



Fastener Industry News • FastenerNews.com

THE NEWSLETTER FOR FASTENER INDUSTRY MANAGEMENT

JUNE 22, 2004

XL Screw Builds New Facility Around Racking System

How important are racks to a fastener company? XL Screw designed and built its new headquarters around a new rack system.

XL Screw was outgrowing its two buildings in Wheeling, IL. One of the buildings was where the fastener importer opened in 1968.

The entire racking system is about “storage and efficiency,” Bob Sachs, president and COO, explained. “There is no wasted space. Even the building columns were placed according to the racks.”

The old Wheeling aisles were 97 inches wide. The new ones in Lincolnshire, IL, are 68 inches wide.

The old racks were 14 feet high. The new bright orange racks are 28 feet high.

An electronic wire guiding system was buried in the new concrete floors for the new automated lift trucks. The trucks lift warehouse staff to eye level with products.

XL Screw’s new building on 8.65 acres is designed for expan-

sion in a second phase. The recently opened first phase will maximize at 23,000 pallet rack locations, plus shipping and receiving space. The second phase could expand the warehouse to a 37,000-pallet rack capacity.

Every step of planning and construction centered on the pallet racks. “The clear height of the ceiling is 32 feet to operate our new lift trucks,” Sachs explained. “The exact clear height of the building was checked with a laser gun during construction.”

“In order to go that high you have to start with the floor,” Sachs explained.

The 11” to 12” thick concrete floors were designed by the structural engineer for O’Hare International Airport runways. The floor has a capacity rating of 504 lbs. per sq inch.

“The new pallet racks can store up to 11 pallet levels, with the majority of the bays being 10 pallet levels,” Sachs pointed out. “Each bay of 20 to 22 pallets has a weight capacity of 38,909 pounds.”

The new narrow-aisle, wire-guided lift trucks require absolutely level floors in order to operate. The floors were measured for flatness by a laser during construction.

The cement floor was installed with a final average value of FF 67.12 and FL 56.71. The required values for proper lift truck operation are at least FF 45 and FL 25.

XL Screw CEO Ron Sackheim, who founded the fastener-importing firm with his father, Norman Sackheim, noted that many warehouse floors are simply not made to handle the weight of the higher racks holding steel fasteners.

XL Screw’s new facility is now the tallest warehouse in Lake County, IL.

XL installed heavy-duty hydraulic dock levelers rated at 52,000 lb. capacity. Most warehouses have manual dock levelers rated at 20,000 to 30,000 lb. capacity. “We knew our product is very heavy and the dock levelers take a lot of abuse,” Sachs

Continued on reverse...

explained. "We upgraded our dock levelers to increase efficiency and to eliminate down time."

The shipping and receiving docks are at separate ends of the building to avoid problems.

Sachs explained that the new "state of the art facility with increased and efficient storage capacity" was important for expanding business. "The two buildings in Wheeling were stunting our growth. For XL to grow and service our customers better, we needed to have the ability to increase our inventory and product lines. Our new warehouse will now set the ground work for our future growth."

Location, Location, Location

Before selecting the site to plan the building, Sachs and Sackheim shopped areas from Elgin, IL, to Wisconsin.

Ultimately the Lincolnshire location was chosen because it was only five miles from the Wheeling warehouse. "Moving 20 to 30 miles away would have caused tremendous disruption and inconvenience to our staff. Most of our 45 employees have been with us for many years," Sachs explained. "The closer we stayed to Wheeling, the better chance we had to continue our formula for success."

Sachs said XL Screw has always been proud of its warehouse neatness and cleanliness. "It is a

reflection on management, and it sets an example to all the employees. When customers visit any of the XL warehouses and personally witness the operation, their confidence will increase regarding our ability to ship their orders correctly," Sachs said.

"The floors are always clean," Sachs pointed out. "We even made sure that there are no lift truck black tire marks" by using a sealer on the floor, non-marking tires and a sit-down floor scrubber on the floors every day.

The office uses "white noise" to muffle sound and "create a wonderful working environment. You don't hear papers rustling," Sachs noted.

Though XL spent more than the minimum on its new headquarters, Sackheim believes it will pay off. "We tried to make the building more efficient."

The move was not without setbacks. It was originally scheduled to open by Thanksgiving 2003. XL Screw received a temporary occupancy permit in February 2004 and began the move in March.

"The move was the easy part," Sachs declared.

In the six weeks approaching opening day incoming shipments were routed to Lincolnshire. Inventory was shuttled in five trailers leased on a daily basis from Wheeling to Lincolnshire. It took 500 truckloads.

Meanwhile office employees were given reusable plastic bins for packing their desks and encouraged to discard as much as possible.

On Friday afternoon the computers were backed up before the moving.

All employees came in during moving weekend to set up their desks for Monday morning.

"By Sunday night it was poetry in motion," Sackheim recalled. "All of our customers knew we were planning to move, but many did not realize when the move was actually taking place."

Sachs' advice to other companies considering a move is to "take as much time as you need to solidify the perfect plan for your company and to get your employees involved in the entire process from design to the actual logistics of the move. Their signature is on each detail throughout the office and warehouse."

Sachs singled out Sue Rock, XL Screw's network and systems administrator, for her role in "everything from the building design to the logistics of the move." He credited XL employees' "dedication to the move" and Rock's "above and beyond" efforts for the successful opening.

Editor's Note: The new address for XL Screw is 195 Schelter Rd. Lincolnshire, IL 60069. Tel: 847 383-2300 or 800 323-7367 Fax 847 383-2345 E-mail: xlw@xlscrew.com Web: xlscrew.com
