

# BENCHMARK

REMSTAR

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BRIEFINGS

## SITE

Zimbrick European  
Madison, WI.

## APPLICATION

Automotive Service Parts  
Storage and Retrieval.

## EQUIPMENT

Dual access Remstar  
Shuttle® Vertical Lift Module  
(VLM) with FastPic® Auto  
software linked to Reynolds  
and Reynolds.

## SUMMARY

Productivity increased by  
70% while saving 84% of  
floor space and improving  
worker ergonomics.



**Reduced Floor  
Space by 84%,  
Increasing  
Productivity  
70% and  
Improving  
the Work  
Environment**

*The parts department supports 23 technicians, wholesale business and retail customers and only occupies 384 square feet on the first floor.*

**Z**imbrick European services Mercedes-Benz, Porche and Audi but in the parts department the main focus is on the service they provide their customers. In the parts department customers come in three forms: service technicians, local body shops and retail customers. Providing superior service to all three types of customers simultaneously can be quite a challenge, but not for Zimbrick European.

When Zimbrick European expanded and moved their facility into a new building there was little room in the blueprint for the parts department. The existing 2,300 square foot parts department that was currently located on the first floor was allotted a 400 square footprint on the first floor in the new building design.

In the new building design the majority of the parts storage was upstairs on a second floor mezzanine area. "We needed to have a means to move parts between the first floor and the second floor short of running up and down the stairs every time we needed to store a part or remove

a part from inventory in order to sell it," said Steve Stepnock, Parts and Service Director. Unsure of how they were going to maintain their current productivity levels Zimbrick European turned to Remstar and things started looking up... literally.

When looking at different options for the new parts department, Zimbrick European considered an automated dual access Shuttle Vertical Lift Module (VLM) from Remstar. "The Shuttle VLM would provide us reduced labor costs, increased productivity and reduce risk of potential injury of using the staircase," said Stepnock. "All of these factors were presented to the ownership and ultimately accepted."

### **Moving Locations... and Parts**

Using a Remstar Shuttle VLM the parts department was able to transition into their new facility while maintaining current labor requirements and increasing productivity by 70%. "Our service department at Zimbrick European is dependant on our parts department," says Stepnock. "The ability of the parts department to get

parts to the technicians in a timely manner impacts our overall customer satisfaction and dealership profit."

To keep parts accessible in the new building Zimbrick European installed a dual access Shuttle VLM in the parts department. The dual access model is equipped to access parts in both of the windows to link the first and second floor work areas together and facilitate part sharing. The VLM access opening on the first floor is located in the parts department directly behind the retail customer counter. The opening on the second floor is located near the freight elevator for convenient receiving and storage operations.

The parts department at the new Zimbrick European location supports 23 service technicians, servicing three different car lines within the facility. They also support the Zimbrick European wholesale business by supplying parts to local body shops as well as fulfilling customer walk in needs. All of this is done through one parts department

## **“The Shuttle VLM delivers the part automatically to the counter person and they’re back in front of the customer within 10 seconds.”**

occupying only 384 square feet on the first floor, 84% less space than the previous parts department.

### **Receiving & Accepting Parts**

All parts are received on the first floor in the shipping and receiving area. The shipping and receiving clerk checks in the parts and then transfers them using a freight elevator to the second floor to be stocked into inventory. Through Reynolds and Reynolds, the parts are accepted into inventory, quantities are updated and stored in their assigned location. Fast moving smaller parts are stored in the Remstar Shuttle VLM, providing quick and easy access when the part is needed on the first floor. Slow moving larger parts are stored on the second floor mezzanine in typical bin shelving.



*“Using the Shuttle VLM to transfer parts between floors, we’ve saved two full time positions it would have required to have people moving those parts manually,” says Stepnock.*

### **Technicians Are Customers**

Service technicians are repeat customers for the parts department, and they are treated that way. “The parts departments’ best opportunity to sell parts is through our workshop” says Stepnock.

When a technician needs a part to complete a car, they make a parts request

via computer directly from their workstall. The parts request is automatically transmitted to the parts department and the staff looks up the part location and availability using the Reynolds and Reynolds software. If the part is located in the VLM, the request is transferred to FastPic Auto and the machine automatically retrieves the part. “It’s absolutely seamless, with just a push of a button the part is delivered to the first floor,” says Stepnock.

If the part the technician has requested is located in the second floor mezzanine bin storage, the first floor parts department calls up to the second floor shipping and receiving clerk with the part number and bin location. The second floor shipping and receiving clerk is responsible for receiving all parts into the system as well as retrieving parts from the bin area when necessary. With the part number and bin location the second floor shipping and receiving clerk locates the part and delivers it to the first floor parts department using an open tray in the VLM. “We use the Shuttle VLM to transfer parts from the second floor bin storage to the first floor,” says Stepnock. “We’ve saved ourselves two full time positions that it would have required to have people moving those parts between the floors manually.”

### **Retail & Wholesales Orders**

There are three Zimbrick European owned body shops within the Madison area that the parts department supplies. Orders are taken via phone or email by the parts department wholesale representative and processed through the system in the same way technician orders are processed. The parts are delivered to the body shops or held for pickup.

Zimbrick European also has a retail customer counter where customers can walk in off the street and purchase Mercedes, Porche or Audi parts. The parts department looks up the desired part, if it is in inventory the part is retrieved and billed out to the customer. “In the old system, the counter person helping the customer would disappear into the shelving for a minute or two to find the part,” says Jack Swoboda, parts manager. “Using the Shuttle VLM the part is delivered automatically and the counter



*“It’s absolutely seamless, with just a push of a button the part is delivered to the first floor,” says Stepnock.*

person walks around the corner grabs the part and they’re back in front of the customer within 10 seconds.”

### **Timing is Everything**

Using the Shuttle VLM Zimbrick European is processing and delivering parts almost three times faster. Before moving to the new facility Zimbrick European conducted time efficiency studies determining the average time required to process, retrieve and deliver a part. “We found the time it was taking a parts person to look up the part, retrieve the part, get it billed out and deliver it to the technician was taking five minutes on average,” says Swoboda. “Using the VLM from the time the part is looked up, retrieved from the Shuttle VLM, billed out and out to the technician is one to two minutes.”

### **Look Up Parts, Not For Parts**

“The Remstar Shuttle VLM allows my parts people to devote their time primarily to looking up parts instead of running all over looking for a part. It frees up an incredible amount of time,” says Swoboda. “They can spend their days looking up parts and getting them billed out and delivered to the technicians.”

# **REMSTAR**

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