

UNEX CASE STUDY



“Our pick area in the freezers is now six times denser with the wheel beds, and travel time between items has been virtually eliminated”

— Jamie Wright, Director of Industrial Engineering

customer: WHOLESALE DISTRIBUTOR

operation: Distributor of food and household products

goal: Fit increasing number of SKUs into existing freezer areas

solution: SpanTrack Bed from UNEX



10 Big Benefits for Busy Wholesale Distributor

Productivity Jumps 17% After Distributor Installs SpanTrack Wheel Beds in Freezers Kept at -10 Degrees.

When a leading distributor of food and household products added a large grocery chain to its client base, the wholesaler had to act fast and find a home for hundreds of new SKUs in already-packed freezers.

“We didn’t have time to add onto the building or make alterations to the freezers,” says Jamie Wright, the distributor’s Director of Industrial Engineering. “We needed a cost-effective and efficient solution in a hurry.”

That solution was SpanTrack, designed by UNEX to maximize product flexibility and flow. The wholesaler equipped 7,200 feet in the freezer area with the wheel beds, and the benefits started rolling in.

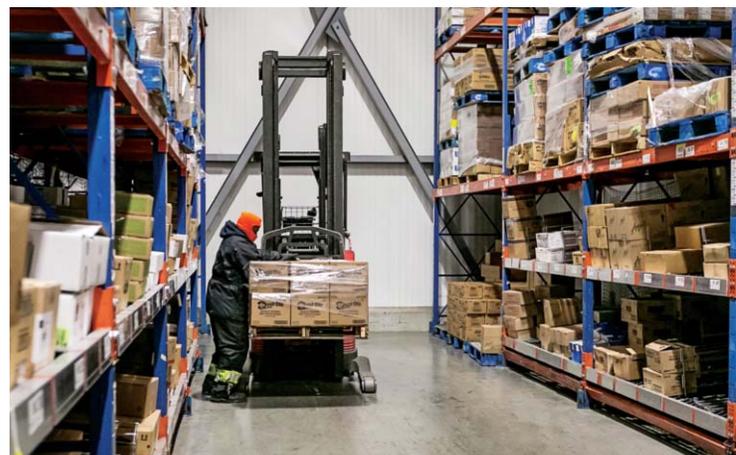
Top 2 Benefits:

Better Space Usage, Higher Productivity

Because wheel beds can increase space utilization in the rack by 50%, the wholesaler was able to reconfigure SKUs and create a more compact pick area. “Our pick area in the freezers is now six times denser with the wheel beds, and travel time between items has been virtually eliminated,” says Jamie.

The more efficient pick has resulted in 17% higher productivity for pickers. “The SKUs are easily within reach. We’re not driving around or walking up and down to locate items. We’ve maximized our storage cube, and there’s no wasted space between lanes,” says Jamie.

An efficient and effective pick is a top priority for the growing wholesale distributor, which serves about 900 supermarkets and mom-and-pop stores in New England, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.



Big Benefit #3: Helping Clients Meet Consumer Demands

Because consumers are demanding a greater variety of products, such as less-expensive store brands and quick-and-easy meals, SKUs are “growing by leaps and bounds,” says Jamie. “If you look inside our freezer, you’ll find everything from gluten-free pizza to barbecue chicken with grits. Our customers have to meet consumer demands in order to stay competitive. And we have to be ready to accommodate those demands. It’s not unusual to add 200 items at a pop on very little notice.”

Stacking up Benefits #4, #5 and #6: Flexible, Durable and Easy to Install

UNEX engineers developed SpanTrack wheel beds for ultimate flexibility. “The wheel beds are easily adjustable. So, if a customer discontinues one item, like enchiladas, I can quickly switch it out with frozen fish or jalapeño poppers or whatever is the latest hot item,” says Jamie.

The wheel beds are also made to withstand harsh temperatures. The freezers are kept at -10 degrees, which is no problem for SpanTrack wheel beds. “They are super durable and work flawlessly, and that’s why the distributor has added them to all three local distribution centers,” says Paul Nicholson, Professional Engineer from The Beacon Group who helped the distributor find the right carton flow solution for freezers.

The drop-in design is another big plus. “They are so easy to install with the hangers. They simply drop onto the rack beams and fall into place,” says Paul. Also, installation of the flow beds does not require any tools or additional hardware.

Bumping up against Benefits #7 and #8: An Ergonomically Sound and Safer Pick

The wheel beds move cases forward and present them at the front for the picker. “Many items are at waist level, so there is nothing all the way to the floor that requires the deep bending that can cause back strains and muscle pulls,” says Jamie. “This is a much more ergonomically sound way to get the work done.”

“It’s also a safer solution. Having SKUs located in a compact area reduces the need for forklifts to be driving around the warehouse in search of products,” says Paul.

Benefit #9: Good Dollars and Sense

The growing wholesale distributor must be able to flex with its clients – and do so in the most cost-effective way possible.

“We had only about two or three months to figure out what to do when we added our new client,” says Jamie. “The wheel beds allowed us to meet our timelines and offered an affordable solution that did not require us to make any significant capital investment.”

And #10: One of the Best Benefits of All: Products from Expert Problem Solvers

Bill Link, Northeast Regional Manager at UNEX, says SpanTrack wheel beds provide one more effective option to meet customer needs. “We offer a range of versatile products because we know every customer is faced with unique challenges and demands.”

Jamie says he appreciates the “practical, real-world solutions” that UNEX designs and develops. “There are UNEX people out there in the field, in distribution centers, figuring out what we need to make our work more efficient. It’s a lot easier to have UNEX thinking of the solutions and drawing up the designs, because it frees me and my team to focus on the high demands of our rapidly growing business.”



UNEX MANUFACTURING, INC.

