

REACHING THE NEXT LEVEL

MAXIMIZING STORAGE UTILIZATION AND EFFICIENCY

“FOUR OR FIVE YEARS AGO, I WAS DREAMING OF THIS KIND OF PROCESS IMPROVEMENT AND UPGRADE. IT’S REMARKABLE TO SEE IT COME TO LIFE WITH THE HELP OF RADIOSHUTTLE AND THE NEW RACKING. WE COULDN’T HAVE ASKED FOR A BETTER EXPERIENCE OR RESULTS.”

- **SETH HAMMAN, WAREHOUSE MANAGER AT MERCHANDISE WAREHOUSE**

OVERVIEW

Merchandise Warehouse started in 1951 as a 50,000-square-foot dry warehouse and office building in Indianapolis. The strategically located warehouse made for a perfect hub for receiving, storing and sending product for its customers in the food, pharmaceutical and manufacturing industries. In 1959, an industrywide shortage of cold storage facilities influenced the company to invest in cooler and freezer rooms. The investment resulted in Merchandise Warehouse flourishing in the decades to come. Today, this multitemperature facility has increased its size by eight times, now with more than 400,000 square feet of cooler and freezer space. As the organization continued to grow, Merchandise Warehouse turned to its long-standing relationship with The Raymond Corporation and Associated, an authorized Raymond Sales and Service Center, to help optimize and manage its facility.

CHALLENGE: FAST GROWTH, LIMITED SPACE

Common warehouse operations and traditional pallet racking was pushing Merchandise Warehouse to its limit. The facility was busting at its seams with product, and customers were wanting even more room. The growth, along with Merchandise Warehouse’s more aggressive pursuit of the latest technologies, presented an opportunity to act on the company’s motto: “take it to the next level.”



SOLUTION: UPGRADING TECHNOLOGY

Merchandise Warehouse needed solutions that would maximize efficiency, so it turned to Associated to help take the facility to the next level. Associated worked with Merchandise Warehouse to assess current operations and technologies and determine the best options for upgrading. The solution: high-density, deep lane racking and Radioshuttle™, a pallet shuttle system from Raymond®.

Radioshuttle allowed for additional capacity and pallet positions while helping store and pick products faster with its pallet shuttle system. This efficient solution created fewer opportunities for product damage due to the reduction in product touches with the integration of three conveyor systems. Most important, Radioshuttle maximized storage utilization by using the full height of the warehouse and high-density, deep lane racking to better fill the facility with product.

RESULTS: IMPROVED EFFICIENCY, INSTANT ROI

Due to successful collaboration among the parties, the process improvement and upgrade solution helped optimize the entire warehouse. Merchandise Warehouse added over 14,000 more pallet positions with the new solutions, and in doing so, was able to keep staffing levels the same. "Overall, the warehouse was more efficient — 44 percent more efficient to be exact," said Scott Whiting, vice president and general manager at Merchandise Warehouse. "What used to take seven man-hours to move product through the warehouse now takes about four. And what used to take 12 touches from receiving to shipping now only takes six. Half of the required touches means half as much opportunity for product damage."

Overall, Merchandise Warehouse doubled its freezer storage size, almost doubled efficiency, cut the opportunity for product damage and time required for spacer removal in half, and didn't have to add staff.

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