



Top 10 Actionable Tasks to Support the Back to Work Process

Date: 5/14/2020

As some states start to loosen their “lock down” status in response to the pandemic we find ourselves getting back to work in a much different environment. We realize we must get back to work to jump start the US economy and provide for our families. There are a lot of questions in regards to how we get back to work. Where do we start in regards to allowing us to be productive but still adhere to social distancing requirements? Here are the top 10 ideas (actually 11) based on our experience in the industry to help you get back to business in this “new norm”.

1. Safety and Hygiene

The first item is to make sure you have done everything possible to be responsive to your employee’s needs. Alpine Supply Chain Solutions is offering Free “Covid-19 Warehouse Training” program. A webinar on Preparedness and Response is available via the link below. Here are some highlights:



COVID-19 WAREHOUSE TRAINING

If you're overwhelmed by the amount of information available on how to keep your warehouse team safe in the midst of COVID-19 – help is on the way.

- Review Daily routines such as breaks, shift start/end times, start of shift meetings and change as needed to minimize group interactions and reinforce social distancing. (i.e. stagger start times, break times, reconfigure break room furniture to space employees out)
- Establish Employee Hygiene and facility/equipment disinfecting routines
- Review and establish PPE requirements - will you provide masks, gloves, etc
- Develop an Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response Plan

For a more detailed list [click here](#) to view the webinar replay.



“Building Relationships One Solution at a Time”

2. Reconfigure Your Production Layout

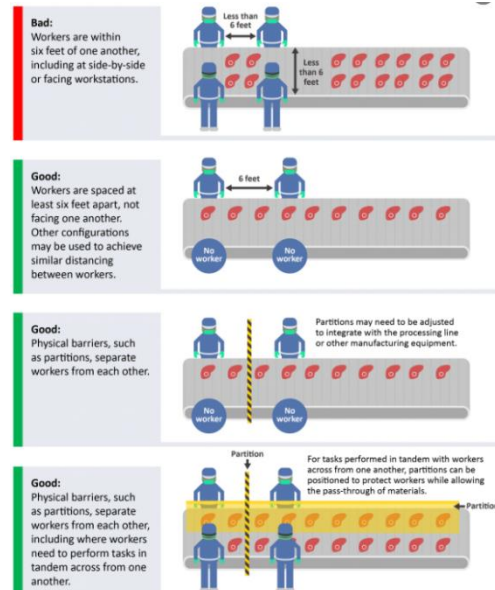


Using [flexible extendable conveyors](#) allows you to quickly and efficiently rearrange your production floor to spread out operators and allow for social distancing. This style of conveyor is relatively inexpensive and can be redeployed for other uses at a later time.

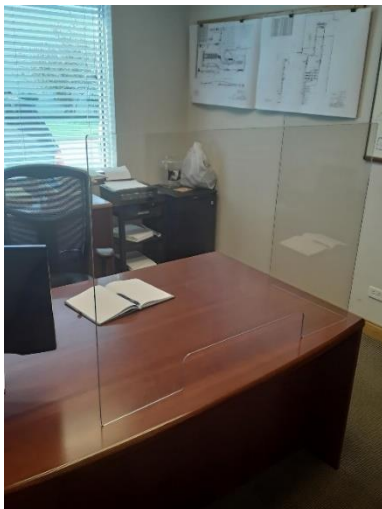
In stock materials are available at TheFlexibleConveyor.com.

Another option is to distance operators on production lines you already have in place by lengthening or reconfiguring your existing conveyors and/or workstations.

[Link to Dorner's options for operator interface](#)



3. Workstation Barriers



If rearranging your layout is not a good option, see-through barriers can be added to your work area to help isolate operators from each other. Desktop units like the one from Benda Manufacturing will work for the office. Several different styles of barriers exist from ones that mount to conveyors or workstations as well as portable panels that can be deployed throughout the plant. Wirecrafters has a product developed for this specific application. Custom shapes

and sizes are available in Stainless Steel, aluminum, or painted steel.

[WireCrafters Portable Panels Link](#)



4. Goods to Person Order Fulfillment

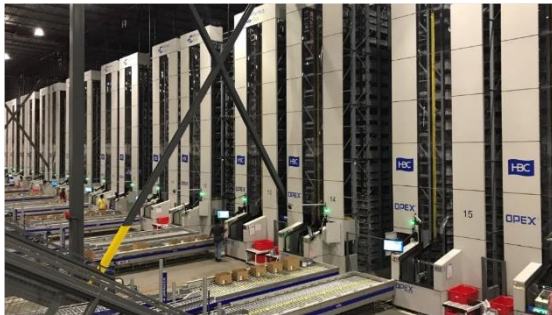


Many distribution centers have manual picking processes that put a high number of operators in a specific area. Using Goods to Person technology decreases the number of operators needed to fulfill orders. In addition, the process automatically keeps distancing between operators.



