

FROM CHAOS TO CONTROL: THE TURNAROUND IN TIME FOR BUSY SEASON

100% of Peak season orders shipped in less than 3 days

Background

Company:

An aquatics product distributor was preparing for busy season which forecasted to be 4 times the normal volume of slower months.

Situation:

While the business had demonstrated strong performance outside the busy season – shipping up to **71% of orders within 24 hours** – that performance consistently collapsed during peak months. Order to ship times stretched to **5 – 8 days**, labor productivity varied by as much as **65%**, inventory accuracy issues created fulfillment errors, and leadership was forced into daily firefighting on the warehouse floor.

Management was evaluating a **robotic picking solution** to address these issues, but they could not implement the automation in time for their busy season. With peak season approaching, the risk of missed shipments, margin erosion, and customer dissatisfaction was rising rapidly.

Objective:

The company retained ProAction to support their team through the busy season. Our goal was to help the company ship all orders within 3 days even with the peak demand.

Actions Taken

ProAction identified that The client's challenges were **not caused by a lack of technology or space**, but by breakdowns in inventory accuracy, picking discipline, warehouse layout, slotting, labor management, and daily operating cadence. Rather than rushing into automation, ProAction focused on:

- Redesigning picking processes using existing resources
- Creating a daily operating window to stabilize flow
- Improving slotting and warehouse layout for "A" items
- Introducing second shift replenishment and put away discipline
- Establishing KPIs and Management for Daily Improvement (MDI)
- Addressing excess and obsolete inventory consuming productive space

A pilot demonstrated, in week 1, a **100% improvement in single line order (40% of orders) picking**, validating that significant capacity and speed gains were available **without automation**.

IMPLEMENTATION IMPACT

25% increase
in picking throughput

100% of non-custom orders shipped next day
in non-peak season

100% of Peak season orders shipped
in less than 3 days

- Reduced labor frustration and turnover risk
- Improved inventory accuracy and replenishment control
- Automation deferred until the operation is ready to absorb it successfully

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