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SNAPSHOT

It's All About Harmony

Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control rethinks materials management, ActivRAC® mobilized storage system makes storage space work smarter.

CHALLENGES

Material Center Operations, the group responsible for materials management at Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control (MFC) manufacturing facility in Orlando, Fla., strives for continuous improvement as it aims to help boost the plant's overall efficiency. Toward that end, the department implemented a new strategy to ensure fast- and slow-moving production materials came together harmoniously as dictated by its Materials Handling Requirements system.

The success of the new approach hinged on the ability to make space for storing slow-moving materials work with the flow, not against it. In turn, that drove the need to bring all slow-moving materials closer to the point of use rather than storing a portion of them off site. A solid concept to be sure, except the already inadequate footprint for storing slow-moving items on site went from 4,000 to 3,000 square feet based on additional uses for the space. And building an addition was out of the question. It all pointed to the need to make the remaining storage space work smarter.

SOLUTION

Curlin Inc., an authorized Spacesaver® distributor based in Tampa, Fla., worked with MFC Material Center Operations Senior Manager Sam Cox and his team to design an ActivRAC™ mobilized storage system to match the group's strategic goals.

Top: An ActivRAC 16P system increases storage capacity within the existing footprint at MFC by 70 percent—and contributes to a 15 percent increase in efficiencies.

Bottom: The patent-pending carriage and rail design allows for sufficient flexing and articulation so that a system can be installed on reasonably uneven floor—streamlining installation and minimizing cost.

"The ActivRAC system gives you the opportunity to take the existing space and do more with it. We've seen how it can improve efficiencies for relatively low cost."

Sam Cox
Senior Manager, Material Center Operations,
Lockheed Martin Missiles and Fire Control, Orlando, Fla.

Above: When users pushes a button on the ActivRAC control panel to open the desired aisle, they gain access to any one of the three levels of pallet racking that make up each 65-foot-long carriage. Items can be accessed from either side of an open aisle.

Left: ActivRAC systems are specifically designed for safe operation. The PhotoSweep® is an infrared and visible red light beam projected along the length of the carriage base. It stops the system's movement when broken by a person's foot or another object.

MFC's powered ActivRAC system replaced five static racking units used to store slow-moving production components, which arrive at the facility in palletized boxes. The ActivRAC system also accommodates pallets of large plastic shipment containers. Each of the system's four mobilized carriages has three levels to capitalize on 16 vertical feet of available storage space. To save costs, the 65-foot-long carriages were built with existing and new pallet racking.

Team members use a pallet stacker to access stored materials. A user simply pushes a button on the front of the ActivRAC carriage to open the desired aisle. Materials can be accessed from either side of the aisle, which expands to a full 12 feet for ample room to maneuver. The ActivRAC system's rails are recessed in the floor, ensuring a smooth transition as the stacker moves in and out of the aisles. Additionally, the patent-pending design eliminated the need for costly structural footings and leveling.

RESULTS

MFC increased its capacity for storing slow-moving materials on site by 70 percent, despite the substantially smaller footprint for storage. The result is the ability to put slow-moving materials closer to the point of use – a practice that contributes to 15 percent gain in efficiencies as measured by minutes per transaction. And since it's easier to track production materials on site, inventory control has also improved. All that, plus more space at on- and off-site locations has allowed the Material Center Operations to support additional functions as planned. Slow- and fast-moving materials are now in total sync at MFC, adding to an already stellar reputation for operational excellence.