



HI-LEVELTM CASE STUDY

WKD Storage Systems Ltd chooses Hi-Level to construct floor for major multi-national retailer

Introduction

WKD Storage Systems Ltd is an installation specialist for storage and handling equipment. Based in Sevenoaks, Kent, the company provides storage equipment, handling equipment, partitioning, mezzanine floors, lockers, trucks and trolleys to end user customers. It enjoys partnerships with a variety of leading manufacturers from which it sources materials for turn-key projects.

The challenge

A multinational retailer, which designs, produces and distributes branded fashion clothing for men and women, through a network of branded retail stores in the UK, Europe and North America, wished to consolidate its warehousing operations. In an effort to streamline its operations and bring stock control back in-house, the retailer decided to relocate the staff, resources and stock from two third party distributor sites located in East London to a third warehouse. To do so, it was necessary to maximise the internal space at the site by multi-tiering the interior space.

The criteria

The retailer put out a tender for a two-tier mezzanine floor measuring 30 metres wide by 90 metres long which would take a load of 4.8 kN/m². This had to incorporate four staircases and seven pallet gates on the first floor, and a variable column grid to include a single column spacing which was wider than the others running through the centre of the ground floor. This column had to provide six metres clearance for the storage and manoeuvrability of a bespoke machine. In addition, cut-outs had to be incorporated into the mezzanine floor to allow garments to be transported from the ground to the top floor and allowances made for a garment conveyor belt system.

The solution

WKD Storage Systems Ltd invited wholesale mezzanine floor suppliers to partner with it to pitch for the warehouse contract. Because of the nature of the build, WKD sought a specialist provider that would be able to deliver to the prescribed specifications. It considered proposals submitted by Davicon and Hi-Level Mezzanines.

WKD selected Hi-Level based in part on its previous experience of working with Hi-Level as the two have worked on a variety of projects over the past six years: "We knew from previous experience that Hi-Level could fulfil the task. We trade with them very often so we're very relaxed about that," said Trevor Lilly, Sales Director at WKD Storage Systems Ltd. Hi-Level designed a fourteen week programme of work that detailed precisely which elements of the build would be completed and when.



But the overriding factor was down to Hi-Level's competitive quote. This was in part due to the in-house design management system Hi-Level has developed, called **QD³ Pro**, which automatically works out the best design for the floor given the technical and operating parameters within the design brief. This factored in current steel prices, manufacturing and installation team availability, using a single set of data supplied by WKD Storage Systems at the quotation stage of the project.

Hi-Level also worked on specifications for the building regulations process. In addition to incorporating all of the specified design features, Hi-Level included top of the range products such as Class 'O' Spreader Flame decking which would meet the stringent fire safety and health and safety rulings imposed on the conversion by the local planning authorities. "They provided us with the necessary drawings and calculations which we in turn passed on to the customer," says Lilly.



HI-LEVELTM CASE STUDY



The implementation

The retailer selected the WKD Storage Systems Ltd and Hi-Level Mezzanines partnership to carry out the project based on competitive cost and reliability of both parties and work commenced in November 2005.

Hi-Level Mezzanines undertook the sourcing and manufacturing of materials plus the installation of the floor while WKD Storage Systems were on site project managing. There were five development phases to the mezzanine build. In addition, Hi-Level also coordinated its activities with the other building contractors. "Lighting, sprinklers, other electrical works, smoke detection systems, they were all going on at the same time. And a lot of those services ran through the mezzanine floor levels so Hi-Level released areas of the floor to them when they were completed," explains Lilly.

Throughout the building process, WKD Storage Systems had several lines of communication with Hi-Level, allowing them to benefit from the supplier's expertise. "They provided us with technical advice in terms of determining what the floor loading would be and how much it could take to enable the main contractor to work on the floor. And in terms of liaison on site and doing the job it was very helpful. We had a weekly chat with the guys that were on site actually building it," says Lilly.

Plus WKD had regular contact with the Sales and Marketing team back at base. "The service offered was most helpful because we had one primary point of contact and our account manager gave us a consistent line of communication. We get costings via the office through him and he came to see us to check we were getting what we needed when we needed it," explains Lilly.

Hi-Level has also provided customer after-care, returning to site to address any issues. "If there was a sharp edge that was just an oversight, they organised the guys that installed the floors to come back in and clean-up and tidy these edges. In the last three months if there has been a specific problem or difficulty they have organised someone to come back in and take a look at it," says Lilly.

The results

The mezzanine floor was completed by Hi-Level in February 2006, on budget and two weeks ahead of schedule in just under twelve weeks. This achievement illustrates the effective working relationship between Hi-Level and WKD which ultimately paid dividends for the retail customer.

Centralising the warehouse and distribution facilities has enabled the retailer to benefit from reduced overheads, economies of scale and has provided it with a single site in the UK from which to provision its network of branded retail stores and department store franchises.

The installation of the mezzanine infrastructure in the leased premises allowed the company to design the interior to its precise needs. It is now able to utilise state of the art technology, such as a conveyor and hanging garment storage system, as a result. And the site has provided it with a pleasant, efficient and profitable environment from which to coordinate UK operations.

About Hi-Level Mezzanines

Hi-Level Mezzanines was founded in 1991 with the aim of establishing a respected distributor sales network to market the Hi-Level Mezzanine floor system. It is now the largest trade supplier of mezzanine floors in the UK numbering partners such as RDA Projects, Hampshire Mezzanine Floors, Linpac Storage Systems, SSI Schaefer, Racking + Shelving and G-Mack Racking among its client base.

The Hi-Level mezzanine floor system incorporates high specification components as standard and complies with BRE Digest 437 and other relevant kite marks.

Hi-Level has developed a fully integrated mezzanine production system called **QD³ Pro** (Quote, Design Draft and Detail) that is unique in the industry. The system automatically calculates the best mezzanine production system design for a floor within the constraints of the technical and operating parameters of the design brief, including variable criteria such as current steel prices, manufacturing and installation team availability.



Hi-Level Mezzanines Ltd
Unit 6, Petersfield Business Park
Bedford Road, Petersfield
Hampshire GU32 3QA

Tel: 01730 233223
Fax: 01730 231311
email: sales@hi-level.co.uk
Web: www.hi-level.co.uk