

# STORAGE AUTOMATION JOURNAL



## Chef Works Recipe For Distribution Success

### OneTouch Distribution

Companies operating complex warehouses and distribution centers are constantly looking at technology and processes to help increase efficiency and productivity.

### Warehouse Execution

With the need to access real-time data, make decisions quickly and anticipate challenges, facilities managers are increasingly turning to warehouse execution solutions.

### Comparing VLMs

With so many Vertical Lift Modules (VLM) options on the market, it's easy to be overwhelmed with deciding which machine will provide you with the best output.



## CHEF WORKS INCREASES EFFICIENCY, ACCURACY AND STORAGE OPTIMIZATION WITH GOODS-TO-PERSON FULFILLMENT

**C**hef Works is not your run-of-the-mill distributor and manufacturer. With roots that date back to the 1960's, Chef Works has emerged as an industry leader in the design, development and management of uniform and culinary apparel programs across the globe.

The mission of the family-owned-and-operated business is to provide clients with new, innovative, high-quality products at competitive

prices along with the tools needed to manage any uniform program --regardless of size. Chef Works is dedicated to delivering uniform solutions that fit their customers' needs.

### **Innovative Product Lines for the Culinary Industry**

From executive chefs, to front-desk personnel and housekeeping staff, the common thread is Chef Works' commitment to excellence in

*“Since we installed White Systems Horizontal Carousels and StorBot Robotic System, which seamlessly integrated with Intek’s Supply Chain Execution software, we’ve been able to increase efficiency and, more importantly for our customers, accuracy.” - Jan Buettner, PMP - Sr. Project Manager*

design, superior choice of fabrics, stylish tailoring, durability and value.

To ensure Chef Works remains a leading innovator in the apparel industry, regular discussions are held with panels of culinary and hospitality leaders to gather front-line feedback.

Responses are immediately implemented in the design of new products to enhance existing products lines. Chef Works is an award-winning company that has also been highly regarded for the superior comfort of their apparel and flexibility in offering mix-and-match color palettes and styles to suit the needs of each client.

#### **Not your Typical Distributor**

Chef Works’ award-winning business model includes value-added services such as custom embroidery, alterations and silk screening for their customers on virtually any apparel item that they distribute to their clients – which includes more than 100,000 items. This poses significant challenges from a distribution standpoint because they are managing the fulfillment of customer orders that includes items with and without value-added services. For example, this might include embroidering a restaurant’s name and a chef’s

name on a garment.

As a leading supplier of chef apparel, Chef Works fulfillsg lobal orders from their two distribution centers. The main distribution center for the last 10 years is located in Poway, Calif., and now a new distribution center has been added in Richmond Hill, Ontario, Canada.

#### **High-Volume Distribution**

Chef Works annually moves more than 12 million units through their U.S. distribution center and a significant percentage of those units have value-added services. All of this is done in a 35,000-square-foot distribution center with only 30 distribution associates splitting two shift s

#### **Increasing Efficiency and Accuracy for Chef Works**

Chef Works began automating its distribution center in 2007. In addition to moving to a larger facility, the transition included implementing a Warehouse Management System (WMS) and Warehouse Control System (WCS). These new capabilities included RF mobile device bar code scanning, real-time inventory tracking, inventory allocation, paperless pick tickets, order consolidation

***“We move in excess of 12 million units through our distribution center on an annual basis, allowing us to run seven days a week, 24 hours a day. We are very dependent on White Systems & Intek’s support and service to ensure uptime. Having White Systems and Intek provide such high-quality service has really enabled us to meet our stated objectives.” - Dave Roth - Chief Operations Officer***

and improved order picking efficiency and accuracy thanks to White Systems Horizontal Carousels for order fulfillment.

Chef Works partnered with Intek to implement their Supply Chain Execution Software for the WMS/WCS software solution and White Systems for the horizontal carousel solution. This partnership provided seamless integration to all of the automation equipment, as well as their Sage 300 ERP and Logistyx Technologies shipping and parcel manifesting system.

Prior to implementing Intek’s WMS/WCS, Chef Works was picking orders using printed pick tickets and physical locations labeled with each SKU. They relied on employees to locate each SKU and to climb a ladder, when necessary, to complete the pick. Order priorities were handled manually using the printed pick tickets. As you can imagine, this was a cumbersome and time-consuming process.

The transformation took approximately six months to complete. With two pods of three horizontal carousels each, one operator has access to more than 3,000 pick locations. Picking accuracy quickly rose to 98.9 percent after implementing the horizontal carousels with pick

to light. This has enabled them to provide excellent accuracy to their customers. In addition, they have added almost 200 Flow Rack pick faces to accommodate high-moving items. This enables the simultaneous replenishment of pick faces while continuing to pick orders. Chef Works’ goal was not to reduce staff, but to keep pace with the growth while maximizing the working space and inventory.

