

'Lean & Clean' Approach Delivers Tidy Payoffs

Ossur Americas, a cervical collar manufacturer in Paulsboro, NJ was on a mission: Eliminate waste and clutter. Toward this goal, management turned to their local material handling specialist Matt Montgomery (Advanced Equipment Company, Inc., Cherry Hill, NJ) and to Unex, the manufacturer of a new type of modular, flow-through workstations called Flow Cells. An engineered plan for organizing materials and optimizing work space was developed, and by projects' end it became evident to Ossur that the payoffs were even better than expected.

"The Flow Cells have played an important part in allowing us to improve cycle time & double productivity."

*Axel Bjornsson
Mgr. Operations, Ossur Americas*

Customer: Ossur Americas develops, manufactures, assembles and distributes millions of cervical collars, prosthetics and other novel medical devices.

Operation: 52,000 square foot facility which outputs over 800 cervical collar packages per day.

Goals: Eliminate waste and clutter, improve ergonomics, upgrade assembly work flow

Solution: Flow Cell workstations by UNEX



The UNEX Advantage

Innovation

- 40+ years developing products and solutions
- Over 25 patents granted

Focus

- Gravity throughput solutions for order selection and assembly operations

Quality

- UNEX manufactured products backed by our Seven Year Platinum Warranty

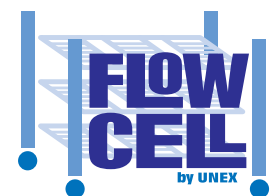
The Carton Flow Authority



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UNEX CASE STUDY
Market: Manufacturing
& Assembly



THE GOAL: **Get Lean**

Lean practices are a priority at the Ossur facility in Paulsboro, New Jersey, where employees assemble and distribute approximately 800 packages of Ossur cervical collars a day. "One of the core values at Ossur is frugality," says Axel Bjornsson, Operations Manager. "We look for opportunities to increase productivity and to eliminate waste in the supply chain because this allows us to be more competitive and cost-effective."

To help establish a Lean environment, in 2008, Ossur replaced its traditional flat tables used in the distribution and assembly areas with UNEX Flow Cells. "The old, flat tables took up too much space and were often cluttered with coffee mugs and other items. In addition, each assembler was responsible for finding and retrieving materials. "Now, an assembly line is set up using Flow Cells to feed raw material to the assemblers. The Flow Cells are custom configured for the job at hand and work moves forward in an uninterrupted way," says Bjornsson.

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THE TARGET: **Boost Safety & Satisfaction**



Standard Flow Cell components were customized to create the perfect workstation in Ossur's shipping area.

Flow Cells are modular in design, easy to customize and offer many ergonomic advantages:

- **Assemblers don't have to bend or reach far for materials**
- **Units are angled for comfortable picking and packing**
- **Boxes are placed at an ideal height so employees can pack directly into them**
- **Built-in lighting and overhead toolbar assist workers**

"It's an efficient and ergonomically safe work setting," says Bjornsson. "Employees start their day knowing exactly what needs to be done, and how it needs to be done, rather than combing their way through clutter"

THE BIG PAYOFF: **Productivity has Soared**

"Flow Cell workstations have played an important part in allowing us to improve cycle time and double productivity," says Bjornsson. "Down time is minimized and work progresses smoothly from one workstation to the next."

● **Labor costs have dropped**

"A company's biggest cost is payroll. The increase in productivity can keep those costs down. For example, after installing the Flow Cell workstations, we were able to eliminate 5 assemblers and still complete the same amount of work."

● **The work environment is clean and focused**

The Paulsboro site has 52,000 square feet and every square foot matters. With Flow Cells, everything the employee needs is at arms reach. "This keeps workers focused on the task, no distractions, no confusion about what needs to happen next and no need to maneuver around cluttered tables," says Bjornsson.

"Down time is minimized, work progresses smoothly from one workstation to the next."



Flow Cell with Tilted Pick Shelf angles totes toward the worker making items easier to see and access.

THE SOURCE: **Choose the Right Partner**

When Ossur needed to make changes to their Paulsboro facility they turned to Matt Montgomery, material handling specialist with Advanced Equipment Co., Inc., Cherry Hill, NJ. The Paulsboro team had to develop a process which:

- ✓ **minimized storage space for parts inventory**
- ✓ **increased order picking efficiency**
- ✓ **improved ergonomics in assembly**

"Flow Cell workstations allowed Ossur to meet all of those requirements." Not only was Flow Cell a perfect fit, but so was UNEX, the company that manufactures the cells. "UNEX was the right partner for this job. Choosing the right partner is key in my business, where the goal is to design, distribute and install products that improve safety and efficiency for customers. Unex puts in the extra effort to work with distributors and the end user to meet each customer's unique needs," says Montgomery. The Flow Cell workstations have been so successful they are now considered a best practice by Ossur. In fact, Ossur recently had the cells implemented at their Camarillo, California facility as well.

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THE BOTTOM LINE:

In addition to the boost in productivity and cost efficiency, quality is on the rise at Ossur largely because of the Flow Cell workstations. "When we fine-tuned the process, quality went up because workers became experts in a specific job. The result is greater consistency, higher quality," Bjornsson explains. Quality is king in the medical device business. Having a high quality product on the shelf and ready to be shipped to distributors and hospitals is crucial to the company's reputation as a major player in the orthopedic market.