



James and James selects BS Handling Systems for automated sortation system



James and James is a third party logistics (3PL) business set up for multiple small clients. Its UK fulfilment centre is strategically located an hour north of London in Brackmills, Northampton, central England's logistics hotspot. It is close to both national courier hubs and international airports, making it ideal for fulfilling orders for both UK and European customers.

JAMES AND JAMES
eCOMMERCE FULFILMENT

With over 350 clients serviced from the fulfilment centre, the storage and distribution operation has to handle a very diverse range of products, from phone cases to wine and cosmetics to yoga mats.

"The company moved into this new facility in 2020," enthuses Stuart Ruchman, Head of Operations at James and James. He continues, "With over 600,000 sq. ft. of operational space it provides us with a solid platform to drive the business forward."

"Initially the sortation of orders was handled manually, but as we attracted more clients, volumes increased and we recognised the need to automate the sortation process."

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Head of Operations – James and James



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Consultants' recommendation

“Once we finalised the decision to proceed with the automation project, we discussed it with our logistics consultants who recommended BS Handling Systems as an experienced and reliable partner to help us design and deliver the system.

“From the outset, we hit it off with the BS Handling team. Given our extensive logistics knowledge, we were well-equipped to lead the design process. Their experience, however, was invaluable, and together we were able to create a resolution that allowed for future expansion as throughput volumes increase.

“The solution BS Handling Systems delivered included three conveyor lanes in the packing area which feed completed order packages onto the sortation system. These are indexed automatically so that there is space between each item on the sorter.

“Before final sortation, each package passes through a sophisticated tracking station. Here, every item is automatically measured, weighed, photographed and scanned to determine which sorter chute each package needs to be diverted down.”

Business as usual during installation

“One of the main challenges BS Handling had to overcome was the need to install the automated system with minimal disruption to our existing day-to-day manual packing and sorting operation.

“With the limited space available, this required careful planning and accurate scheduling of the work. To their credit, they handled the situation really well and there was very little, if any, disruption to our day-to-day order processing.

“The installation took around eight weeks to complete and once our team were trained on the new system it became clear what a huge benefit it was going to deliver for the business. The automated sorter can handle up to 2,500 items an hour, four times the capacity of the manual system. Now we are confidently looking forward to putting it through its paces during the peak periods of Black Friday and Christmas.”

Smooth installation and commissioning

The project was managed by Phil Taylor, Key Account Manager at BS Handling Systems. He explains, “Everything went to plan. Other than the usual last minute adjustments, there were no significant obstacles we had to overcome. The team at James and James were very helpful and easy to work with throughout the installation and commissioning processes.

“For the automatic sorter we specified a CU Sort modular belt system from Conveyor Units. We also incorporated the SICK tracking unit which tracks, measures, weighs and photographs each item as it passes through the system.

“Given the space restrictions and the need for easy pedestrian access around the sorter, we had to raise the infeed conveyor and the sorter higher off the ground than would normally be the case.

“This meant adjusting the angles of the chutes in the vertical plane and constructing a heavy duty steel support frame for the SICK tracking/weighing station. If there was any vibration in the support structure, it would cause inaccurate weight readings which would result in false error readings.

“We also designed and constructed a raised walkway to run parallel to the sorter. This enables easy access to the packing benches either side of each of the three input conveyor lines, as well as access to the sorter.

“The sorter has met all the key parameters specified by the client, including the increased throughput requirements, efficient use of space, cost savings and the ability to handle a wide variety of package profiles,” concludes Taylor.





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Attracting new clients

Stuart Ruchman again, “This new automatic sorter has been a real game-changer for our operations. Now we can more accurately process four times as many orders an hour for our customers. It has also saved us a lot of money with regard to labour costs, all whilst giving us better visibility of our orders throughout the process.

“We are very proud of the investment we have made in the Northampton fulfilment centre and are more than happy to give potential customers a tour of the facility. The sorter in particular, is a great selling point.

“Seeing our operation first hand gives them tremendous confidence and peace of mind that James and James will look after their storage and distribution needs accurately, efficiently and effectively. The automated sortation system and conveyors have played a major role in raising the throughput performance and accuracy of this facility. There’s no doubt it will also make a tremendous difference in our ability to handle extreme peaks.

“I would have no hesitation in recommending BS Handling Systems to anyone looking for a forward-thinking, friendly and professional materials handling integrator. They consistently deliver excellent quality and they always do what they say they are going to do,” concludes Ruchman.



BS Handling Systems

Established in 2009, BS Handling Systems is a provider of warehouse, storage and conveyor solutions across a broad cross-section of industries. Our first principle of business is customer satisfaction and peace of mind. Based in Leicester and drawing on 100 years’ experience in the materials handling industry, we offer a unique competence in delivering bespoke systems and solutions.



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