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Supply Chain Matters Useful Links.

Logistics & Distribution

The Logistics and Distribution functions within the Supply Chain; encompassing transportation, stock control, warehousing, and ensuring structures are in place to monitor the flow of goods and materials, are crucial for the effective management and co-ordination of processes to ensure customer satisfaction

Interim Project Management

As supply chain complexity increases, the majority of organisations are not in a position to employ the specialists they need to ensure every aspect of their supply chain is optimised. The cheapest option is often to task an existing member of staff with new responsibilities which is fantastic if it works. In most cases however, this is a false

New Food Supply Chain Optimisation Team

Gideon Hillman Consulting Ltd, has established a dedicated Food Supply Chain Optimisation Team that provides specific expertise for food and drink companies aiming to drive efficiencies through their operations.



The team is headed by Philip Beckham MILT, (pictured here) who has over 28-years experience in the food-processing sector, covering all aspects of materials management, pan-European food logistics, supply chain optimisation and quality management.

He has significant knowledge of supply chain management systems, VMI and vendor management together with facilities and engineering management.

With the support of other team members, Gideon Hillman Consulting can provide a wealth of experience from working for major UK retailers, food supply chain and logistics providers, along with fresh produce growers and distributors.

This experience covers food processing and produce picking, multi-temperature warehousing and distribution, packing and despatch operations, crate washing and container recycling centres, chilled/frozen transport and logistics requirements.

“With the increasing pressure from grocery retailers and food processors to drive efficiencies throughout their supply chains we identified there was a need to create a dedicated team with a wide range of in-depth knowledge.” says Managing Director Gideon Hillman.

“Philip and his team can provide manufacturers, suppliers, retailers and logistics service providers with expertise that will help identify opportunities to improve operations and reduce costs.”

The company also reports significant demand from clients for guidance on packaging waste regulations, shelf-ready packaging initiatives, as well as equipment leasing and RTP (returnable transit packaging) managed pool services.

For more details contact Gideon Hillman on gideon@hillman-consulting.com

The Role of Returnable Transit Packaging in the Sustainable Supply Chain

The emphasis today across all industry sectors is ensuring a sustainable supply chain, with the key considerations of improving environmental and social impacts. This is

economy which results in that person losing focus on their key role and function, without the necessary time and expertise to properly deliver efficiencies in other areas

MRP II & ERP Implementation

Often when companies install MRP & ERP business systems, many elements within the whole Supply Chain tend to be forgotten at the planning stage, and there has not been a full appreciation of what was needed for a successful implementation.

Specification, Design and Sourcing

Materials handling can mean a substantial investment. However investing time in careful design and sourcing, whilst taking into account all of the requirements of users throughout the entire supply chain should reduce. . . .

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Winter 2007 Edition – Feature Articles:- “New Product Development – The Crucial Investment “ & “ How Green is your Supply Chain?”

Autumn 2007 edition - Feature Articles: - “Sourcing from China – The Reality” & “Transatlantic Project Management”.

achieved through the management of raw materials, products and services at all stages within the chain.

Materials Handling Equipment (MHE) and the way in which it is used plays an increasingly important role in the drive towards sustainability and therefore developments in MHE can have a substantial impact on all areas of the supply chain. The biggest impact within the MHE sphere over the last decade has been the increasing rate of introduction of Returnable Transit Packaging (RTP) fleets across all sectors. Wooden pallets and crates, along with their plastic and metal counterparts are all RTP products, although some more suitable to the sustainable supply chain ethos than others.

The original rationale behind RTP use was predominantly cost driven based on the ratio of RTP unit trips in their lifespan against capital investment versus single trip packaging costs. In the food, medical and pharmaceutical sectors, the drive was also towards elimination of fibrous materials (such as cardboard), in the production area.

It is not until more recently that sustainability of the supply chain and packaging waste legislation has been a key business driver in the development of RTP systems, and the advanced management techniques of the RTP fleets.

In addition to the capital investment, other RTP costs include repair and maintenance, loss, stockpiling and extended dwell and cycle times, lifespan of the equipment and the flexibility of the chosen design to adapt with developing and changing supply chain demands. However RTP fleet operational process and therefore costs can be managed by effective control systems integrated into existing distribution and traffic systems. As the life of the RTP equipment is prolonged through effective management it also serves to improve sustainability and further reduce the cost of packaging per trip.

The development of RTP in all sectors continues in an effort to increase lifespan, reduce waste in process and cost, and minimise carbon emissions through reduced “pallet miles”. In order to minimise the transport and logistics requirements, RTP design objectives are often for maximum product density for product delivery and optimal nesting or folding for the return journey when empty. In many cases RTP fleets are pooled and shared between users in the same supply chain to reduce the overall amount required.

Benefits of RTP extend even further by reducing the need for fork lift truck activity in production and handling areas as many RTP systems are either fitted with wheels or can be carried on dollies. This enables the RTP units to be linked and pulled in “trains” by tow trucks enabling more units to be handled per trip than if using a fork lift truck. There is an increase in the use of conveyor systems and roller racks to move smaller RTP units such as totes and trays around production, warehouse and despatch areas. This reduction in fork lift truck requirements also has health and safety benefits, reducing fork lift and pedestrian accidents, as well as environmental benefits in reduced fork lift truck emissions.

This overview of MHE trends and developments specifically in RTP use demonstrates that RTP systems are geared to total supply chain sustainability initiatives and cost savings ensuring environmental benefits through reduced vehicle and trip

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Contact Us

info@hillman-consulting.com

www.hillman-consulting.com

Tel: +44 (0) 1926 430 883

requirements. It is a complex, multi-faceted and fast moving sector with new initiatives constantly entering the market.

Either adopting RTP for the first time or indeed looking to improve current RTP use and initiatives can be a daunting task. Investing at the outset in specialist materials handling consultants to review, plan, develop and implement your MHE strategy, will maximise the opportunities and the benefits of your MHE systems and process to support your supply chain sustainability requirements.

For further information from the leading MHE & RTP Consultants contact Gideon Hillman on gideon@hillman-consulting.com