

2-MINUTE OVERVIEW



National Airline Revitalizes AS/RS with New Controls and Laser-guided Position System

Features/Benefits Provided:

- Reduced system jams
- Reduced down time
- Eliminated guidance system misreads
- Provided compatibility with new SAP host system
- Freed a maintenance worker for non-AS/RS duties

A large U.S. national airline was challenged with maintenance issues from their 25-year-old automated storage and retrieval system (AS/RS). This site is their primary distribution point, supplying repair parts to maintenance crews around the globe. It fulfills about 60,000 orders each month while storing 100,000 SKUs. They were encountering problems with the 10-aisle mini-load guidance system generating misreads as well as experiencing system jams. Incompatibility with a new SAP host system, used for inventory oversight, was also an issue.

After collaborating with their supplier, the airline chose a modernization strategy. This included an upgrade of the controls on their storage and retrieval machines (SRMs) with new PLCs, laser-guided positioning system, and a warehouse control system (WCS).

After the project, orders are placed into the SAP host system. Next, SAP creates a prioritized pick sequence which is downloaded into WCS. This order prioritization allows on-ground aircraft to take precedence and get parts immediately over less critically needed resources. From the WCS end-of-aisle workstation, the worker is

instructed which items to retrieve in the pan containing the parts. After the part is retrieved, the worker then confirms the quantity and part number in WCS. Automatically, WCS updates the SAP inventory. Finally, the worker releases the pan back into rack storage.

The WCS workstation's graphical interface allows workers to receive their pick instructions, audit bin items, access SRM fault information, and monitor the SAP/WCS connection status. This makes system monitoring and usability straightforward, enabling the worker's proactive response.

The Airline's greatest project benefit was minimizing the risk of grounded aircraft and its related flight cancellation expense.

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