

# AS/R Systems Inc.

## Enhancing Labor Productivity & Space Utilization

**N**oble Corporation, a regional distributor of HVAC, plumbing & electrical materials, wanted to improve labor productivity and space utilization. Cutting 180,000 sq ft from its 400,000 sq ft Vaughan, Ontario DC, while increasing picking performance and reducing costs were key goals. In 2016, a client/vendor partnership was formed between Noble and AS/R Systems (with extensive experience in warehouse optimization, founded 1991), to evaluate and resolve these objectives.

Diagnostic focus was placed on profiling order and SKU activity trends. Order classes included store delivery, daily delivery (to construction sites) and priority walk-in clients. SKU activity was categorized by size and activity around pipe, pallet and “each pick” SKU’s, with subsets for fast, medium, and dead items. Initial data mining exposed that a small percentage of SKUs was responsible for most activity in each commodity class. Armed with granular information on critical work-flow and SKU attributes, Noble and AS/R developed solutions to maximize pick rates by commodity class. Fifty percent of activity was fit into 3 pods of 4 carousels. This configuration delivered high-speed, pick-to-light automation, increasing pick rates from 20-30 lines/hour, to 180+ lines/hour within a month and 240 lines/hour after 3 months. The solution also compressed broken case pick parts, once spread over hundreds of thousand square foot, into just 25,000 sq ft.

AS/R specializes in design and integration of goods-to-person (G2P) system solutions. Its technology delivers significant space and labor improvements to a broad base of distribution and production firms, at a fraction of the cost of market alternatives. The company supports clients as both expert solution provider and teacher, providing experience and training based on deep technical knowledge that maximizes return on integration projects. Design begins with a systematic Pro-FILE survey, mapping present operations and assessing opportunity for new technology. AS/R provides clients a clear idea of ROI based on labor and space utilization improvement, before investing. “Pay only for what you need - since no two businesses are the same, we ensure the right features are



selected to optimize the processes instead of handing clients (and having them pay for) those they do not need,” mentions Doug Robertson, founder and COO.

The diagnostic Pro-FILE gives new insights to clients based on meaningful order-to-SKU methods matching, while considering site-specific facility constraints. Pro-FILE reports apply traditional industrial engineering principles to determine best layout and location of key facility blocks (receiving, packing, shipping, dock locations and more). Careful consideration is given to optimal fit around columns, ceiling height and more. Efficient implementation leads

to maximum space utilization and enhanced labor productivity using G2P methods that require no travel down long/wide aisles to retrieve product.

“

Pay only for what you need - since no two businesses are the same, we ensure the right features are selected to optimize the processes

”

Another exciting offering is Magic Warehouse™ software (MW). MW is a cost-effective package, designed to automate picking. MW works both on and off carousels, using RF pick and tote management logic for integration of non-carousel zones. Its easy-to-use interface lets clients focus on value-add tasks, instead of managing complicated systems. When it comes to machine control, industrial engineering methods and workflow optimization, MW outclasses many large WMS (Warehouse Management System).

For pallet loads, long loads and dock work, AS/R offers very narrow aisle (VNA) and side-loader products that minimize space lost to wide aisles. In coming months, AS/R plans to introduce a pallet to person solution eliminating forklifts, operators and wide aisles while cutting labor and space. **LT**