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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

Network Planning

Network planning involves building transport, inventory and location strategies around your customer service goals, ensuring the total package achieves the best service at the lowest cost. Companies often devote considerable time & expense in 'optimising' only one element of the network, failing to notice the negative cost effects this may have elsewhere.

The crucial element in any

Developing a Beautiful Logistics solution

Gideon Hillman Consulting has been working with the Urban Retreat group of Companies, the luxury hair, beauty and spa specialists, to develop and deliver an improved and reduced cost warehouse and distribution strategy for their own brand products and their online e-commerce site, Beautique.com.



The project focus included the distribution of Urban Retreat products to retail outlets which include, Urban Retreat Beauty Salons, QVC shopping Channel, Boots the Chemist and Beautique.com, the world's premier beauty and hair website.

In addition there was considerable focus on the Beautique.com storage, picking and despatch operation for all beauty brands including the Urban Retreat Products.

"Working with Gideon Hillman Consulting has been very straightforward with an effective and practical approach that sets us on the road to achieving our key Supply Chain objectives," says Urban Retreat Ventures Managing Director Mark Blair " Once implemented we expect their strategy and recommendations to yield considerable benefit".

Gideon Hillman Consulting, which recently achieved ISO 9001:2008 quality standard accreditation for the provision of Specialist Supply Chain Consultancy, provides companies operating in all major industry sectors throughout the UK and Europe with a range of expertise to improve operations and reduce costs.

Managing Director Gideon Hillman MILT MIBC comments: "There is a genuine culture within Urban Retreat for continuous process and operational improvement within their supply chain. Working in partnership with their management team we have been able to identify real improvements for the business operation."

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

network optimisation plan is

Warehouse and Inventory Management

In the current economic climate all companies should endeavour to undertake the widest review possible to ensure elements of your warehouse, picking and despatch processes are not 'sub-optimised'.

This requires through analysis to develop solutions for all areas of Materials Management, Procurement, Stores and Inventory Management including Strategy Development, Stock location, Handling and Picking processes, Demand Forecasting, Integrated Inventory Control, Vendor Management, Vendor Support Operations and

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 2008 edition – Feature Articles:- “New Supply Chain Optimisation Team” & “The Role of Returnable Transit Packaging in the Sustainable Supply Chain”

Summer 2008 edition - Feature Articles:- “Reduce costs and increase utilisation of Plant & Equipment” & “Outsourcing Specialist Expertise & Resource is on the increase”

Winter 2007 Edition – Feature Articles:- “New Product

Lowering the Cost of Pallet Fleets through Effective Management

The key to managing pallet fleet costs is managing specific supply chain processes and an effective management and control system which can be easily integrated into the existing supply chain operation.

Pallet fleet specifications and costs vary depending on the industry sector, application and budget. However one thing common to many established fleets, is that when originally specified, costed and implemented, a number of elements were not considered, and often still aren't. These include repair and maintenance costs due to normal wear and tear as well as misuse, equipment loss, stockpiling and extended dwell and cycle times, lifespan of the equipment and the flexibility of the design to adapt with changing supply chain demands. These all have substantial cost impact, however, many companies are either unaware of the real fleet costs, or just accept it and budget accordingly.

The starting point is therefore establishing the objectives of the pallet fleet and the requirements within the supply chain, including operational requirements, now and for the next five years. Once these are confirmed then handling methods and pallets can be specified. Success is facilitated by simple cost effective process design, adding value to existing operations by generating “self funding” fleets, including cost control mechanisms reducing damage, loss and misuse.

Processes are unique to the organisation's supply chain needs, whether a simple hub and spoke operation or a complex multi-tiered supply chain. Identifying the different needs of an inbound or outbound pallet fleet is crucial to the solution.

Equipment design must take into account the physical requirements of the pallet, as well as lifespan under actual working conditions, ease of maintenance, repair, and handling. Having specified the right pallet, the challenge is to make every one 'earn its keep'. Effective management systems increase fleet visibility and cost control, improve accountability for damage or loss and optimise pallet utilisation; reducing overall pallet fleet costs and will identify 'actual' loss via audit trailing facilities, thereby negating 'perceived' loss.

In terms of damage, it is estimated that 70% of damage to all returnable transit packaging equipment, including pallets, is avoidable. Effective management allows an organisation to identify who is damaging the pallet and to examine and improve handling processes accordingly.

Perhaps most fundamental is the issue of cycle time management – the key to overall fleet size and therefore cost. For example, a small reduction in cycle time of a day or two could result in 15% to 20% savings in total fleet costs. This can be achieved through a combination of process and systems, ensuring synchronous pallet flows integrated with lean manufacturing or production process. For a pallet management system or third party pool provider to deliver maximum benefit, the specification process must be thorough, realistic and bespoke to a specific

Development – The Crucial Investment “ & “ How Green is your Supply Chain?”

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

Additional Links

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organisation’s requirements and supply chain needs.

In all cases key considerations relate to how, when and where pallet movement data is captured, e.g. via RFID or barcode technology or by manual entry for bulk movements, keeping data entry minimal so as not to increase on-costs and the risk of human error. The system must manage overall fleet performance, including repair and maintenance, cleaning, and damage inspection procedures. The reporting capabilities, available via a local network or the internet on secure password access, should only include issues and operations that can be controlled and improved, and subsequently measured via KPI’s.

Managing Director Gideon Hillman explains “As well as cycle time reduction, the ability to share pallet management system and process data with other supply chain systems and process managers within the business, and ensuring the flexibility to change with the business needs, is crucial. Having worked with many pallet service providers and pallet users over many years, our experience shows that investing in independent specialist consultative and practical operational advice, will negate over-investment and reduce your pallet fleet costs in the longer term.”

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