

# VELOCITY VIDEO CASE HISTORY

## A DC VELOCITY SPEED CHALLENGE

### *Receiving on a roll*

**New mobile carts with integrated power make receiving more efficient at industrial supplier MSC.**

ACCURACY IS IMPORTANT IN ANY DISTRIBUTION operation, but it is critical for companies that have a large number of SKUs. High SKU counts require that the right inventory is always in the right place – and that process of accountability starts in receiving. An efficient and accurate receiving operation provides the ability to accurately identify products wherever they may be within the facility. It also helps to assure that customers are correctly and quickly shipped the products that they order.

This month marks the first shipments from MSC Industrial Supply Co.'s (MSC) newest customer fulfillment center in Columbus, Ohio. MSC is a leading value-added distributor of industrial supplies across North America. Among the new material handling equipment installed in the 400,000-square-foot facility are 12 mobile carts with integrated power from Newcastle Systems. The carts help MSC efficiently receive the more than a quarter million SKUs the company expects to eventually stock in Columbus.

The use of mobile carts in the receiving process is nothing new to MSC. A few years ago, the operations at the company's Atlanta customer fulfillment center developed prototype mobile carts using several old aluminum picking carts and configuring equipment (batteries, chargers, and inverters) that were carried from its industrial stock. It did not take long for MSC managers to realize expected gains in efficiency by processing receipts directly at the receiving docks. However, MSC soon realized it needed more durable carts to maintain the efficiency improvements while meeting increasing customer demands for quick product delivery.

"Our customers have to get their products to market faster, so they are demanding more speed from us. We had to look for the next generation of mobile carts," explains Shane Honig, senior industrial engineer at MSC. "We wanted something more functional, with batteries, chargers, and inverters all designed to work together. We also wanted a

solution that was not just repurposed carts, but something that would be more ergonomic, would improve the work functions of our associates, and would allow us to meet the demands of our customers."

That's when the company looked to Newcastle Systems to provide new carts, purposely designed for the rugged environment of daily distribution. Each mobile cart holds everything that receiving personnel need, including a computer and monitor, a wireless scanner, bar code and label printers, a toolbox with box-cutting tools, and other supplies. The carts also contain maintenance-free batteries, chargers, and inverters

to assure that power is maintained for up to 12 hours – plenty of power for a full shift. The carts also fit well into MSC's lean distribution processes. Everything is efficiently organized on the carts to assure that workers have what they need to keep product moving.

"We are able to take the cart to the product instead of having the product being brought to us," says Rich Delille, receiving supervisor for floor freight and stock handling. "There are a lot of times when our forklift driver is unloading trailers or busy putting product up in our

pickup-and-delivery racks for stock handlers to put away. So we are not wasting valuable time waiting to process product."

In addition to receiving bulky items, the carts are being used as additional workstations to receive smaller goods, and they also are employed to process outbound pallets for less-than-truckload shipping.

The company is so pleased with the carts' performance there that it also plans to install them in facilities in Nevada, Pennsylvania, and Indiana. The labor savings alone provide a return on investment of only four to six months.

"Our partnership with Newcastle Systems has been one that has been cost-effective and productive for MSC, but it has also been one that has allowed us to support our commitment to continuous improvement and our 5S lean processes throughout our business," says Honig.



To view a short video of the Newcastle Systems carts in action at MSC, go to [dcvelocity.com](http://dcvelocity.com) and look for the Velocity Video. To learn more about MSC, visit [mscdirect.com](http://mscdirect.com).