The system has been expanded to include an automated order consolidation storage system utilizing additional White Systems Horizontal Carousels and a White Systems Storbot automated robotic storage system. This expanded system, which integrates with Intek’s software, was instrumental in driving efficiency with one of the more difficult aspects of the operation -- picking customer orders that include items with and without value-added services.

This order profile is very common and the White Systems Storbot solution with horizontal carousels enabled Chef Works to stage and store value-added service items (i.e. embroidered items) for orders. From there they could automatically release and process the associated non-value-added service items for picking and consolidating the completed order (i.e. an order that includes value-



-added service items (i.e. embroidered items) for orders.

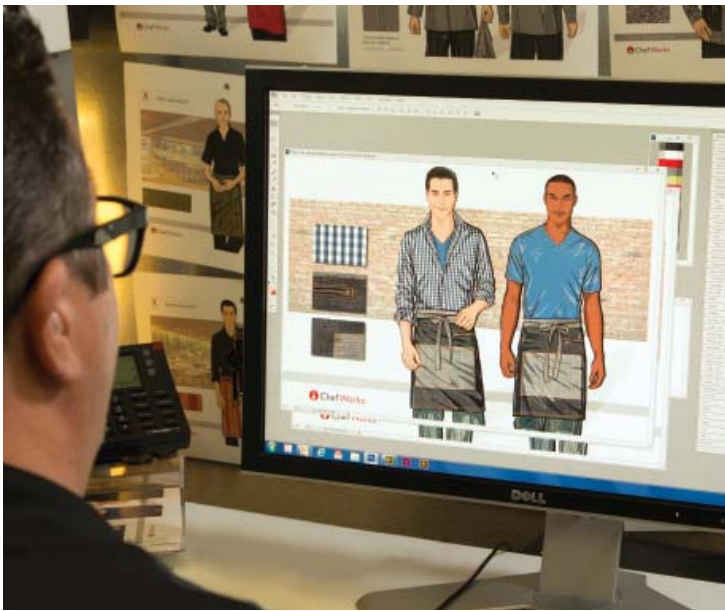
### **How Intek and White Systems Helped**

Intek and White Systems were selected as the solutions for Chef Works. The integration planning and implementation fit the required timeline and provided growth capacity for five years. Intek provided integration with the customized embroidery process, which requires passing detailed instructions between multiple databases, and the Chef Works Sage 300 ERP. Some level of modification was required to accomplish this task while maintaining the integrity of Intek's software for support and future upgrades. This integration provided additional tracking and data analysis tools such as real-time order status for customers, cycle counting, order inventory transactions, operator performance and the ability to

quarantine product electronically (eliminating the need to manually move products to special locations).

Many of Intek's configurations are accessible to the user to set up and modify with changing business conditions. Intek and White Systems utilize robust, proven technologies to reduce any operations down time. Both have sufficient customer support systems in place to take care of most day-to-day issues, and both systems integrated with Chef Works' information technology automation. This allowed the straight-forward addition of more conveyors, carousels and automation well past the initial installation.

Intek's Supply Chain Execution system brings everything together and fully integrates the entire operation from receiving through shipping and everything in



*“White Systems and Intek are a fantastic combination of the right technology and the right equipment to help us deliver our products in a fast, accurate and efficient way to our customers.” - Amanda Stuckey - VP, Marketing*

between. This includes the White Systems Horizontal Carousels for picking and the Horizontal Carousels and StorBot for order staging and consolidation, Sage 300 ERP, Logistyx Technologies shipping and manifesting system, and all RF Mobile Device operations for the fast-moving flow rack picking and high bay/narrow aisle racking system.

### **Chef Works, Intek & White Systems – Partners for the Future**

It is clear this has been a successful venture for all parties involved because Chef Works is in its 10th year partnering with Intek and White Systems – a relationship that has extended well beyond the five-year growth requirement. Chef

Works has quadrupled its business during that time while distribution associates have doubled. Safe to say, they are happy with the operational accuracies the Intek and White Systems solutions provide.

Chef Works looks forward to a continued partnership with the goal of reducing lead-times and improving satisfaction to their customers well into the future!

# Are you suffering from warehouse anxiety?

## Our Warehouse Supply Chain Execution Solutions are here to help!

### Built for your Warehouse

Are your labor costs growing faster than revenue? Is your CFO breathing down your neck about inventory accuracy? Is customer service screaming at you about order accuracy? Has your business model changed and now you must support Omni channel distribution? Do you need your ERP/WMS to do more for you - but you can't wait 5 years for it? Do you need a WCS, WES or MES but don't really know?

If you are drowning in acronyms and looking for a partner with proven results, look no further - Intek can help you!

