

Case Study

Trans World Entertainment

Location: Carson, California

Industry: Hardware

Application: e-Commerce Order Fulfillment

Lightning Pick Solution: LP Put



Company Profile

Trans World Entertainment is a leading specialty retailer of entertainment software, including music, home video and video games and related products. The Company operates nearly 1,000 retail stores in the United States, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico under various brands. The Company is in the process of re-branding the majority of its stores (Coconuts Music and Movies, Strawberries Music, Warehouse, Sam Goody and Spec's) to the name f.y.e.- for your entertainment. The Company also operates over 130 video only stores primarily under the Suncoast brand and on the web at www.fye.com, www.warehouse.com, www.secondspin.com, www.samgoody.com and www.suncoast.com.

The Challenge

The company's e-commerce distribution center is in Carson California.

Customers place orders through the internet, which are then logged and staged for import into the shipping system. As 100 orders become available, a batch is released to the shipping system. Once the batches are picked, they travel to Put-to-Light workstations where individual orders are filled.

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The major gain in operational efficiencies have provided us added capacity within our existing infrastructure to handle the expected growth of the on line business".

John Traver
Project Manager
Trans World Entertainment
Corporation



LIGHTNING PICK



The Challenge (Continued From Page 1)

Each put-to-light workstation is divided into 100 separate cubicles for individual customer orders. Operators select products from the batch tote and RF scans the bar code label on each item. This initiates light modules on cubicles to illuminate if their order requires that item, and directs the exact quantity needed. This 'scan and sort' approach is a fast and accurate way to execute music, video, book and other e-commerce order fulfillment.

Trans World installed the Put-to-Light application in 2000. However, in 2006 they learned that by the end of the year, the original provider would no longer be supporting the system. They decided to use this as an opportunity to evaluate the latest technologies available to improve productivity throughout their Put-to-Light, labeling, manifesting and shipping processes.

The Solution

Trans World selected Lightning Pick to provide a brand new Put-to-Light solution.

Lightning Pick's new LP Put offered updated cable-free light module hardware design and advanced software to improve sortation performance. To enable the put and manifesting technologies to work as a single solution, Lightning Pick partnered with SPS.

As individual orders are filled in the LP Put system, SPSI's shipping software consolidates the data to build the shipment requests for processing. Documentation for the orders is produced and the shipment is sent to the respective carrier.

"Our staff has frequently commented on how much easier the new Put-to-Light and shipping system is to use.

With the new Lightning Pick/SPSI system, the Carson DC has enjoyed a significant productivity enhancement."

Barry Crane
VP of Distribution
Trans World Entertainment
Corporation

The Lightning Pick Advantage

The new system was installed in March 2007, and the positive results were immediate.

The new solution quickly optimized the login, scan and put process. In the old system, operators needed to hand type numerous product codes in each batch. With new system, the shipping software consolidates product codes to increase readability of the more valid codes. Because of this the Put-to-Light application is better able to scan and match barcodes.

In the old system, domestic shipping documents were printed to one printer and international documents were printed to a second printer. Now each printer is configured to print both domestic and international documents. The combination of the dual form printing along with a process design change to eliminate the need for 'external' lights have yielded print time efficiencies of 10x the old system. The pack slip and ship labels are now immediately sent to the printer when the last item for a customer order is put, reducing the opportunity for printing delays.

The old system used a file transfer methodology to gather and send data. For the new system Lightning Pick and SPSI established improved communication routines that strictly use a database read and write method. The risk of missing orders has been minimized by using a record (hash total) checking routine. Because of this Trans World's Operations staff is alerted to issues before the batch hits the shipping floor.

These improvements have substantially increased the overall speed of the new system. SPSI and Lightning Pick also provide a new dimension of proactive operations management by making Trans World aware of problems at an earlier stage in the process. "The old system provided no insight on the productivity of our daily operations", said John Traver, Project Manager for Trans World. "The new Lightning Pick/SPSI solution provides us a web-based portal that allows quick and effortless access to shipping information and operational performance".

"The new Lightning Pick/SPSI solution has proven itself to provide the speed and accuracy needed to support our online business". He adds, "The major gain in operational efficiencies have provided us added capacity within our existing infrastructure to handle the expected growth of the online business".

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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