

Wegmans Food Markets

A unique and simple new system provides flexibility to the Pottsville Distribution Center.



Wegmans Food Markets Pottsville Distribution Center

About Wegmans:

Wegmans Food Markets, Inc, headquartered in Rochester, NY, needed to expand its current distribution center to support the Mid-Atlantic regions. The organization is consistently featured in the top 10 of Fortune Magazines 100 Best Companies to Work For and on Forbes' annual list of the Largest Private Companies in the U.S. Wegmans employs over 37,000 people and operates 71 stores; 48 in New York State, 12 in Pennsylvania, 7 in New Jersey, 4 in Virginia and 1 in Maryland.

The Wegmans Food Market, Pottsville Dry Grocery Distribution Center, was designed to provide dry grocery, candy and spices to the majority of the Wegmans supermarkets.

Business Challenges:

- ▶ Create a distribution center that maximizes space, accuracy and productivity while minimizing capital investment.
- ▶ Reduce turn rate and walk times for slow mover items.
- ▶ Utilize a simple and flexible automated pick system that could work with any kind of pallets and optimize current equipment assets.
- ▶ Decrease unloading time for suppliers.

Highlights of the Project:

The new 300,000 square foot, 50-foot high distribution center is highly organized, as a result of wireless real-time inventory tracking and control consisting of: computerized tracking, laptops and label printers on forklifts, and voice-activated selection.

Retrotech integrated (8) AFT SRM's along with feed and discharge conveyors using their tracking and control software to support the slow mover operation for this facility. A DELL PC platform, running Linux operating software, handles the real-time control of the ASRS and connects to the PLC's that manage the conveyors. LED Displays at the end of each aisle direct fork truck operators to destinations.

Most products, fast to medium movers, are on pallets on the floor with no racks. Full and partial pallets of the slow mover products are stored in the AFT ASRS to eliminate long walk times. The SRM uses a reciprocating fork like a turret truck and standard rack design which greatly simplifies the receiving, shipping and pallet management process.

A unique conveyor front end and picking process was developed to more effectively stage order processing and to continually update of quantities on the "pick from pallet". When compared to a "pick to belt" process the price/performance ratio of using a goods to man design is extremely favorable and it has the added benefit of being able to pick to store aisle far more easily than with a pick to belt approach.

Results:

- ▶ Flexible picking system - conventional racks can be adjusted to suit full or partial pallets and work with any type of pallet — from low-grade white wood to CHEP.
- ▶ Increased fulfillment productivity — significant reduction of walk times for slow mover items and effective pick staging for order processing.
- ▶ Rapid receiving and dock turnaround — With over 200 product deliveries coming in every week and almost as many going out, Wegmans Food Market Inc. guarantees suppliers a two-hour turnaround time for unloading.
- ▶ Highly accurate order fulfillment and inventory tracking — which translates into less "short orders" and more satisfied consumers.

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