



GEAR FOR SPORTS

CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

Custom Apparel Order Fulfillment

LP Pick-to-Light Solution

Container Routing (LP Convey) Solution

LP RF Picking Solution

Lightning Pick Software controls Weighing, Manifesting, Labeling and Shipping systems



“We had lots of walking time, so we needed a system that would reduce travel and would also simplify the picking process for our workers, because the majority of our workforce does not speak English. They actually speak seven different languages.

The Lightning Pick solution solved both problems”.

Randall Stabenow
VP of Manufacturing and Warehousing
GEAR FOR SPORTS



Company Profile

GEAR FOR SPORTS® has become the leader in custom decorated apparel and sportswear. Over the past 30 years the GEAR FOR SPORTS family of brands has grown to include GEAR FOR SPORTS, Champion, Robert Trent Jones Apparel, Sunice and Under Armour. From t-shirts, caps, fleece, luxury men’s fashions to performance wear and performance outerwear, GEAR FOR SPORTS® delivers their customers’ messages with the finest products available.

The Challenge

GEAR FOR SPORTS is the top brand of apparel sold in college bookstores, golf courses, resorts and military installations. Shirts and jackets are manufactured overseas as “blanks,” meaning that they arrive at GEAR without logos or designs. They are then picked by order and sent to six area manufacturing facilities where college and client logos are screened or embroidered onto the garments to customer specifications.

In 2004, GEAR wanted to improve the overall efficiency of their production operation by applying lean principals to their manufacturing and distribution processes. The goal was to improve the efficiency of their labor, improve productivity and maintain the highest quality standards for their products.

The Solution

To accomplish this, they first consolidated 5 separate warehouses into one new distribution center in Lenexa KS. The new facility was designed by the **Siggins Company** (North Kansas City, MO - phone: 816-421-7670, www.siggins.net), a full service material handling designer and supplier to the manufacturing, warehousing, and distribution industries.

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video speed challenge

Distribution champ

A new distribution center near Kansas City is expected to save GEAR For Sports a million dollars a year on distribution costs.

See Lightning Pick in action. Contact Lightning Pick Technologies today to receive a copy of the GEAR FOR SPORTS video case study, produced with *DC Velocity* magazine.



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The Solution (Continued from Page One)

The sophisticated design included narrow aisle storage, conveyors, a pop-up sorter, and a two-story pick module featuring 3,000 pick-to-light (PTL) light modules supplied by **Lightning Pick Technologies** (Germantown, WI - 262-251-2100, www.lightningpick.com).

Lightning Pick Technologies designed a cost-effective system that optimizes the DC's fulfillment based on pick frequency. Supervisors can monitor picking activity and order status in real time through Lightning Pick PC stations located throughout the facility.

The Lightning Pick software first identifies needed SKUs for each order and routes picking tasks to appropriate work zones.

Fast movers are selected with the **LP Pick**® system from flow racks. Lights direct the picking of items into order totes that are then placed onto a conveyor. Slower movers are selected from shelving using radio frequency terminals via the integrated **Lightning Pick RF Picking**® module. By utilizing the best technology for each order situation, GEAR FOR SPORTS has maximized its resources and provided a favorable return on investment.

In addition to the picking software, Lightning Pick Technologies provided extended applications to serve as middleware between the facility's **Oracle** ERP and individual machine controls.

LP Messenger controls the weighing, manifesting, labeling and shipping systems, while **LP Convey**® interfaces with the conveyor controls. Considering such complex systems, the integration went very smoothly.

"Everytime in the past when we added a third-party software we had problems," says Randy Staebenow, VP of manufacturing and warehousing for GEAR FOR SPORTS. "But we had no systems issues with the Lightning Pick software. That was a pleasant surprise."

The Lightning Pick Advantage

The Windows-based Lightning Pick PTL system has saved tremendously on labor over processes in the old facilities. Before, workers selected individual orders into wheeled carts. Often the items in the orders would be quite a distance apart.

"We had lots of walking time," recalls Randy. "We wanted a system that would reduce travel and would also simplify the picking process for our workers, because the majority of our workforce does not speak English. They actually speak seven different languages."

"The Lightning Pick solution solved both problems".

Now with the Lightning Pick system, workers function in designated zones and walk very little. Lights direct picking for each order, so the system transcends any language barriers.

"The system has simplified our training as well," adds Staebenow. "A new associate can be productive in about one fourth the time that it took under the old system."