

BENCHMARK



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BRIEFINGS

SITE

Galloway Ford,
Fort Myers, Florida

APPLICATION

Automotive parts for
automotive service
department

EQUIPMENT

Three vertical carousels,
FastPic inventory manage-
ment software interfacing
with Reynolds & Reynolds
software

SUMMARY

System reduces floor space
up to 90% while increasing
productivity and customer
service



**Galloway
Ford Speeds
turn around
time in parts
department with
automated
vertical carousels**

"The system has exceeded our expectations. The improved productivity supports an additional 12 to 15 technicians."

Before building a new facility to house the parts department for his steadily growing business, Sam Galloway, owner of one of the largest Ford dealerships in America, wanted to be sure it could accommodate the most advanced technology available.

Galloway selected a Remstar Vertical Carousel system to help them maximize overhead space, access parts more quickly, and simplify overall inventory management.

"We needed about four or five thousand square feet of additional space to store our parts on conventional shelving and saw that a vertical carousel system could store the same number of items in less than 500 square feet. The cost of building the additional 5000 square feet and buying the carousel system were about the same; when we considered the productivity benefits, the carousel was by far the best investment. We knew we'd be going in this direction sooner or later and the pending construction gave us

good reason to do it sooner," said Galloway's parts manager, Richard Bennett.

The new storage and retrieval system had to be fully compatible with the Reynolds & Reynolds software that Galloway was using for its business systems. So when Reynolds & Reynolds agreed to collaborate with Remstar International on what would be the first interface between the industry leading Reynolds & Reynolds business system and an automated storage and retrieval system, Bennett ordered three Remstar Vertical Carousels.

How vertical carousels improve productivity

Galloway's parts inventory grew steadily with its business. In addition to supplying the 65 technicians in the auto repair, truck repair and body shop service areas, the inventory supported both wholesale and retail sales operations.

Fielding the orders were five retail counter salespeople, two wholesale counter salespeople, and five counter salespeople staffing the telephones. While the Reynolds & Reynolds software managed ordering, invoicing, and record keeping for Galloway's more than \$1.5 million parts inventory, the storage and retrieval process was manual.

A technician performing a brake job, for example, would walk his repair order to the counter and hand it to the clerk, who would check the inventory in the R&R software, issue a pick ticket, walk to the shelving area, select the parts and return them to the technician. The actual processing of the order might take four or five minutes, but if there was a line, the technician's time could be tied up for 20 minutes. Once the parts were issued, the clerk had to enter a transaction to the Reynolds & Reynolds system, for reorder, price estimating and other such business purposes. And, to comply with audit

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"The system has increased customer service, the technicians can stay focussed on their repair projects and the counter people spend more time with customers."

requirements, someone had to go onto the floor to maintain an ongoing count of the physical inventory.

The technicians never have to leave their work station to get parts, ordering and retrieval time is typically less than two minutes, and inventory is almost automatic. Instead of walking the order to the window, technicians now enter orders from the terminals in the repair area. Instead of having to conduct manual



Galloway needed four to five thousand square feet of shelving or a Vertical Carousel system which used less than 500 square feet to store parts.

inventory each week, Bennett's files print out the contents of each carousel.

By not having to pick parts, the counter clerks can spend more time on the phone and face-to-face with the customers. Rather than fielding orders, they submit them to the carousel operator,

who delegates warehouse pickers to deliver orders to them. The pickers, instead of having to wade through some 5000 square feet of shelving, now work an area that is less than 500 square feet.

Forming the storage area are three vertical carousels, each about 20 feet high, 11 feet wide and 5.5 feet deep. Two of the carousels face each other, with a six-foot walkway between them. The third carousel abuts one of the others, forming a 22-foot wall and facing the space reserved for a planned fourth carousel.

The carousels themselves are a system of rotating shelves - carriers - that move up or down a tracking guide in response to operator commands. Each carrier can have up to 150 storage compartments to store parts of varying sizes, up to 5.5 feet high. Items are delivered quickly to an ergonomically positioned "golden zone" from which they can be retrieved easily and safely.

Bennett now uses these carousels to store all parts 9" X 9" X 5" or smaller - about 8000 part numbers representing some \$450,000 of Galloway's \$1.5 million parts inventory. The rest of the inventory is bulk storage, much of which is now on a mezzanine through which the carousels rise.

Helping Galloway make the most effective use of the system is Remstar's FastPic Inventory Management Software which helps optimize the storage space and provides part tracking and reporting. FastPic software interfaces with the Reynolds systems through a data download. Part numbers and quantities are stored in a compatible file and "printed" to the storage and retrieval system via a cable connected to the PC printer port.

The FastPic software balances the ideal placement of parts in a compartment with maximum quantities specified to provide maximum storage density and easiest access.

When inventory changes, for example when a part is discontinued, the software allows for reconfiguring the storage space to accommodate the change. FastPic software also helps locate parts, tracks usage and generates accurate records and reports.



8000 SKUs representing \$450,000 of inventory is stored on the vertical carousel system.

The FastPic software also provides some benefits in integration with the Reynolds & Reynolds software. Bennett projects that by removing the need for physical inventory, he will save about \$4000 a year in personnel costs, for example. Also by enabling him to print out a copy of the most commonly requested parts for a particular repair project, he can augment R&R generated service pricing guidelines.

"Overall, the vertical carousel system has exceeded our expectations. It has already improved productivity and will be able to support expansion of an additional 12 to 15 technicians if we choose to do so. And all of this has to have a positive impact on customer service. The technicians can stay focussed on their repair projects and the counter people can spend more time with customers," said Bennett.



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