



KARDEX

BEST PRACTICE

Space saving proves the right medicine for Amersham Healthcare

With a multi-million pound investment planned for its Gloucester site, leading pharmaceutical giant Amersham Healthcare faced a major headache when it wanted to expand its business.

After a quarter of a century at the Gloucester site the company, which manufactures diagnostic imaging agents used by hospitals worldwide, needed a solution which would be innovative, forward-thinking and give it plenty of room to develop. With such specialised demands and the need to make space for the planned £7 million investment to take place, David Hine, section manager for Pharmaceutical Product Finishing at Amersham Healthcare turned to leading materials handling specialists Kardex Systems (UK) Ltd for help.

"I had seen the benefits of an earlier Kardex installation at one of our other sites but knew that because of the massive space savings required this would be a much more difficult project to tackle," he said.

developing a solution

Working on the need to save floor space while at the same time providing additional storage room, Kardex drew up plans to initially install five Kardex Shuttles and two Industriers at different areas within the factory site. However, since then, Amersham Healthcare has installed a number of DataStack units to take care of document storage requirements and additional Shuttles, bringing the total number of Kardex units in

place to 22. In doing so, Kardex has enabled Amersham Healthcare to plan a major expansion of its clean room facility in the production area, while in stores the...

...Shuttles have not only reduced the floor space footprint by half but increased holding capacity by 30%

Each unit took just three days to install and put into action.



David Hine, Amersham Healthcare

conforming to rigorous standards

Crucial to the process is the ability to store vast quantities of materials under rigorous procedures, which require strict security and access control. In addition, EEC regulation adds further complications

because it insists on all pharmaceuticals being sub-divided separately into different language categories according to their labels and depending on which country they are heading to.

Here, several giant Kardex Shuttles provide a complete bonded store, housing vial labels and the products themselves. Because the Shuttles have height sensors they are designed to automatically

'find' the correct storage area within the available space for whatever needs to be stored away. And, by keeping lot numbers on the same shelf, segregation of products is easy.

■ CHILLED STORAGE

■ ROOM FOR NEW OFFICES

■ DOCUMENT STORAGE



specialist chilled storage

While much of the work in progress is stored at room temperature, some parts of the production process need special temperature controls.

As part of Kardex' commitment to customer service, the company took David Hine to France where French customer Telemechanique has already stored three temperature controlled Shuttles which reach temperatures as low as minus 25 degrees Centigrade.

"Going to France was extremely useful because it enabled us to see the units in action and talk to their engineers about issues such as equipment stress at low temperatures," said David. "It gave us confidence and helped us be sure that we were making the right decision in investing in this type of equipment for our own production processes."

room for new offices

Further along the production line, in the main stores warehouse, the company has been able to build a whole new set of offices where previously space had been taken up by racking which stored anything from cleaning equipment to raw materials.

Existing storage facilities comprised of simple cupboards and racking frames, which not only took up a great deal of floor space but failed to fully utilise the full ceiling height.

David Hine said: "Before the new units were installed our stores area appeared to be fully stocked but the new equipment has allowed us to create the space for investment to take place.

"The Shuttles have given us a wide range of benefits besides the space saving, not least of which is the ease of delivery of all the materials needed. All the necessary components are now simply delivered at waist height for



transfer onto a trolley, which makes life much easier for all our employees.

"As a result, we've been able to put in several new offices, including a stores office, materials management office, locker rooms and workshops simply through the space we have saved by the introduction of the Kardex Shuttles."

David Hine, Amersham Healthcare

"We have achieved tremendous savings on space which was all due to the work which Kardex did in planning the space properly and making sure we had the right machines for the right jobs and the most cost effective solutions."

As well as the Shuttles, one of which is the biggest in the UK at 2.8 metres wide, several Industrier Carousels have been installed for storage of smaller products.

computer controlled document storage

Documents and batch records which, according to the Medicines Control Agency (MCA) need to be kept for a minimum of 10 years, are stored in two fire protected Kardex DataStack units, enabling them to be easily accessed by authorised staff.

The official checks of the Medicines Control Agency (MCA) and the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) call on a company

to be able to produce data in just 10 minutes but, says David Hine, "Thanks to the DataStack units the average document retrieval time is now just 30 seconds." And, because the DataStack units are all computer linked, the company can easily see who has accessed documents, when they were taken out, and when they were returned to the system. Due to the success of the Kardex systems, Amersham



Healthcare has reaped considerable benefits and continues to work closely with Kardex. The organisation plans to invest

in additional Kardex equipment in the future, in line with the organisations growth and development plans.

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