

Automated layer picking

Heinz: Improved technology for third-party logistics.



Kraft Heinz wanted a significant increase in the amount of pallet layers being picked automatically without making changes in the existing product configuration. This was achieved with the installation of a K.Handle Layer Picker® Flex-R from Körber.

The customer

Wincanton, a leading third-party logistics (3PL) provider in the UK market, was challenged with a task at their National Distribution Centre in Wigan, UK managed on behalf of Kraft Heinz. The challenge from Kraft Heinz was to increase the amount of automated layer picking performed at the site without associated changes in product configuration. The Körber Layer Picker® was identified as a potential solution.

At a glance

Project goals

- Increased volume and larger variety of products to be picked automatically

Solution

- K.Handle Layer Picker Robot

Features and benefits

- Able to pick more difficult products than ever before
- Upgrading an older installation to meet new challenges
- Higher throughput and fewer limitations



In 2013, the first product testing took place at the Körber Supply Chain site in Denmark, testing more than 40 product configurations that could not previously be layer picked using existing technology at the National Distribution Centre. During this test, the Layer Picker® proved its worth and its potential for the upgrade at the National Distribution Centre.

The project focused on a solution with one Layer Picker® Flex-R, including conveyors. In the middle of 2014, an order for the Layer Picker® system was placed. Factory acceptance testing then followed at the end of 2014, and more than 60 product configurations not previously tested all passed with great success.

The Layer Picker® Flex-R solution offers an improved picking profile compared to the existing technology. This solution is designed to create “sandwich / rainbow” pallets of mixed products to customer specifications. The solution offers a throughput up to 180 layers per hour, and is designed to operate 24/7 if needed.

Benefits

Due to the new Layer Picker® solution, Kraft Heinz National Distribution Centre have been able to improve the agility of the automated warehousing solution, aiming to provide over 90% of its dispatched volume, untouched by hand. The solution will also bring more flexibility into vehicle loading, as the throughput will be greater, which will enable operations to run closer to the planned dispatch time. This installation went live in April 2015.

“The Körber Layer Picker® does what it says on the tin. Working with Körber and the team behind the Layer Picker® has been very professional, and has added even more confidence in the solution delivering outstanding results from the first push of the button.”

Stuart Alldrige

Senior Logistics Execution Manager
The Kraft Heinz Company



Facts and figures

Throughput of the Kraft Heinz UK DC

12,000 pallets/week

Full pallets

80% of the pallets are shipped as full pallets

Picked pallets

20% of the pallets are shipped as layer and case picked pallets

Layers picked automatically

While 45% of the goods were layer picked automatically prior to the project, the Layer Picker® increased the volume of goods significantly, by adding to the aim of having 90% of the pallets leaving the DC untouched by hand

