

CASE STUDY: IMPROVING SAFETY AND ORGANIZATION

Louis Glunz Beer, Chicago, IL

THE CHALLENGE: *Providing access to 2400 SKUs*

Managers of cold storage facilities all face the same challenge: they want to store the most stock in the least amount of space, while still maintaining safe and convenient access to every item.

One of those managers is Dave Tripicchio, head operations manager at the Louis Glunz Beer distributorship in Chicago. Founded in 1888, the Glunz distributorship deals in beers from hundreds of breweries around the world, maintaining access to 2400 SKUs at any given time. Effectively managing that many SKUs in a beer cooler demands a commitment to quality and an organizational space between to match, and much of that responsibility rests with the operations department.

The distributorship owners were dissatisfied with their cooler storage situation. The cold storage warehouse had about 250 feet of static racking, four levels high, and extra kegs would often get set in front of the racks. In order to get a keg off any particular rack, staff would first need to clear a path through kegs stored in front of them. "We'd get the beer in and find a place for it to sit safely, and hopefully we'd rotate it in the proper order and no one would get hurt," Tripicchio said.

The system was inefficient, and they realized that something needed to change.





"Our mission as Glunz employees is to provide a great customer experience, and primarily that means delivering fresh beer on time. For the beer that's in-house that means we have to preserve it, rotate it, and keep a tight inventory variance. Our inventory is our lifeblood."

*-Dave Tripicchio,
Head Operations Manager*




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THE SOLUTION: *Racking that moves*

Substantially improving safety and organization would involve completely rethinking their keg storage, and one of the owners asked Tripicchio to look into the ActivRAC® Mobilized Storage System. Tripicchio called the local Spacesaver consultant, who visited the facility to conduct a complimentary space assessment. He explained the ActivRAC system, conducted a space analysis to determine how many barrels could fit in the cooler, and provided a quote. Four large load-bearing columns are located in the middle of the cooler, and the Spacesaver consultant suggested locating the ActivRAC system inside the space enclosed by those columns.

Since the business is family owned, the decision to go ahead was easy: Tripicchio said it took about 20 minutes for the siblings on the executive team to green-light the proposal. Installation went smoothly and staff were trained on the system's operation. Then they loaded the slower-moving and specialty SKUs onto the ActivRAC system and moved faster-moving SKUs out of the middle of the cooler and placed them around the perimeter. Now the racking system accommodates between 1500-1800 half-barrels at any given time.





"We gained a lot more than we had imagined. We feel like we can do anything now that we've got the barrel cooler straight. It's a major savings."

-Dave Tripicchio,
Head Operations Manager

THE RESULT: A safe and convenient system

Looking back, Tripicchio said the ActivRAC has eliminated potential safety hazards. "After we got the ActivRAC installed, it really became evident how much safer the cooler became," he said, noting the system made it safer to walk around the cooler and drive the forklift, and more efficient to pick barrels. "The safety aspect is immeasurable."



The end result is a safe system that keeps slow movers out of the way and allows for convenient picking and rotation. Every barrel has a location, which has made location integrity nearly perfect.

The ActivRAC System has improved customer service and also created a safer and more efficient work environment. "We gained a lot more than we had imagined," Tripicchio said. "We feel like we can do anything now that we've got the barrel cooler straight. It's a major savings."

