



Freightliner
a Genesee & Wyoming Company

Working together with Freightliner to create a new depot stores operation

The Challenge

Unipart Rail has a number of successfully managed depot stores in the UK and Australia but following a detailed review of existing and potential customer's requirement, the company was challenged to develop an innovative approach to supply chain management based on Lean principles, with Unipart Rail responsible for supplying all materials and services required by a rail vehicle maintenance depot as close to the point of use as possible. The solution needed to be both cost effective and add real value to the depot maintenance teams.

Freightliner at the same time approached Unipart Rail as they were opening a new depot in Crewe that would maintain the Class 86 and 90 vehicles and were looking for an innovative solution that would support their maintenance activities.

The Solution

Unipart Rail developed the SmartServe solution which offers three levels of service elements that provides a flexible and scalable solution that can be fine-tuned to customer's requirements. The Freightliner teams were looking for a fully comprehensive solution, the SmartServe Premier proposition. This solution was founded on a number of key principles:

- A collaborative working relationship with the customer
- Material supplied by Unipart Rail provided as close to the point of use as possible using integrated technology that included vending machines and Kanbans to improve service levels, increase efficiency and reduce costs.
- Material paid for once consumed, at the point of use
- Skilled professional team managing every aspect of the supply chain, including dedicated forecasting, planning, customer service and engineering support
- Robust, capable, reliable and sustainable processes across the whole value stream
- Use of bespoke forecasting software to plan and manage material requirements
- Use of UR View graphical analysis software and visual displays to provide transparency and measures to demonstrate performance and drive improvement activity across the supply chain

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Unipart Rail and Freightliner agreed the solution and worked together to develop a project plan based on 2 key work streams:

Material supply – Unipart Rail used their knowledge and expertise to identify and source materials and develop an inventory plan that ensured all planned materials for exams were available at the depot when required. In addition casualty, consumables and tooling requirements were identified and agreed with Freightliner. This activity ensured that all parts, tooling, consumables and PPE were available as required at the depot with a replenishment from the Doncaster DC on a daily basis.

Depot store – Unipart Rail designed the stores layout, identified the storage media required and planned the build to house all of the materials required. In addition the vending machines, kitting trolleys and fastener and material Kanbans were developed to ensure that material is available at the point of use and replenished by the Unipart Rail on-site team.



The Result

A rapid deployment team facilitated the stores build and operation within 10 days ensuring all of the materials were available upon completion of the build. The systems and processes required to operate at the depot were developed and implemented for go-live, with processes that interfaced with Unipart Rail modified as required ensuring high levels of performance.

The results of the detailed planning process and working collaboratively with Freightliner were:

- Full development of the SmartServe solution from concept to implementation within a 9 month period
- Supply of all materials and tooling to Freightliner in a cost effective manner to commence operations, to the agreed schedule

- Freightliner receiving high levels of material availability for planned, casualty and on condition requirements of 98%
- No investment in inventory by Freightliner to reduce their cashflow requirements
- Improved cost efficiencies by the customer of up to 10% annual savings
- Highly skilled Unipart Rail depot resource provided full time on-site to support planning and material supply activity and aid a continuous improvement culture

“In my experience this is very unique. With Unipart Rail having many suppliers and very good supply management skills these will combine to give us the benefits of having increased vehicles back in traffic and reduced operational costs.”

Dave Curtis, Engineering Production Director of Freightliner Maintenance Ltd.



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