

# UNEX CASE STUDY



**“We need to run the facility as efficiently as possible to keep up, and the UNEX products help us do that.”**

**- Rodney Honeycutt,  
Materials Supervisor**

**customer: Daimler Trucks Components & Logistics**

**operation: Parts distribution and assembly facility for Daimler Trucks North America**

**goal: Maximize space and improve efficiency in pick and sub-assembly areas**

**solution: Flow Cell with Span-Track Lane from UNEX**



## **A Booming Truck-Building Business Creates an ‘Efficient, Nimble and Quick-Moving Operation’ with UNEX Solutions**

***A supermarket setup and high-performing sub-assembly line keep truck parts rolling full speed ahead at a North Carolina plant.***

Nothing collects dust at the Daimler Trucks Components & Logistics facility in Gastonia, North Carolina. The plant runs 24/7, rapidly fulfilling orders and sub-assembly of thousands of parts used to build commercial trucks and buses for Daimler customers in North America.

“We have an excessive amount of work and multiple activities going on at once,” says Rodney Honeycutt, Materials Supervisor. “Space, speed and accuracy are very important at our facility.” To achieve all three and more, Rodney says Daimler turned to UNEX to transform “an archaic” storage, picking and lineside sub-assembly system into an “efficient, nimble and quick-moving operation.”

### **The Speed Bumps**

The Components & Logistics facility was originally designed as a distribution center, but with the company’s growth and a full-scale truck manufacturing plant nearby, the facility quickly added a sub-assembly area as well. The site includes 4,000 square feet, where 2,600 small truck parts are picked, such as bolts, nuts and other fasteners; 800 square feet of lineside assembly space; and areas for pressing and stamping operations.

Initially, bulky cardboard boxes on pallets filled the small-parts pick area. “It was a mess,” says Tom Currier, the Distributor from Harris Handling who helped Daimler find more efficient solutions for the site. “People were using box cutters and ripping open cartons to grab what they needed. There were stray screws and empty boxes scattered all over the floor.”

The cumbersome setup created a major speed bump for pickers responsible for delivering the fasteners to lineside. It also boxed in the



space, and that was a significant issue for Daimler. The site needed to quadruple the number of parts coming in – an impossible goal to achieve with the old racking system in place.

**Delivering a Quick Pick Supermarket Design**

Tom called in UNEX to provide a solution that would address the space issue and establish an orderly, efficient and safe pick environment. The UNEX team designed a grocery store-type setup using Flow Cell with 6-inch-wide Span-Track Lanes.

“We initially tested about 40 racks at the facility to see if they would work in the pick area,” says Tom. “They worked great. Everything was controlled, contained. It was like night and day from what they had before. So, we added more.”

The pick area for fasteners now includes 2,600 Span-Track Lanes, which Rodney says “take up a third less space than the old system and allow us to get a lot more product in the same footprint. And the racks are really durable. We can count on them to hold the weight.”

In addition, the UNEX system provides high visibility and accessibility. “Everything is labeled and coded, so we know we are getting the right fastener,” says Rodney. “It’s a quick and accurate pick point.”

**Productivity ‘Definitely Jumps’ at Lineside**

Maximizing space and efficiency are top priorities at the pick point, and the same holds true for the lineside area. This is the place where Daimler workers assemble doors, windshield brackets, tire frames and other components that are shipped to plants that are building the complete truck or bus.

“We were looking for lineside storage solutions that were strong, serviceable, clean and lightweight,” says Rodney. Flow Cell from UNEX turned out to be the best fit. Pickers from the fastener area deliver totes full of various fasteners to the Flow Cell units, where lineside workers pick the exact screws and bolts they need to assemble an item.

“Productivity at lineside definitely jumps when workers don’t have to come off their station and waste a half hour to an hour walking 300 feet to sort through the parts they need,” says Tom.

UNEX provided 40 Flow Cell Workstations, giving workers an organized and dependable way to carry out a variety of assembly tasks. The easy-to-build steel units are adjustable to allow for maximum product density to accommodate Daimler’s lineside needs.

UNEX studies show that Flow Cell workstations can increase space utilization by up to 50% and boost production efficiency by 30%, because parts angle toward the picker, making picking easy and fast.

**Quality ‘Is Always There’**

Rodney says his facility has “been busier than ever and won’t be slowing down any time soon.” A number of North American truck manufacturing facilities depend on the Gastonia plant, along with a handful of school bus companies and auto parts stores. “We need to run the facility as efficiently as possible to keep up, and the UNEX products help us do that.”

Tom adds he knew UNEX could provide the right solutions for the thriving Daimler facility. “I’ve done business with UNEX for a long time, and the quality of the product is always there. As a distributor, I only like to sell things with value, and I can count on UNEX to provide that.”



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