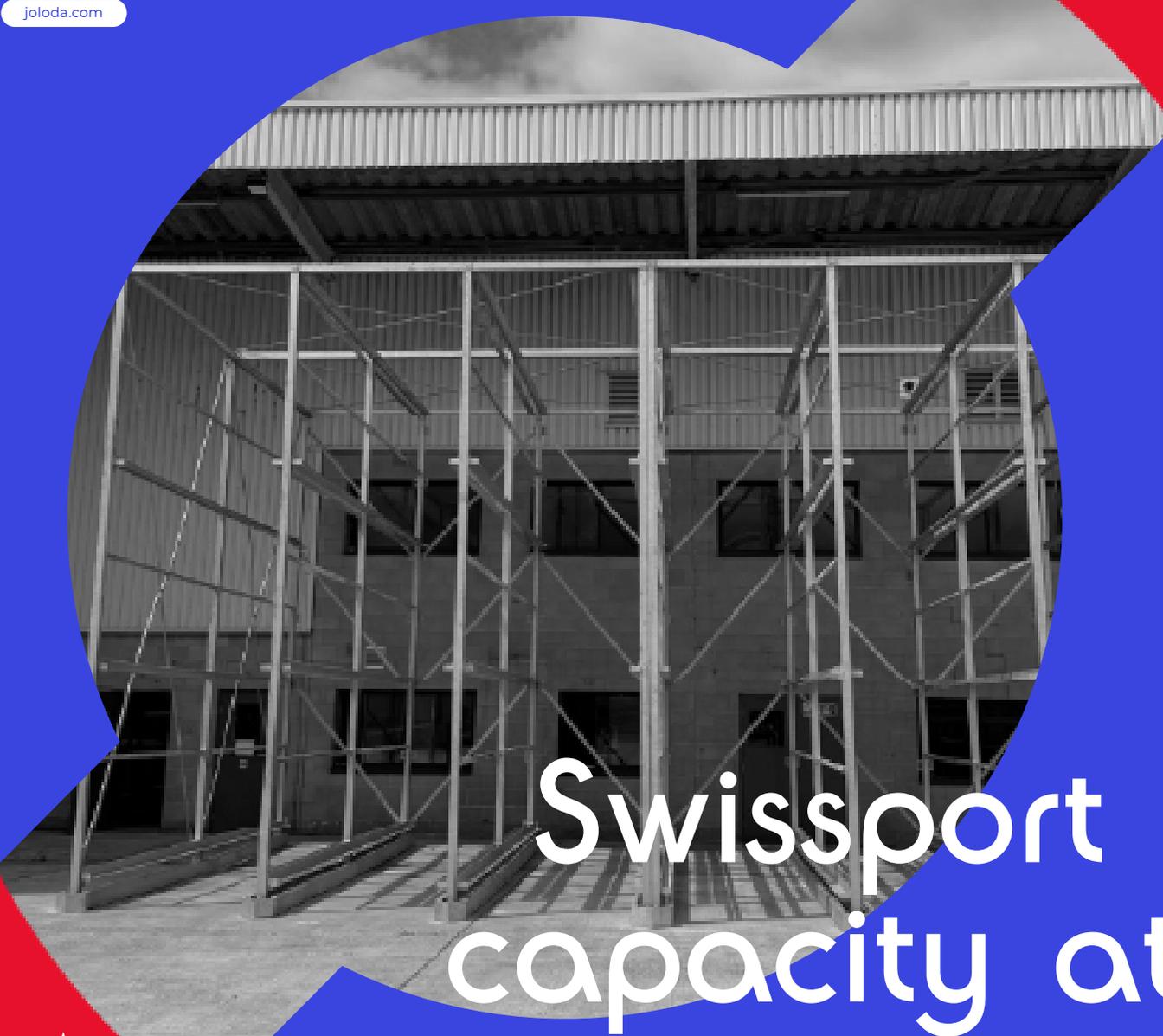


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Swissport increases capacity at Gatwick Airport with racking system

"The new racking system has noticeably improved how we manage empty ULDs "

Tony Roberts
Warehouse Operations Manager



introduction

Efficient storage of empty Unit Load Devices (ULDs) is essential for air cargo operators to maintain smooth operations, maximise space utilisation, and uphold safety standards. At Gatwick Airport (LGW), London, a major global ground handling operator required a tailored racking solution to manage its growing inventory of empty ULDs more effectively.

We delivered a robust air cargo racking system designed to improve warehouse organisation, access speed, and operational safety. This case study explores how the installation has helped streamline its ULD storage, supporting ongoing operational demands and scalability.





the client

Swissport International Ltd is the world's leading aviation services provider, operating across numerous airports located globally. In their facility, they offer air cargo services for a wide range of freight types, spanning perishables, e-commerce, time-critical shipments including pharmaceuticals and perishables and general cargo.

