



Achieving Ergonomic Sustainability with the Gorbels Pivot Pro

Industry:
Manufacturer

Product:
Flooring Materials

The Problem:
Aging workforce getting worn down throughout the day

The Solution:
Pivot Pro®



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A large manufacturer of flooring materials makes a considerable effort toward environmentally friendly products, using recycled and biodegradable materials in its products whenever possible. While their process was targeting environmental sustainability, it was becoming very obvious that it was not ergonomically sustainable.

“Over the years we had made some minor tweaks to our process, but our work force is aging, we’ve got a lot of women on the floor, and we realized they were getting too worn down throughout the work day,” said the Vice President of Operations. “We were seeing injury reports pile up that had lots of sprains of the wrists and shoulders. We realized that we needed a change.”

The area with the highest injury rate was in the packaging area where finished product was being fed into multiple conveyor lines where they were manually picked up, placed onto lift tables to be palletized and shrink wrapped for shipping. The boxes ranged in size, but are most typically 22 inches square by 6 inches deep with a weight of about 60 pounds.

The search began for a safer and reliable method of unloading the conveyors. “To me, reliability means you can count on something for every day, every shift,” said the VP of Operations. “Once we open the

doors on Monday morning, we don't stop production until Saturday morning, and I need my equipment to be available for my folks."

An additional requirement was that one product serves multiple lines; however that was difficult with several building supports in the unloading area.

The company chose a freestanding Gorbelt Pivot Pro® articulating jib crane with a 150 pound capacity, 9-foot height under boom and 12-foot span. The Pivot Pro® was paired with a Vaculex vacuum lifter. The articulating arm of the Pivot Pro® allowed one worker to use one product to unload two conveyor lines, while reaching around two building columns between the two conveyors.

Management was cautiously optimistic about changing the packaging process. "People typically hate change. I expect that. We introduced the Pivot Pro® to our palletizing area, and they can't live without it now. My employees are happy, and it makes for a much safer work environment."

"I've been here for 17 years, and it's the best improvement we've made since I started," said a female operator. "It's like heaven, like I'm not even lifting anything anymore."

After the first year of use, the company is happy to report that the Pivot Pro® is meeting productivity, safety and durability expectations. "We've had no injuries, no complaints, no problems whatsoever," said the VP of Operations.