

# Analysis supports wholesaler growth

**T**he management of clothing wholesaler Weird Fish approached Gideon Hillman Consulting to develop its warehouse and logistics resources after sales to major high street retailers boosted growth.

The brand, born in 1993, has a core business of wholesaling quirky clothes to 400+ independent retail outlets, and also sells through the internet and through five of its own dedicated retail shops in the South West of England. It has seen a significantly increased growth rate in the last two years driven by supply to major high street retail chains.

"We approached Gideon Hillman Consulting as they were highly recommended to us by another company for whom its specialist Warehouse and Logistics team carried out a similar project with excellent results," says Spencer

Dodington, finance director at Weird Fish.

The company has approximately 30,000 sq ft of warehousing and offices in Cheltenham, which

is the national distribution centre for the UK and currently fulfils all the orders for the business.

The warehouse operation is primarily a break bulk, replenishment and pick & pack operation to suit the order profiles of the traditional customer base.

However the recent growth in sales to major high street retailers has created the need for Weird Fish to review and reconfigure both its operational and planning processes.

The target for the team from Gideon Hillman Consulting was to design the optimised solution, reflecting the changing business profile, and to support implementation in December 2010 when warehouse activity is

traditionally low prior to the intake of the Spring/Summer 2011 range.

The consultants carried out a review of all physical aspects of the warehouse operations from goods received through to order despatch; as well as a detailed review of historical and projected order profiles.

"We undertook a comprehensive mapping exercise of the existing pick face layouts, picking routes and operating procedures, identifying key areas for improvement, and designing practical solutions, in

order to improve order pick speed, simplify the picking operation and consequently reduce costs. This also allowed us to generate capacity to accommodate the clients projected growth," says Paul Trudgian MILT,

project director for Gideon Hillman Consulting.

The consultants worked closely with the Weird Fish management and warehouse teams to find pragmatic solutions to specifically suit the client's unique requirements. The team was able to identify to Weird Fish the cost and efficiency benefits of the proposed solutions by clearly presenting the pick rates and the cost per item picked for the optimised solution versus the

current operation.

"The result was a sensible and practical solution which focused on our real needs, objectives and capabilities, and gave us a clear direction on how to continue improving our warehouse operations in the future," concludes Dodington.



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