



Benham BMW Use Two Lean-Lifts To Maximise Efficiency



About Benham BMW

Bayerische Motoren Werke AG, or to give it its more familiar name 'BMW', is a German automobile, motorcycle and engine manufacturing company founded in 1917. BMW's UK operations are based in Bracknell, Berkshire. Here they are responsible for importing BMW vehicles into the UK and supplying them for sale through an independent dealer network. One such dealer is the leading BMW supplier in the West Midlands; Benham Wolverhampton.

Opened in March 2009, Benham Wolverhampton was custom built to increase showroom floor space whilst also improving the quality of their after sales services. The new facility incorporates industry leading workshop facilities such as a dedicated MOT Service Area which contains twenty car repair bays in addition to two motorcycle repair bays.

About Industore

Industore are the exclusive distributor of German manufacturer Hänel's automated storage and retrieval systems for the UK and Ireland. They specialise in the design, supply, installation and servicing of automated storage solutions, vertical carousels, storage lifts and related control and software solutions.

They have a nationwide sales and service network with offices in London, Birmingham, Manchester, Cardiff, Belfast, Glasgow, Dublin and Galway.

The Challenge

Benham BMW found that they were beginning to outgrow their old sales and service centre. Day-to-day they were beginning to face challenges being brought on by a lack of storage space with the most adverse impact being placed on their Service Department. All stock was being stored on traditional racking that was proving very difficult to monitor, restock and generally keep organised at an acceptable level.

The Parts Department was holding an average of around £300k of stock at any one time. The traditional racking they were using took up a lot of space, posed security issues and was also extremely difficult to keep organised and clean. Engineers couldn't keep track of what parts and tools they were taking – if they took a part in error and then returned it to the wrong place the stock checking suffered. In addition there was a lack of accountability and traceability. If a part or tool went missing it was very difficult to track the origin of the initial mistake. Likewise if a tool had been stored in error it was very difficult to locate. All these issues had a knock on effect to the speed of servicing and repairs.

Outside the physical aspect of storage, the majority of the system relied on paper based forms being filled out by engineers and service staff. The system suffered as a consequence of the space and organisational challenges, proving itself difficult to manage as Benham BMW grew. Therefore when the decision was made to construct new premises, the management approached Industore to work with them at the design stage, incorporating their automated storage solutions.



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The Solution

Industore already had a working relationship with BMW having installed twelve Hänel Lean-Lift's into the UK headquarters in Bracknell. This installation, in addition to the multiple Hänel Lean-Lifts and Rotomats installed in various other car dealerships across of the UK, meant that Industore were in the perfect position to provide a solution to best meet Benham BMW's challenges.

Working closely with Benham BMW at the design stage, Industore assessed which processes they wanted to improve and advised that the best solution would be to install two Hänel Lean-Lifts.

Industore therefore installed one 7m high Hänel Lean-Lift for the Service Department to help better keep and manage their stock, whilst one 7m high, dual access Hänel-Lean lift was installed to link the Service Department with the service bays, allowing engineers to store their bespoke servicing tools as well as collecting parts.

The system now allows the parts team to load up a shelf in the stock room's access hatch and put it into the Lean-Lift for each individual scheduled job in a specific day. All the engineers will then have a barcode on their job sheet that, when scanned, will bring down the relevant shelf containing all the parts needed for that specific job to the service area's hatch. Essentially now any pre-booked work can be loaded into the dual access Lean-Lift and the parts department will not have to speak with the technicians unless an unexpected part is required on a job.

Final Word From The Customer

Simon Wilkes, Parts Manager at Benham BMW said: "Initially we looked at Industore's solutions to save floor space and help us maximise the number of service bays in our new facility. However we were also aware that we needed a solution that was going to help us organise and maintain our stock better. The Lean-Lifts not only helped us to achieve our goals, but they have actually exceed them.

Since we opened in mid-2009 we have managed to go from holding £300,000 worth of stock in the Parts Department to now stocking around £80,000. This is a result of huge improvements in stock utilisation and accuracy. The Lean-Lift is far more accurate than the stock forms that we previously used.

Obviously Industore's automated storage solutions have saved us floor space, but an important area that has helped us improve as a department is the traceability that the Lean-Lift's offer. If anyone enters information incorrectly or accidentally take the wrong part it is now extremely easy to trace the error back and see its origin. This saves us a lot of investigative work and time spent on finding missing stock. Technicians can also use the system to see who had a tool last - if a tool goes missing they don't need to run around the whole service area trying to find it, they just look at the machine logs.

I would recommend Industore and I would definitely recommend the Hänel Lean-Lift's that they have installed. The overall improvement in organisation has been massive and it is difficult to think about the way we used to operate before the introduction of the Lean-Lifts."



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