

HONEYWELL COLLABORATES WITH URM STORES INC. TO OPTIMIZE ENTIRE OPERATION FOR PRODUCTIVITY GAINS

Case Study



Honeywell

OVERVIEW

Started in 1921, member-owned food distributor URM Stores, Inc. overcame hurdles in their 100-year history including the Great Depression and financing challenges to expand over the years into a 655,000 sq ft. facility that manages its 26,000 items that bring in an average weekly inventory of \$45 million. Headquartered in Spokane, Washington, URM has grown its sales volume to over \$1.3 billion and employs over 2,800 individuals at URM and its subsidiaries.

With the company preparing to undergo significant change and projected growth, all while navigating COVID-19-related challenges, URM welcomed the opportunity to collaborate with Honeywell and warehouse technology partner, [Mountain Leverage](#), to evaluate their whole operation for ongoing satisfaction and value. After walking with Honeywell through a Customer Satisfaction Program (CSP) assessment, URM received a comprehensive analysis of their operations, along with recommendations on how to improve productivity with process optimizations.

QUICK FACTS

Customer Profile

- Customer: URM Stores, Inc.
- Locations: Spokane, WA
- Industry: Food Distributor
- Website: <https://www.urmstores.com/>

Customer Results

- Anticipated 22-28% overall productivity gains from batch picking analysis*
- Process enhancements to shorten pick paths and picker productivity
- Anticipated time savings from slotting demand into shorter pick paths

Why URM Chose Honeywell

- Consultative approach and value-driven dialogue with Sr. Business Consultants
- Prepare for growth with optimized processes and strategic relationship

**Based on findings from Honeywell's Customer Satisfaction Program assessment. Results may vary.*



BACKGROUND

Throughout the CSP, Honeywell and Mountain Leverage analyzed URM's current picking processes and warehouse operations to provide productivity-boosting recommendations, such as the implementation of batch picking and demand-based slotting strategies. Director of Warehouse Operations for URM, Josh Leech, explained, "When Honeywell reached out, we took this as an opportunity to have them look at what we're doing right now, find out what we can do better and point out areas to increase value."

Especially with the labor market being tight and employees seizing the opportunity to move to different jobs, URM wanted to provide their employees with the most efficient and streamlined warehouse operations so that they could have a competitive advantage in the job market. The analyses and operational insights provided through the CSP provided URM with tangible recommendations to implement that would help minimize turnover in the warehouse throughout this tough job landscape. Leech noted that the collaboration with Honeywell and Mountain Leverage, and the operational insights from the CSP, were a critical part of their strategy to empower their workers to have the best experience while operating in the warehouse.

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION PROGRAM

A loyal Honeywell customer for over 20 years, URM was confident that Honeywell would be able to help optimize their existing operations to improve productivity and set them up for future growth through a consultative engagement. Working as a team, URM, Honeywell and Mountain Leverage were able to identify ways to achieve those goals.

Leech shared, "We've had this solution and processes in place so long, we were excited to see how Honeywell's team could help us make it even better and maximize the use of what we have."

For URM, quality and service are two of the most important things they strive for in their operations and the best way they can continue providing quality services is to have quality people in the warehouse.

"The only way you have good people in your warehouse is to keep your people. You keep your people by making sure you give them the right tools, the right training, the right everything. That way, they're leaving work feeling accomplished, not finishing a shift frustrated and mad."

– JOSH LEECH, DIRECTOR OF WAREHOUSE OPERATIONS FOR URM

As URM was looking at every possible way to improve operations and empower their people, the process improvements spanning their entire operations were a critical next step. Analysis on slotting, batch picking implementation and material handling, followed up with data-backed recommendations, provided URM with comprehensive workflow recommendations.

With these recommendations and insights, URM could take the next step to further warehouse operations to benefit from even greater productivity benefits, improve picker experiences and meet ROI requirements.

BENEFITS

One of the biggest benefits to URM's relationship with Honeywell was the trust between Honeywell, URM and Mountain Leverage, and the "pursuit of excellence" mindset that was at the forefront of their conversations.

Because of the trusted relationship with URM, Honeywell and Mountain Leverage were able to engage them about virtually any aspect of their operations, which allowed them to provide more feedback from their comprehensive analysis.

"The Honeywell team didn't want to sell me anything, they just wanted to help us do better and engage in meaningful dialogue to help us achieve that goal. That's it."

- JOSH LEECH, DIRECTOR OF WAREHOUSE OPERATIONS FOR URM

With Honeywell supporting its operations and ongoing satisfaction, URM is well-positioned to handle the projected growth, while keeping a close check on picker experiences and process efficiency. Sr. Business Consultant at Honeywell,

Mike Wooldridge, elaborates, "We strive to live up to our job titles. When we engage with a company, it's about helping the business meet their consumer demands with a consultative approach that analyzes the operation holistically."

Leech closed by saying, "I want to make sure that all the technology and processes are in place so I can confidently tell our CEO 'Bring on more business.' With Honeywell, we're moving faster and more efficiently and I'm excited to be a part of it."

Most importantly, he feels he's helping empower his employees to succeed at URM by providing the best possible tools and processes to do their jobs effectively.



For more information

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