GreyOrange and OPEX Perfect Pick are both Goods To Person Technologies that fit different applications based on your specific operation.

[OPEX Perfect Pick](#)



[Grey Orange](#)



5. Automated Materials Delivery - Autonomous Mobile Robot (AMR)

Do you have a lot of repetitive material handling in your process? Are your operators manually moving products throughout your facility? An Autonomous Mobile Robot (AMR) can help reduce the human movement and therefore potential threat of contamination. These types of technologies are collaborative with AI style interfaces. It is also a great way to reduce non-value added movement and increase overall efficiency.



6. Automate repetitive tasks - Collaborative Robots (Cobots)

Highly repetitive tasks within a production facility that can be done with a collaborative robot will reduce the operator density and naturally distance workers from one another.

As Universal Robot's blog explains, 'Cobots are designed to work alongside human employees, they are capable of "learning" on the job.' They are easy to program and redeploy for other tasks as your business needs change. One main reason Universal Robotics made this list is the delivery on most units is around 2 weeks.



Video links with explanation of COBOT and how it works

[Robotic Palletizers](#)

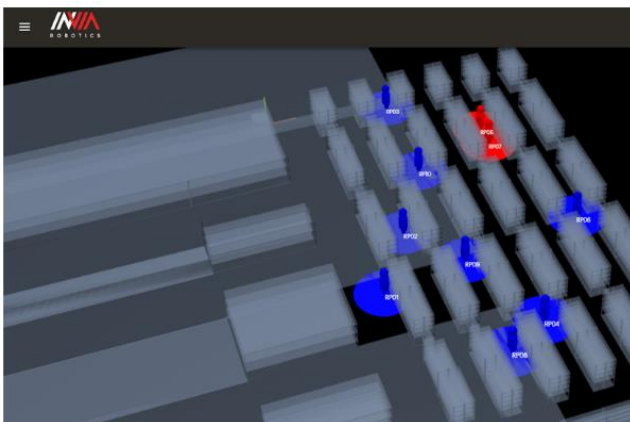
[Universal Robotics](#)



7. Manage Operator Pick Paths and / or Reslotting

Here are some ideas to reconfigure your order picking area to promote social distancing:

- Spread out High volume SKUs over greater area to maximize distancing and minimizing pick path cross over
- Provide MULTIPLE slot locations for high volume SKUs
- ZONE Picking / Pick -n- Pass



- Use Technology to rethink Pick Paths to improve and control operator distancing
- Add Pickup & Delivery (P&D) stations to REDUCE employee interaction
- Use software to control how orders are initiated.

8. Facility Entry cage

Do you have entrances where visitors can gain unsupervised access to your facility? Installing a [building access cage](#) is an inexpensive way to add another level of security. If the visitor is scheduled to be there this would be a great place to have the questionnaire and thermal temperature reading taken. An additional level of protection would be a sanitation station prior to entering your building.



9. Hands Free Operations

Are there manual processes in your operation that could be automated to take the “personal touch” out of the equation?

- Manually applying labels? Consider adding automatic label applicators

- PANDA is an acronym for Print and Apply. Print and applying labels by using automated equipment will reduce at least one touch point for your operators. As your company starts to get back to work, reducing the touches on products in your facility helps in many ways. The reduced contact helps your employees stay safe and healthy as well as reducing the risk of spreading any contagious virus to your customers.



- KVK Inc. has multiple years of successful applications of PANDA to manufacturing, Distribution, and Fulfillment operations.
KVKnet.com

- Vacuum lifters - machine touches the product, not human hands so less contamination
 - [Schmalz](#) is a leader in the use of vacuum to reduce the ergonomic need to touch the product. Multiple products offer simple one-hand operations with one-finger/two-finger controls for right- or left-hand operators.
- Automated bar code scanners vs. hand operated scanners
 - Although bar code scanners are not new, the use of these robust devices allows operators to effectively work with less touches of packages or totes during the pick process.



Contact us today to review how we can add touchless Print and Apply label systems to your process.

10. Conveyor Rentals – Temporary Reconfiguration of Production Line



What if you have a new temporary production line you would like to add - have you considered [renting conveyors](#) on a month to month basis? Sometimes simple portable belt conveyors can allow you to quickly set up a new operation. The beauty is that if business conditions change you can return the conveyors when you are done with them!

11. Dividing Shifts, Decrease Density of Workers

This seems like an obvious solution and does have consequences in regards to employee satisfaction but sometimes hard choices have to be made. If we are currently running a single shift can we take half of the operation and put them on a second shift, therefore decreasing the operator density in the building?



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Conveyor Solutions' Core Values:

- Integrity
- Optimistic and Growth Oriented
- “Make It Happen”
- Passionate and Enthusiastic
- “Own It”
- Creative Problem Solver

We can help you implement any of the ideas above to get your operation back up and running! **Call us at (800) 678-9091.**



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