

Case Study

Charlotte Russe

Location: Ontario, Canada

Industry: Retail

Application: Retail Store Order Replenishment

Lightning Pick Solution: LP PACK

Warehouse Management System:

Manhattan Associates



Company Profile

Charlotte Russe stores deliver style in clothing and accessories, providing an exciting, fashionable assortment of merchandise that compliments virtually every facet of their customers' lifestyle. Founded in 1975, their stores provide fashion and lifestyle needs of young, fashion-conscious women in their teens and early twenties, offering trend right apparel and accessories at value prices. In addition to a wide selection of apparel, Charlotte Russe also offers a full range of accessories and footwear, helping customers to easily compliment their apparel selections.

The Challenge

In September 1996, Saunders Karp & Megrue, a private equity investment firm, and Bernie Zeichner acquired Charlotte Russe from its founders with the intention of pursuing an accelerated national store expansion program. Since the ownership change, Charlotte Russe Holding, Inc. has more than quadrupled its store count. Today they operate 437 stores in 43 states and Puerto Rico. The company plans for new store expansion into existing markets and new regions continues today.

The Solution

Charlotte Russe selected the Warehouse Management for iSeries solution from Manhattan Associates. The Manhattan WM optimizes Charlotte Russe's receiving, inventory, planning and replenishment processes to efficiently support their retail store growth.

In March of 2002 Charlotte Russe's Ontario DC also installed a Pack-to-Light solution from Lightning Pick.

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"Our expansion strategy challenged us to support our news stores and meet the rising replenishment order volumes.

Lightning Pick's Pack-to-Light solution immediately helped us push merchandise out to our stores faster, and get it in front of customers where it belongs.

LP Pack's intuitive, visual sortation approach also made training new employees exceptionally simple. Within a few hours we can have new operators actively using the Pack-to-Light system to quickly break down full cases of product into individual store boxes".

Chris Monier
VP of Distribution and Logistics
Charlotte Russe



LIGHTNING PICK



Fast Facts

Headquarters:

San Diego, CA

Distribution centers:

1 (Ontario, CA)

Size of DC:

217,000 sq. ft. with 47,000 sq. ft. mezzanine (264,000 sq. ft. total)

Number of employees:

93 base staff, 400+ during peak

Platform:

IBM System i

Number of SKUs:

Approximately 18,000

Volume Throughput:

Over 75 million units processed per year

Lightning Pick Solution:

LP PACK

Manhattan Associates Solutions:

WM for iSeries

The Solution (Continued From Page 1)

Sometimes called a Put-to-Light or Put-to-Store system, Pack-to-Light was ideal for Charlotte's flow-through retail store replenishment approach.

The Pack-to-Light process is simple and effective. Manhattan's WM conveys full cases of inventory to the correct pack area, where operators use the fully integrated Lightning Pick system to break them down to less-than-case-quantities for individual retail stores. The operators scan the full case of product with a cordless RF unit. Next, light modules illuminate at store boxes requiring that item, and direct the quantity needed for each. Different colored LEDs (red and green) direct operators to store positions/boxes above or below the track of light modules. The operator can quickly and accurately 'put' (or 'pack') the items to that store box, and then extinguish the light to confirm that the sortation was completed. The process repeats until the full case is rapidly emptied, and then another is conveyed to the pack area.

The Lightning Pick Advantage

"Our expansion strategy challenged us to support our news stores and meet the rising replenishment order volumes," said Chris Monier, VP of Distribution and Logistics for Charlotte Russe. "Lightning Pick Technologies' Pack-to-Light solution immediately helped us push merchandise out to our stores faster, and get it in front of customers where it belongs".

"LP Pack's intuitive, visual sortation approach also made training new employees exceptionally simple. Within a few hours we can have new operators actively using the Pack-to-Light system to quickly break down full cases of product into individual store boxes".

Tom Rodenbach, Charlotte Russe's Director of Distribution adds "In addition to optimizing our flow-through sortation approach, the Lightning Pick method has another benefit for when the stores receive their boxes. The Pack-to-Light system packs individual store boxes by category so that once a store receives them, they can easily be moved directly to the right department for putaway".

Today, Charlotte Russe maintains an impressive sortation rate regardless of order demand.

"Our throughput for the whole Pack-to-Light system (all six zones) averages 5000 units per hour" shares Tom. "During peak season we process 9500 units per hour through Lightning Pick, while maintaining a 99% accuracy rate.

LP Pack's intuitive, visual sortation approach makes new employee training exceptionally simple, while the Pack-to-Light approach has increased the speed and quality of Charlotte's order processing for reliable store replenishment".



Lightning Pick Modification Supports Fulfillment to New Stores

Recently Charlotte Russe found that it would have more stores than pack locations. Physically adding more rack and pack locations is not an option, so the current physical layout will have to support more than one store per Lightning Pick location and light module.

A software enhancement to the Lightning Pick solution enables two stores to be packed at a single light location. Two beacon lights are used to indicate which group of stores is currently active. The first beacon would activate when the A store group is active, and the second beacon would turn on when the B set of stores is active.

“Three years later, the new Lightning Pick modifications have helped Charlotte Russe overcome our space restrictions, and effectively process retail distribution orders to new stores in our supply chain with a minimal capital outlay,” shares Tom.

Charlotte Russe projects the fashion attitudes and trends that appeal to a broad range of customers through an intriguing mix of effective store layout, appealing fashion and exciting merchandise presentation. Manhattan Associates Warehouse Management and Lightning Pick’s Pack-to-Light solutions make sure that the stores always have the right products in place to fulfill this successful customer service approach.

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Tom Rodenbach
Director of Distribution
Charlotte Russe

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For more than 30 years and across 500 installations worldwide, Lightning Pick has delivered advanced light-directed technologies on time, on budget, every time. Our best-in-class pick-to-light, put-to-light, pack-to-light, pick carts and other solutions optimize material handling processes — from manufacturing through order fulfillment. Today, we're the number one provider of light-directed solutions in North America, providing our customers increased productivity, higher quality and improved process efficiency.



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