

CASE STUDY – MOBILE FLOW RACK

MOBILE FLOW RACKS SLASH COST, TIME

Lithonia is the nation's largest manufacturer of lighting products, offering thousands of lighting products for residential, commercial and industrial applications. It was the number and variety of products that challenged Six Sigma Project Manager Willie Johnson when he looked to improve assembly line productivity at the company's plant in Cochran, Georgia.

Lithonia was using a conveyor assembly line that incorporated fixed place flow systems and full pallet stations. Over the past few years, customer demand for greater product variety, style and functionality changed product assembly requirements from an ongoing operation with few changeovers to one that was interrupted with many changeovers. Johnson decided that one way to meet the changing requirements of the production process was to switch from fixed racks to a mobile rack system that would offer increased flexibility in setting up and modifying assembly operation.

Johnson contacted Keneco and mobile racks were installed on the Gotham Downlight GRSE/AFV product line. This line, under the

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direction of Line Supervisor Geneva Tinsley, assembles over 50 models of the Lithonia's Vertisys lighting fixture. The new mobile racks provided new flexibility on moving materials in and out of the assembly line, allowed the parts to be positioned closer to the operators, and offered better identification methods for



part location. In addition, if the GRSE/AFV product was to be built on a different assembly line within the plant, the mobile flow system could be easily moved to the needed line. “The use of mobile racks reduced staging time by 20 to 25% and, because of better positioning on the line, increased assembly efficiency as well”, according to Johnson. Adds Tinsley, “Another benefit not to be overlooked is the ease with which the plant floor can be cleaned, improving the workplace environment”.

“Keneco's mobile flow racks are a great concept for manufacturing that involves high volume changeover rates such as those experienced on our GRSE/AFV assembly line”, concludes Johnson. “it is a concept that we can spread across the plant, simplifying the process of changing from order to order when different parts are required.

Keneco, Inc.