

The importance of maximising

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The importance of maximising every millimetre of shelving and racking cannot be underestimated in today's environment however many companies find it difficult to ensure stock is stored and managed in an efficient manner. We are regularly called in by clients who are looking increase the capacity of their existing racking and shelving system. In virtually every case we can provide ideas and solutions for achieving extra storage WITHOUT having to spend a penny on additional bays or racking. The secret to maximising storage capacity is not in how much linear metre-age you can achieve. It's about looking at each part or product being stored and considering the best type and size of storage equipment required.

So here is our top tips for getting everything you can out of the shelving and racking you have.

Use Containers for Small Parts

The storage of smaller items can always be tricky and there is the tendency to simply place them on shelving systems. By using small parts containers you can quite literally double, treble or quadruple the capacity of your shelving system by stacking containers on the existing shelves. In addition to all the extra locations provided, containers come with labelling facilities to improve stock placement, picking and replenishment!

Use Metal Dividers

Fixing metal dividers to shelving systems can not only stop products from naturally spreading, they can also be used to provide a clear order and natural positioning of products for effective storage.

Measure Your Airspace and Install Additional Shelves

OK so it may sound totally obvious but so many companies are not maximising the height of their racking and shelving systems. Rather than designing the solution around the products being stored many clients opt for a standardised approach with every shelf being positioned at the same height in the belief that this will provide them with the most flexibility. Absolute nonsense. It does the complete opposite. You should never ever have a standard height unless every product you are storing is the same – such as in an archive storage box. And even then make sure the height of the shelf is specified to be as tight as possible to the height of the box.

So get your tape measure out and measure the clear air space between the top of the products being stored and the bottom of the shelves or rack beams. If the total airspace is more than the height of a pallet or product, start looking at how you could install extra shelves or beams. In one recent project we encountered, the client was using small parts storage to maximise the space on each shelf but you can clearly see the airspace and we calculated that the client could get an extra 2 shelves in each bay. That is a 25% increase in storage capacity with minimal investment and required no additional floor space.

Use Pallet Guides

I cannot tell you how often I have gone into a warehouse facility and seen 3 pallets in a bay where the system has been designed to accommodate 4 and on rare occasions even 5. Why let your fork lift truck driver dictate your capacity when you can use pallet guides to ensure pallets are placed exactly where they should be.

Consider Drawer Solutions

The automatic choice for storage is shelving and racking however by installing metal or plastic drawer systems you could create a perfect storage system which maximises capacity and minimises the floor space required.

This could be as simple as individual shelf trays, divided in the depth to make 100% use of the entire shelf. (if you are storing small items on the first 100mm or so of a 450mm deep shelf with NOTHING else behind it, this is for you). Or take for example a solution we designed for an automotive garage. Rather than installing a shelving system with bins, we designed a solution which featured a metal drawer system with 27 drawers that were 50 mm high and each with 84 locations. That's an amazing 2268 locations in a floor space measuring just 750mm x 750mm.

Add Extra Storage By Using the End Panels

End Panels are not just for structural support. By fitting louvre panels or slat wall systems to the ends and in some instances the back of existing shelving systems you can fit additional shelves, containers or spiggots to accommodate even more products.

Go Dynamic

With new retrofit dynamic racking systems now available, you can also transform underutilised racking systems into order picking and even carton live solutions to boost productivity and increase capacity. So remember. Don't get sucked in by standardising your shelving system or racking in the hope that it will save you money. A well designed system that is tailored round the products being stored will always be more effective and efficient than one that is focused on capacity.