

VELOCITY VIDEO CASE HISTORY

A DC VELOCITY SPEED CHALLENGE

Sponsored by Kiva Systems

Bracing for success

Kiva mobile fulfillment robots do the running at orthopedic device supplier DJO.

WHEN PATIENTS' WELL-BEING IS AT STAKE, the orthopedic doctors caring for them must be able to rely on the suppliers of the medical devices they use to get their patients walking again.

DJO is one such supplier. As one of the nation's leading providers of orthopedic braces, implants and pain management products, DJO knows that it must process and deliver its products accurately and in a timely manner.

Recently DJO looked to manage some of its own distribution pains by consolidating several operations into a 110,000-square-foot facility in Indianapolis. As part of the consolidation, it looked to Kiva Systems to supply it with a mobile picking and storage solution. The system relies on 50 robots that shuttle some 500 storage pods between floor-level storage and fulfillment stations.

"Before Kiva, it was a completely manual operation," recalls Steve Martin, DJO's director of operations. "We had people with pieces of paper, pencils, scanners and large carts to pull boxes. So the vast majority of the time they spent wasn't actually pulling product; it was walking up and down the aisle and traveling to the product. That's one of the benefits of Kiva. That has gone away. Now the inventory travels to the puller rather than the puller going to the inventory."

About 5,200 of the facility's roughly 6,000 SKUs are stored within the Kiva pods. The system holds everything from small wrist braces to full-length crutches. Only the largest items, such as massage and examination tables, are picked from traditional storage.

During fulfillment, the Kiva robots retrieve the pods holding products needed for orders. These are taken to 13 picking stations,

where workers are positioned to pick from the pods and to place the required items into staged cartons. Lights direct picking, telling the worker at the station which product to pull from an inventory pod and into which carton the item should go. Combined with bar-code scanning, this assures very high levels of accuracy.

The system is also very flexible. If a rush order comes in, it can easily be placed at the beginning of the order queue. The Kiva system stores the pods in a large open floor area, slotting and reshuffling their locations based on order preferences.

Because of its flexibility, the system can be easily expanded simply by adding more robots and storage pods.

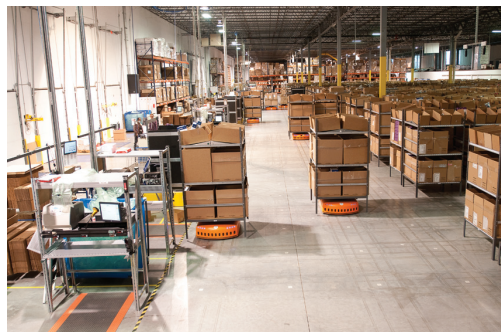
Since DJO moved to the Kiva system, storage density has increased and so has productivity. Work that required about 70 people before is now being done at the 13 picking stations. Overall, DJO believes productivity is 40 to 45 percent better with Kiva.

"The people in the warehouse really view the Kiva system as a partner and a way for them to take a lot of work content out of their day, and really to help them focus on the value-add, which is packing the order, making sure it's accurate and going to the right customer," notes Luke Faulstick, executive vice president and chief operating officer at DJO.

"And our customers are assured that they're getting the right product and they're getting it at the most effective cost and with the highest levels of accuracy."

You could say that DJO's new Kiva mobile fulfillment system is just what the doctor ordered.

For more information on Kiva Systems, call 781-221-4640, or visit www.kivasystems.com.



To watch a short video showing operations at the DJO distribution center in Indianapolis, Ind., go to www.dcvtv.com and click on the Velocity Video.