Case Study: Premier® Yarns and Carolina Handling

PREMIER® RAYMOND CAROLINA HANDLING

RETAIL CASE STUDY

Overview & Challenge

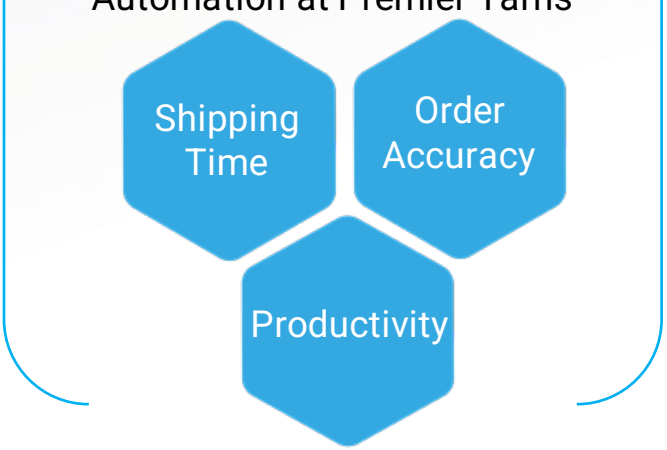
A leading North American manufacturer and distributor of hand knitting yarns, Premier® Yarns in Harrisburg, NC opened as a mass market distributor in 2005 with a sister company, Universal Yarns, selling to smaller, independent retailers.

The company launched a website in 2008 and, in 2010, established an e-commerce platform for online sales to end users. Before the pandemic, sales online had slowly increased from an average of five orders per day to about 20. But when Covid forced retailers to close, Premier's online orders immediately jumped to 400–500 per day.

"In 2022, on Black Friday, we got slammed with orders on our dot.com business," said Premier Yarns President Hal Ozbelli. "FedEx was coming three times each day for pickup, and we regularly ran out of supplies like boxes and tape."

As orders continued to pour in, Premier owners knew they needed an alternative to their largely manual process.

They turned to long-time material handling partner, Carolina Handling. "One of the solutions they recommended was Locus Robotics. After we visited a few of the companies that are currently using these systems, it was a no-brainer. We have found the right partner and team to work with," said Ozbelli.



Retail company doubles daily picks with LocusBots

RETAIL CASE STUDY

Results

With the new system, 12 mobile Locus robots deliver picked orders to an induction area where they are placed onto a top conveyor and delivered to packing stations on each side.

Premier Yarns already has seen a return on investment, doubling its daily shipments to an average of 1,000 per day, according to Warehouse Manager Marsha Sanders.

"Our daily picks have doubled, and we've gone from a huge window time frame of shipping our orders — 5 to 10 business days down to 2 to 3 business days.," said Sanders. "We've seen that transition happen pretty quickly."

Pick accuracy has also improved, along with employee satisfaction.

"It helps with mispicks because our robots distinguish which items to put in the totes," Sanders said. "It's also a lot less physical because our pickers are assigned to designated aisles, and they now are hands-free. They aren't pushing around carts; so, with the flow, they're able to replenish, work and clean the aisles as they're going without anything in their way."

The dashboards also assist with replenishing and planning.

"We're able to assess our open picks from the TV screens provided to us by Locus, so we're able to see where all our line picks are daily — how many robots are in those areas, how many quick picks we have," Sanders said. "If we see there are a lot of picks in a certain area, we know we need to focus on those aisles and make sure they're staying replenished and always have stock so our bots can go."

Results

100% Increase in Daily Shipments

80% Decrease in Shipping Time

\+ Pick Accuracy

\+ Happier Employees