The operator manages air cargo handling for international carriers and freight forwarders, where the volume and complexity of cargo necessitate efficient and safe storage solutions for empty ULDs.

Unit Load Devices (ULDs) are standardised containers or pallets used in the aviation industry to consolidate cargo, including, mail, baggage, and perishable goods (such as fresh fruit and flowers) for efficient air transport. Common examples include LD3, AKE, and AKH containers, each designed to easily fit into aircraft cargo holds.

Since IATA formalised their standardisation, ULDs have become central to the speed, safety, and cost-effectiveness of modern air freight. They enable airlines to load and unload cargo quickly, minimise damage during transport, and optimise aircraft space, making them essential for daily operations.

the challenge

The team was looking to prevent operational challenges that could arise related to the storage of empty Unit Load Devices (ULDs) due to increased demand. Their existing method used single-tier racking arranged in single-section aisles. This could eventually lead to slower ULD handling and not make full use of available warehouse footprint.

Looking forward to increased demand, the team didn't want to face potential delays caused by cargo processing workflows.

Recognising the opportunity to enhance capacity, a structured system that would maintain successful operations, support future growth, and ensure ongoing compliance with safety protocols was recommended.



the solution

Joloda Hydraroll's air cargo racking solution was designed specifically for the needs of air cargo logistics. Features include:

- **Modular Racking Units:** The system features modular storage bays custom-built to accommodate standard ULD dimensions, allowing for secure, vertical stacking to maximise warehouse volume.
- **Heavy-Duty Construction:** The racks are manufactured using high-grade steel with engineered load capacities to safely support multiple stacked ULDs.
- **Weather-Resistant Coating:** Coated to withstand environmental factors typical of airport warehouses, ensuring durability and longevity.
- **Forklift-Friendly Design:** Wide aisle spacing and sturdy construction allow safe and efficient forklift access for storing and retrieving empty ULDs.
- **Scalable Configuration:** The modular nature of the racking enables expansion or rearrangement of storage layouts to adapt to fluctuating cargo volumes or changes in warehouse operations.

The system was installed following a successful project at Birmingham Airport, where Joloda Hydraroll supplied Swissport with a system to optimise its ULD handling process for freighter aircraft.



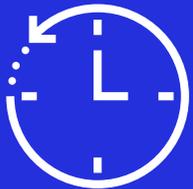
"Storage is now more organised, and retrieval times have reduced"

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the benefits of implementation

The installation of Joloda Hydraroll's air cargo racking system resulted in several important operational improvements:



1. Improved access efficiency: the structured racking layout, with clearly defined storage bays and forklift-accessible aisles, reduced the time required to locate and move empty ULDs.

This streamlined cargo preparation workflows and helped maintain fast turnaround times.



2. Scalable foundation: supports future growth in cargo volumes. With the ability to expand or modify the racking over time, Swissport is now better positioned to meet both current and long-term storage needs efficiently and safely.



3. Modular design: of the racking system offers operational flexibility, so layouts can easily be reconfigured in response to changing demands or cargo volume fluctuations, supporting day-to-day adaptability.



4. Effective use of vertical space: means the new system significantly increased storage capacity within the existing warehouse footprint.

This avoided costly facility expansions while maximising the use of available space.

the feedback



Tony Roberts
Warehouse Operations Manager

Tony Roberts, Warehouse Operations Manager at Swissport LGW, commented:

"The new racking system has noticeably improved how we manage empty ULDs. Storage is now more organised, retrieval times have reduced, and the working environment feels safer and more structured.

The modular design gives us flexibility to adjust the layout as our needs evolve, which is essential given the increasing volume of cargo we handle. The installation went smoothly, and we've been able to make better use of our existing space"



Nathan Knox
Account Manager

Joloda Hydraroll's Account Manager for Air Cargo Handling Equipment, Nathan Knox, added:

"We're proud to have delivered a tailored solution for the Gatwick cargo operations team.

The success of this project highlights the importance of understanding their operational challenges to support efficiency, safety and growth. Thanks to the whole team who contributed to design, manufacture and installation."

conclusion

The air cargo racking installation has provided a practical, efficient, and scalable storage solution for empty ULDs. The system maximises warehouse space, improves access times, and maintains high workplace safety standards. Moreover, the modular design offers flexibility to adapt to future cargo volume growth, ensuring the operator is better equipped to handle growing cargo volumes safely and efficiently.

This case study exemplifies how specialised storage solutions can play a pivotal role in optimising logistics operations, helping air cargo handlers meet rising demand while maintaining high standards of safety and efficiency. Logistics and warehouse managers looking to streamline ULD storage will find the benefits of a tailored air cargo racking system clear and compelling.



if you have any questions, please get in touch!



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