



SilMan Industries designed and implemented a new parcel handling system for OnTrac Logistics, expanding the speed and capacity of their Vancouver, Washington facility.

(Follow [this link](#) to view a video of this project.)

The Situation



OnTrac is a parcel logistics company based in Chandler, Arizona. The company was launched in 1991 and has experienced rapid growth, now serving 65 million consumers in eight states. In recent years they have enjoyed particular growth in the northwest, specifically in the region surrounding Portland, Oregon.

This surge in demand reflects the rise in “I want it now” expectations from consumers, as well as increased demand for fast, low-priced shipping solutions by sellers. These factors have created a growing market for delivery services beyond UPS and FedEx. This swell in capacity needed in the marketplace has provided new growth opportunities for regional carriers.

This is exactly the situation encountered by OnTrac in the Pacific Northwest. In response to these increased opportunities, the company relocated to a new facility, more than doubling its footprint from 60,000 to 162,000 square feet. The new plant can accommodate nine large package-unload doors, three high-volume divert (“HVD”) sort towers, eight fluid load doors, and 130 van positions for delivery trucks.

The Challenge

According to Jim Brownlow, Director of Operations Development and leader of the OnTrac Design Group, the objectives for the new location are two-fold:

- Phase 1: meet current demand of 6,000 PPH
- Phase 2: capable of expanding to 9,000 PPH at a reasonable cost as regional demand grows

With this new level of capacity, Brownlow believes that OnTrac will be in a position to leverage its current success into long term growth in the area.



And finally, typical sort facilities at OnTrac tend to have limited space around the Sort System due to the number of support structure platforms and columns. These columns can limit usable space and impose limitations on egress, access, and tow cart routes.

“We have been extremely pleased with both the creative design and the functionality of the system that SilMan helped us with in Vancouver, Washington. We consider this facility a showcase and are proud to bring our customers in and show off our system.”

– James Brownlow, Dir. of Operations Development

Solutions

Beginning with the OnTrac base design, the SilMan Logistics Team crafted a solution that meets the immediate objectives for the new facility, while setting the stage to meet the challenges of continued growth. This fully-integrated turn-key system includes custom engineering, equipment, electrical and controls installation, and mechanical installation.

At the heart of the SilMan proposal is a raised Super Structure for supporting the HVDs, facer stations, and all conveyors. This mezzanine was designed with columns on wider than normal centers, expanding usable floor space:

- Recover valuable floor space for storage or other revenue-producing activity
- Wider tow cart aisles
- Improved egress for all system users
- Ease of access to equipment by maintenance personnel

One unique complication OnTrac manages is a high volume of freight for market-leading auto and recreational vehicle tire providers. Since tires are considered “incompatible” they are typically required to manually unload these items at a dedicated door (no conveyance), requiring multiple team members. SilMan designed and built a special Unload Conveyor that allows OnTrac to unload tire trailers at the same doors they handled regular freight with extendo conveyors. This solution enables tires to be unloaded using a standard unload door, and at a much quicker rate than what could be achieved manually at a dedicated door, with reduced personnel.



Results

The outcome created by the OnTrac-SilMan partnership has allowed the carrier to increase volume without the additional team members. The SilMan solution also reduces the time needed to complete a sort, resulting in increased service levels:

More parcels to more clients, delivered on time.

The new sort system was also designed ergonomically, increasing team member’s efficiency and reducing sort errors.

And most importantly, OnTrac Vancouver is poised for continued success, with a path toward future expansion built into the current solution.

About SilMan

SilMan Industries (previously SilMan Construction) is based in San Leandro, California. Founded in 2008, the firm operates nationwide in three divisions – Construction, Material Handling and Site Services – and partners with “best in class” companies in the Industrial, Manufacturing, Distribution and Public Works sectors. For more information, please visit www.silmanindustries.com/about.