BLECKMANN ADOPTS GROUNDBREAKING RFID SCAN TUNNEL FOR SURE SORT® SORTER, ACHIEVING A 2X INCREASE IN OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

The new RFID-scanning technology from OPEX® enabled Bleckmann to achieve a 99% read rate in the company's sorting process.

OPEX® | Bleckmann

// THE BACKGROUND

Founded in 1862, Bleckmann is a third-party logistics (3PL) provider specializing in omni-channel commerce. The company is a market leader in supply chain management services for fashion and lifestyle brands with specific expertise in e-fulfillment. From its strong base in Europe, Bleckmann expanded into the United States and Asia, enabling the company to serve its customers internationally. Bleckmann's site in Grobbendonk is located directly on the Albert Canal connected to the Port of Antwerp. Grobbendonk DC further expanded to a total operating area of 120,000 square meters, making it one of the largest campuses under one roof within Bleckmann.

// THE CHALLENGE

During the continued expansion of the e-commerce sector in recent years, Gregory Brignola, Site Manager at Bleckmann, recognized the necessity of integrating automation into their operations. One of the main challenges for Bleckmann was being able to efficiently scan barcodes and RFID tags, which were often hidden inside an item's poly-bag. This, along with escalating labour costs, sourcing skilled workers, managing seasonal peaks, and addressing environmental concerns all underscored the necessity for automation. The need to stay competitive and future-ready prompted a strategic consideration of automation as a crucial solution to address these multifaceted challenges.

// KEY CHALLENGES

RISING LABOUR AND OPERATING COSTS

MANUAL SORTING WAS INEFFICIENT AND TIME-CONSUMING

GROWING NEED TO EFFECTIVELY MANAGE SEASONAL PEAKS

SCANNING BARCODES ON TAGS, WHICH WERE OFTEN HIDDEN IN PACKAGING

// KEY RESULTS

2X

EFFICIENCY INCREASE
WITH SURE SORT'S RFID
SCAN TUNNEL

99%

READ RATE FOR ITEMS
WITH SURE SORT'S RFID
SCAN TUNNEL

1.3M

NUMBER OF ITEMS
SORTED ON THE
SURE SORT SYSTEM

>32KM

DISTANCE TRAVELED
BY OPEX IBOTS TO
SORT ITEMS

// THE SOLUTION

After researching automation solutions, the OPEX® Sure Sort® small item sorter caught Brignola's attention. Bleckmann sought a flexible solution for sorting small poly-bagged items containing children's clothing and accessories for a recently acquired client. The challenge for Bleckmann was efficiently scanning barcodes on product tags, which were often hidden within the packaging. To help resolve this, Bleckmann initiated the process of adopting RFID tags. To address the low barcode reading percentages, OPEX developed and worked with Bleckmann to test the industry's inaugural RFID scan tunnel into their system. This partnership proved successful, doubling Bleckmann's sort rates and resulting in an impressive read rate of nearly 99% compared to the previous scan tunnel technology. This innovative solution significantly enhanced the speed and accuracy of Bleckmann's sorting process.

// THE FUTURE

The integration of this solution seamlessly aligned with Bleckmann's requirements, solidifying their position as the first European 3PL to adopt a Sure Sort automated sorting system that leverages the RFID scan tunnel. This move underscores Bleckmann's dedication to enhancing service standards for clients. With a validated automated sorting process for order fulfillment, they are well-positioned to onboard additional lifestyle brand clients sharing similar product profiles, further expanding their client portfolio.

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