



Inotec develops new 'docket grab' hanging sign for Samworth Brothers

When the Samworth Brothers company was looking for a new hanging sign for its chilled distribution site in Leicester they chose to partner with inotec which specialises in supplying bespoke warehouse labelling and line marking solutions. The result is an innovative 'docket grab' hanging sign that uses ballbearings to grip dockets. These signs, which can be either single or double-sided, are now being used in the pick by line area of Samworth's Oak Meadow facility.

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Glyn Maude

General Manager
Samworth Brothers Supply Chain

The Samworth Brothers site in Oak Meadow Leicester has a storage capacity of over 10,000 pallets across chill, deep chill and frozen. Around 580 people work on the site with orders being picked by 160 warehouse operatives.

Glyn Maude is General Manager, Samworth Brothers Supply Chain, he explains why the new sign was needed, "As our business has grown rapidly over the last few years we needed to change how we picked orders in this warehouse. Originally the whole area was racked, but it was decided to take part of the racking down to create a pedestrian only picking area surrounded by barriers.

"This meant we could present the products to the pickers in that area instead of getting them to pick out of the racking. The lanes of pallets run towards the racking area and the stock comes into the picking area from underneath the racking, deposited by fork lift truck.



"I knew that I would need hanging signs for the new area but couldn't see anything suitable on the market. I'd seen other companies using drainpipes cut into segments with a slit to hold a label and I'd thought that there has to be a better way of doing this so I approached Steve Towler at inotec. I already knew Steve as he'd helped me with line marking and signs for our marshalling lanes here in Leicester and done a great job. Once I'd given him the size of sign and what it needed to do, he went away and came up with the docket grab concept. A couple of mock-ups later, we had our 'docket grab' hanging sign.

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"In the pedestrian only zone the picker collects the pallet of stock using a hand pallet truck and walks down the picking line of pallets. He then scans the pallet label that is held in the hanging sign above a pallet, this details a retailer's order. The label tells them how many cases to put on that particular pallet for that order. This allows us to control what stock is going where.

"We know when a pallet is fully picked as we've set the height of the hanging sign and the length of the label to indicate the full height of an order. When the pallet is full the picker can clearly see there is no room for more stock on that pallet.





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“This means we have uniformity for all the pallets we’re picking. Prior to this we were sending pallets out that were all different heights – not many were too high but some were too low, now they all come out at a standard height.

“Our new way of working has helped us reduce the amount of pallets we’re sending out to retailers. It also ensures we fill the trucks up as much as we can so that we don’t put additional vehicles on the road. This reduces our distribution costs benefitting both us and our customers.

“A further advantage of the hanging signs is that the pallet labels are now up in the air and out of the way – before they were stuck on the pallet and could fall off, get stuck to something else or just generally go missing! The new sign system prevents this happening.

“Our pick accuracy is already really high at 99.98 per cent but we still have a margin for error that we want to eliminate. Although we’ve only been operating this pick by line system for a short time I am expecting to see an improvement in picking accuracy.

“The signage work that inotec has done here for us is great. We work really well together as our two companies have a lot in common in terms of work ethic and the way we view things. It’s a fantastic business, I’d give them ten out of ten every time.”



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For more information
please contact inotec UK