



# thespeedchallenge

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## Out of the distribution fog

London Fog moves into its own dedicated facility to gain efficiencies and increase its throughput capabilities.

AFTER YEARS OF HAVING A 3PL HANDLE ITS DISTRIBUTION, London Fog now has a place of its own to hang its coat - thousands of coats actually!

This past May, the raincoat and outerwear supplier began distributing from its facility in Secaucus, N.J. Since moving there, London Fog has reduced costs, improved throughput and increased accuracies, leading to fewer returns.

London Fog chose their facility primarily for its northern Jersey location and because the building already had garment racks and slick rails left by a previous owner. London Fog selected a warehouse management system (WMS) from Foxfire Technologies to create the efficiencies that justified the move. The WMS controls virtually all facility operations: receiving and putaway, order waving and batching, picking and replenishment, value-added services, scan packing, loading and shipping.

"The nature of our business is seasonal, so it does not pay to have a lot of automation," explains George DeRocker, London Fog's VP of distribution and IT. "In selecting the WMS, we looked for a Windows-based solution that would provide a seamless interface and also be cost-effective. We felt that Foxfire was a good fit."

DeRocker also wanted a software supplier that offered a highly qualified development team, excellent customer service and 24/7 support.

"I like the idea that I can call Foxfire and ask for a particular individual," he adds. "That is definitely a plus."

### Dealing with hang ups

The apparel industry is unique in that it has to handle both flat-packed goods and garments already on hangers. About 60% of London Fog's receipts arrive on hangers, while 40% are flat-

packed. Upon receipt, flat-packed items are scanned into the Foxfire WMS that assigns them to pallet racks or floor storage based on activity, with floor slots given to faster movers.

Garments on hangers (GOH) are received at separate docks that allow unloading directly onto the facility's railing. These are also scanned into the WMS and then rolled on railed trolleys to storage.

Foxfire supports several types of picking methods to increase productivity. London Fog has configured the system to use two: paper picking and RF-directed for pallet, case and piece picking.

Pick tickets are used to select flat-packed goods and split case apparel from racks and floor positions. Items are RF scanned to verify proper picking. Similarly, GOH apparel is also selected from slick rail positions and placed onto wheeled trolleys. About 70% of all picks are sent by the WMS to a large value-added area where many flat-packed items are placed onto hangers and some garments are ticketed or bagged.

Items next head to pack stations, where each piece is scan-packed as it is placed into a shipping carton, assuring high accuracy. The WMS then generates retail-compliant shipping documents and labels. Cartons are sealed, sent through a scale used for verification and manifesting, and then sorted and consolidated onto shipping pallets as directed by the WMS. The Foxfire system also

supports TMS and contains a transportation module that assigns cartons to LTL docks or small package carriers.

DeRocker has been very pleased so far with the performance of the facility and its systems. "It's great to be in a warehouse where we are the only client," he says.

—By David Maloney, Special Projects Editor

For more information on Foxfire Technologies, call 678-445-7763 or visit [www.foxfiretechnologies.com](http://www.foxfiretechnologies.com).



*Each garment is scanned to assure high accuracy before being packed into shipping cartons at London Fog's new distribution center in Secaucus, N.J. The facility processes over 225,000 units a month during peak season.*

To see a three-minute video of London Fog's new DC, go to [www.dcvelocity.com](http://www.dcvelocity.com) and click on The SPEED Challenge.