

Two-Level Storage Solution Maximizes Manufacturer's Stockroom Space

Prior to a redesign, Osram Sylvania's tool/spare parts stockroom included items stored on commercial shelves, racks, pegboards and on the floor.

For more than 100 years, Osram Sylvania has provided high-quality lighting products for applications such as general lighting, precision materials and components, electronic control systems and automotive. The company's automotive division is headquartered in Hillsboro, NH, and is considered the world's largest provider of automotive light sources. It has produced premier industry products including: red neon for brake light applications; amber neon for turn signals; fluorescent for auto interior lighting; and high-intensity discharge headlights. When the company was considering new equipment for its 250,000-sq.-ft. manufacturing facility, it was imperative to create new space within the existing environment, without new construction or major organizational changes to its processes.

Osram decided to acquire space from the tool/spare parts stockroom. The original stockroom was 3,300 sq. ft., which was sufficient to house all the parts and tools needed to produce the 1.5 million units shipped each day from Hillsboro. Under the new plan, the size of the stockroom would be reduced to 1,500 sq. ft. — 55% less than half the original size. It was vital that the stockroom store more parts in less space.

"This posed a challenge, since the number of items stored in the stockroom would not be reduced," says Paul Belliveau, Osram's Spare Parts stockroom manager. Further complicating matters, he adds, was the fact that "due to the increase in manufacturing, additional items were to be stored. We needed a storage solution that would house more items in less space."

Lista International, a Holliston, MA-based manufacturer of storage and workspace solutions, had outfitted Osram's original stockroom with modular drawer storage cabinets. For more than 30 years, Lista had provided Osram with additional cabinets. "We have been extremely satisfied with them," says Belliveau. "When I learned we needed to downsize the stockroom, I didn't hesitate to call them."

Osram had stored approximately half of their parts inventory — the fastest-moving parts — in existing Lista cabinets. The remaining half was kept in a mix of commercial shelves, racks, pegboards, and on the floor. To consolidate their expanded parts storage, Lista recommended that the company take advantage of the facility's full ceiling height. Osram decided to build a custom mezzanine system comprised of Lista modular drawer storage and shelf cabinets.

Level I of the mezzanine was designed to house small parts. Forty new Lista uniform-height drawer cabinet housings were secured together to store all high-usage, high-turnover parts and tools. To complete Level I, new shelf cabinets were stacked above and fastened to the drawer cabinets. Heavier, bulkier items can also be stored here. Osram re-used the older Lista drawer and shelf cabinets and transferred them to Level II of the mezzanine system.

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Osram upgraded its stockroom with a massline system, enabling it to maximize organization as well as consolidate a newly expanded parts mix.

To avoid downtime, Lista retrofitted the new Level I cabinet housings with the loaded drawers from the original cabinets. The retrofitted cabinets provided easy access to parts during the construction phase of the system. "The fact that we were able to retrofit old and new Lista storage systems together is a testament to the durability and flexibility of Lista storage equipment," says Belliveau. "Even though our stockroom became outdated, the Lista storage cabinets did not."

The storage system's new drawers were selected after Lista surveyed Osram's present and future storage needs. Partitions within each drawer can create organized, custom compartments that can be reconfigured at any time.

Additionally, Lista's drawers extend 100% from the housing so items stored at the rear of the drawer are accessible.

"Lista's ability to custom-design storage solutions was integral to the success of this project," says Belliveau. "They were the only choice for us. We'll see them in another 30 years when we need more cabinets."

Lista International Corp., 106 Lowland St., Holliston, MA; 800-959-0807.

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