

## Lear is in the Driver's Seat.

*Parts Supplier Needed Rugged, Dependable Carton Flow and Found It in Span-Track.*

When Lear Corporation's Duncan, South Carolina plant was chosen by BMW to supply the seats for their new Z3 roadster, they certainly didn't rest on their laurels. As North America's largest supplier of auto interiors, Lear had their own set of rigorous standards to uphold, couple that with their knowledge of BMW's commitment to quality, and Lear knew they had their work cut out for them. That's why Lear's Industrial Engineer, Brian Fraser and Materials Team Leader, Carolyn James turned to Span-Track by Unex. "We had heard about Span-Track on a tour of BMW's Greer, South Carolina plant," James said. "A small group of us had gone over to BMW and saw it in place. Span-Track was working for BMW so we asked the associates questions about it. The response was overwhelmingly positive." James is responsible for the flow of materials and directing the team's daily operation, from training to setting up new programs and helping to improve area work flows. James added, "after that introduction to the product, our Industrial Engineer, Brian Fraser knew Span-Track could help improve our assembly areas."

From the beginning, Lear's management had a clear indication of what they wanted. They knew they had limited plant space and wanted to utilize every conceivable square foot. According to James, the bin holders - in use early on in the project - just weren't accomplishing the job they were designed to perform. "The bin holders couldn't handle the capacity,"



*Left and below:*

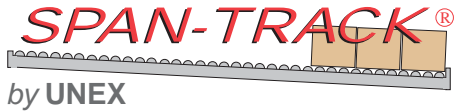
*Span-Track was added to single-deep Huske pallet rack, creating uninterrupted flow of trim covers and foam pads to the assembly areas.*

**Span-Track lets us get to the back to re-supply our workstations...and lets us handle a lot more parts."**



James said. "They're nothing more than a straight board with slats that actually hold a small bin onto it. It's on wheels and it's real basic. The bin holder can best be described as a cork board. It's a no-thrills product that allows you to put up the parts that you're going to be using. The major problem with the bin holder is you don't have much access from the back and you can't store many parts on it. That was what we loved about Span-Track. It let us get to the back to re-supply the workstations and let us

handle a lot more parts." James knew the product was working as it was designed. "In different areas we were doing different things and Span-Track seemed to fit well in all areas." James and Fraser knew from the onset that getting the associates' input was one of their major priorities. "We had several occasions where we had a compass team here to gather information. A lot of data was collected on time-saved issues. They wanted to know if the associates were satisfied with Span-Track's performance. It was well received."



One of the major factors for Lear Corporation's market success has been its proprietary Sure-Bond process. This process enhances seat designs and improves durability by eliminating the need for mechanical attachment devices to secure trim covers to foam pads. This innovative manufacturing process results in increased manufacturing efficiency and lower production costs, along with the ability to detach and recover the trim material in the event of a defect. So any product that would help to increase manufacturing efficiency was welcomed with open arms at Lear Corporation. James emphasized, "Being



Span-Track fits well in all areas and increases product and parts flow.



able to service the area from the backside of the flow rack was one of the biggest selling points to management." According to James, before acquiring Span-Track, they had to go into the assembler's work area, which would hold up production.

**"With Span-Track, production doesn't have to stop in order to re-stock."**

"We had to get into the work areas to put parts out for the assemblers. What was happening was we were interfering with their work, because the stager, who was actually putting the parts out, was in their area. What we were able to do with a very small space was create a small rack area that we could load parts into the back and the operator building the seat can get all their parts from the front. We don't have a lot of space, so Span-Track helped us utilize it a little better."

In her closing remarks James commented on the reliability and maintenance free aspects of Span-Track. "It's been wonderful. We haven't had any problems at all with it. There's no maintenance. Once you get your rack in place, get your bins on it and get it labeled, you don't have to do anything with Span-Track until you want to change a part number or put a new bin on that's a different size. Then you can adjust it very easily." James added that she would recommend Span-Track to anyone simply because of its ease-of-use. "It's very simple. People with no assembly knowledge can put it together in a very short time. There's no maintenance other than upgrading your parts that are on it. I recommend it to everyone."

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**Lear Corporation**, located in Duncan, South Carolina, is one of over 65 North American companies who supply parts and components for the BMW Z3 roadster.

**UNEX**, located in Jackson, New Jersey, manufactures a broad line of conveyors and carton flow equipment. Unex products are sold nationally through material handling distributors. For more information, please call 800-334-UNEX (8639). Fax: 732-928-2828 [www.unex.com](http://www.unex.com)

