution site at Glemsford in Suffolk had run out of space for the ever growing quantity of finished goods being despatched every day.

“The company has been growing so quickly we had to use outside storage,” explains Sue Selley, operations manager at Avent. “We had no more space on site so were paying for the storage and also suffering the cost and admin burden of transporting goods to and fro.”

Around 90% of product despatch involves order picking as there are now over 350 different item numbers. There are also differing customer requirements for truck or container loading of orders from as far afield as Russia, China, New Zealand, US, Africa, and Iceland as well as the UK and Europe.

Avent contacted Bito Storage Systems, who were able to devise a live storage and picking solution which would bring all operations back under one roof while raising efficiency. With space at a premium despite the need for a large order picking operation, Bito have incorporated high density bulk pallet storage and a picking tunnel solution to meet Avent's requirements.

"We actually had to slightly increase outside storage while the new system was installed," comments Sue Selley. "But by doing it in stages we could clear part of the floor to let Bito install the racking. We worked well with them to make sure we had the space to continue operating during installation. We could then bring back stock and populate the new storage as sections were released to us. Therefore we were reducing our off site storage costs as the construction took place."

First came high density bulk pallet storage; Bito's pallet live storage which compresses 1,000 pallet locations in a floor area of only 10m x 30.6m. Despite a height restriction of under 10 metres, there are five levels of storage each containing 25 lanes eight pallets deep. Lanes are angled so that pallets move forward under gravity, with put away into one side and retrieval from the other.

This was followed by a dynamic storage and picking installation which now forms the heart of Avent's order fulfilment activities. Case picking from pallets is mainly carried out from the first two levels of the racking, with replenishment stock and occasional picking above. With Bito's live storage picking solution, this has allowed Avent to mainly separate order picking from replenishment, alternating aisles in the warehouse to increase picking staff safety and remove bottlenecks.

With a mixture of conventional, two deep, three deep and eight deep pallet live storage, Avent have considerable flexibility in how products are handled in the warehouse, leading to long term efficiency. "This is important as products we handle can change, gift packs taking up much more space, for example," explains Sue Selley.

One innovative element of the solution is Bito's installation of a picking tunnel. The busiest picking aisle is only two pallets high, with an office style suspended ceiling above creating an unusually light and pleasant working environment. Sue Selley; "we're really pleased with the tunnel, it gives us very good visibility." The space above is taken up with further bulk live storage. Provision has been made in the design for a further picking tunnel in the future.

Picking is carried out using man up order picking truck, which can be raised to gain ergonomic access to stock on the second level. Stock is picked onto an order pallet, which can be Chep, Euro or plastic pallet depending on customer requirement. Once a pick face pallet is picked to empty, it is removed and a replacement pallet immediately rolls forward to take its' place, significantly reducing order picking delays.

"Every item we have is in the pick face," comments Sue Selley. "Replenishment is currently carried out by staff looking for empty slots in the lower levels, replenishing by means of the computerised system, using the FIFO system, and placing a new pallet in the vacant slot. The new systems gives us really good visual accessibility."

Another benefit provided by Bito was the design of a special angle beam, saving height while making access easier for the picking staff. This has resulted in a warehouse which receives all of the on site high tech manufacturing plant's production and can store over 3,200 pallets. Total capacity in the warehouse is now 7023 pallets.

Commenting on the business benefits of the new warehouse operation, Sue Selley says; "We no longer use any outside storage, and are in control of our own stock for the first time in years." Indeed the company has saved a considerable amount just in this area.

"Storage and order picking is much easier. The live storage has certainly improved picking efficiency – the staff pick far more quickly," Sue Selley adds. "It also protects the stock very well and we have far less damages. It has been a very worthwhile investment."

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.

For electronic copies of this story and photographs email bito@marketingman.co.uk or call +44 1926 748008.

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