

Case Study | Larson-Juhl UK



ASG Services' expertise in labelling solutions ensures a sticky situation in a new warehouse operation is effectively overcome.

Background

Bedford-based Larson-Juhl UK supplies a wide-range of high-quality mouldings, mountboards, crafted frames, glass and accessories to art galleries, the picture-framing, hobbies and photographic markets. Setting the industry-standard, the company offers more than 3,000 different mouldings in a variety of styles and finishes to suit its customers' ongoing requirements.

To optimise its distribution operation and improve delivery times to its customers, the company invested a significant sum in consolidating its multi-warehouse operation into a single new facility, complete with special cantilever racking.

Challenge

At 10m high, the specialist racking is twice the height of that used in the company's former warehouse. Whilst improving the storage of the mouldings and frames, the racking presented the company with an unexpected problem, namely scanning label barcodes on the end or side of the cantilever arms.

A camera was attached to the forks of a lift truck and relayed an image to a screen in the truck's cabin. However, the resolution on the camera was poor and this made reading the labels difficult.

A Larson-Juhl UK company director said: "We had all the warehouse infrastructure in place and our material handling fleet was ready, but the problem remained on how the product could be scanned.

"The situation threatened to destabilise everything we had been trying to achieve in optimising the efficiency of our operation."

“ Tony project-managed the whole thing and kept me constantly updated on the progress of the job and any hurdles that needed to be overcome. One of the things that impressed me was how proactive he was, and how quickly he derived a solution to a daunting problem. ”

Company Director, Larson-Juhl UK

Labelling and Integrated Safety Solutions

Call us
+44 (0) 1925 710923

Email
info@asgservices.co.uk

Visit
asgservices.co.uk

Solution

On the recommendation of the company which installed the racking, Larson-Juhl approached labelling specialist ASG Services to see if it could devise a solution.

Tony Gresty, Managing Director, ASG Services visited the new facility to determine the problem for himself.

He worked with Larson-Juhl's IT operative, the FLT provider and a specialist digital imaging company. Following on-site testing, Larson-Juhl opted to use a high-resolution camera instead.

While the clarity of the image improved, the problem persisted as the barcodes could not be read properly due to the camera location in relation to the cantilever arms.

“The problem while simple, required a complicated solution. We had never used two dimensional (2D) labels and a 2D barcode in conjunction with a camera so we had to devise a new solution,” said Tony.

Tony determined that the traditional location to install the labels would not be adequate and that using a 2D barcode on the end cap at the end of the arm would be ideal.

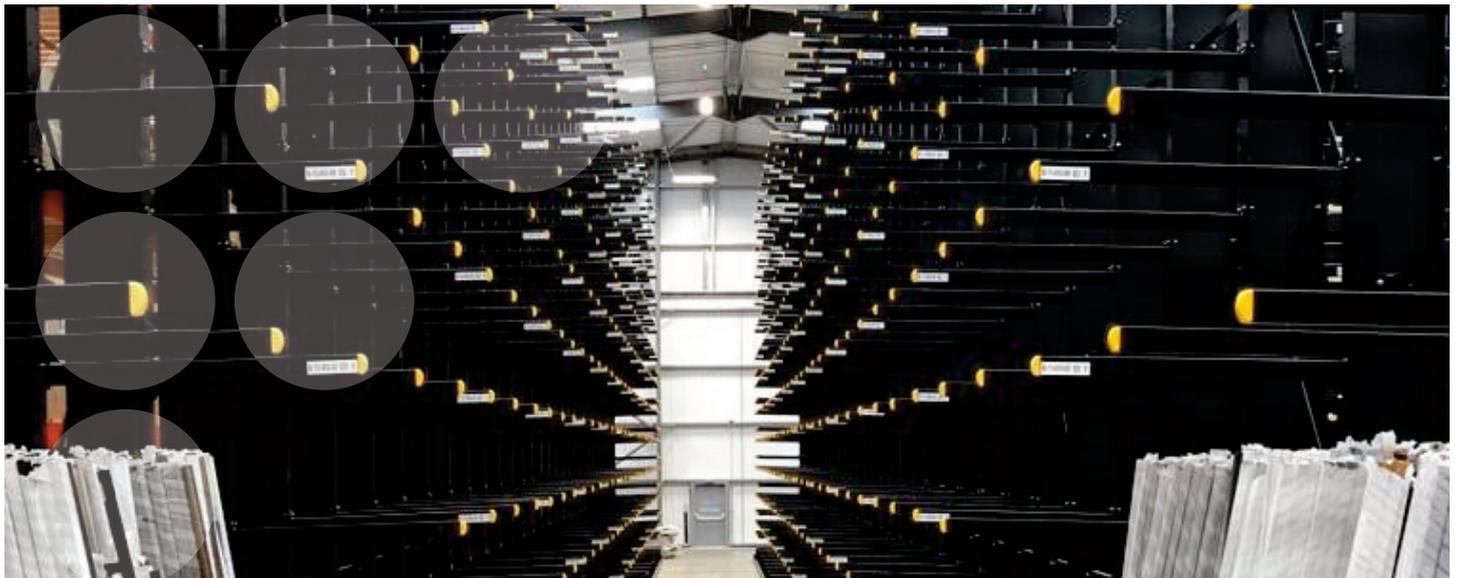
So, after determining the right barcode symbology and density, the labels were properly secured to the racking arms so they could be scanned accurately.

The final issue was timescale. ASG Services was able to manufacture and install the labels within a 10-working-day window to facilitate the transfer to the new building to maintain Larson-Juhl's schedule.

Outcome

With the ability to scan accurately, the company was able to optimise its distribution operation in the way it had always intended.

Stock levels can be accurately maintained and the optimal product for each customer identified quickly and dispatched ready for next day delivery.



ASG Services
Unit 3 Easter Court • Europa Boulevard
Westbrook • Warrington • Cheshire • WA5 7ZB
T: 01925 710923 E: info@asgservices.co.uk W: asgservices.co.uk



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