



Performance in motion



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Dorner Autologik Develops Pharmaceutical Reprocessing Automation Project

Dorner Autologik was recently awarded a very unique project for a pharmaceutical third party logistics (3PL) provider that provides drug reprocessing for major retail chains and pharmaceutical manufacturers. The drugs handled range from common antibiotics to highly controlled narcotics. This keeps their facility and processes under the watchful eye of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to ensure that the product is properly tracked and routed to the correct destination for destruction or return to manufacturer.

Using their manual processes, the 3PL customer was constrained to processing no more than 2,200 cases of drugs per day. Shipments often arrive by the truckload where hundreds and thousands of pounds of varying size cartons of up to 50 pounds in weight are offloaded into a secure processing area. Due to solid business growth, the 3PL customer wanted to handle larger volumes without relocating or significantly remodeling the facility. The Dorner Autologik design team worked with the 3PL customer to engineer a design that would work within these constraints and yet fully automate the identification and sorting of the incoming cartons. The end result is an easily maintained, flexible, and automated system that is capable of processing up to 12,000 cases per shift and is expandable to support further growth.

The system features a unique product induction area that allows truck drivers to unload directly onto a Dorner inclined, powered belt conveyer. Packages are then properly gapped by the system before entering a multi-identification tunnel that captures the barcoded shipper tag information. If the package content includes RFID tagged drugs, the Dorner Autologik RFID system can peer through the over-wrap carton and instantaneously capture hundreds of RFID serial numbers before the package leaves the tunnel. This information is then stored in a database to begin the all important immutable tracking required by the FDA.

After leaving the barcode tunnel, the package moves to an in-line high speed labeling station where it receives a "license plate" label to uniquely identify the package. This license plate number is married with the other tracking information in the database. The package then continues into another secured area on a Dorner inclined, powered belt conveyer onto a fully integrated cross belt sorter. Since the Dorner Autologik system knows the belt location, contents, and destination location of each package, the cross belt sorter smoothly routes the drugs to their correct processing lanes where the drugs receive their final disposition.

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