

Case study: Rent the Runway Dressed for success

Location: USA



Interlake Mecalux and partner ABCO Systems have supplied a New York-based fashion rental company with custom-made pick module systems designed to store the thousands of high-end garments in its New Jersey warehouse. By doing so, the start-up has exponentially improved its storage capacity and increased the productivity of its warehouse workers.

Dream closet in the cloud

Jenn Hyman and Jenny Fleiss founded Rent the Runway in 2009 after realizing it would be smarter for women to rent designer fashion items rather than purchase them. They began their business by setting up a pop-up shop on the campus of Harvard Business School where students could rent on the spot.

Eventually the women decided to launch a website in which customers could rent clothing online, and with some positive publicity, they attracted 100,000 clients to sign up on their site. Today, the company keeps growing and partners with more than 550 fashion designers to offer women the 'dream closet in the cloud.'

America's biggest drycleaner

Rent the Runway's continued growth necessitated more warehousing space in the town of Secaucus, New Jersey, just outside of New York City, the site of the company's flagship store. Rent the Runway solicited the help of material handling solutions provider ABCO Systems Inc., an Interlake Mecalux partner, to equip the warehouses with the proper equipment to store the thousands of articles of clothing that Rent the Runway manages each day.

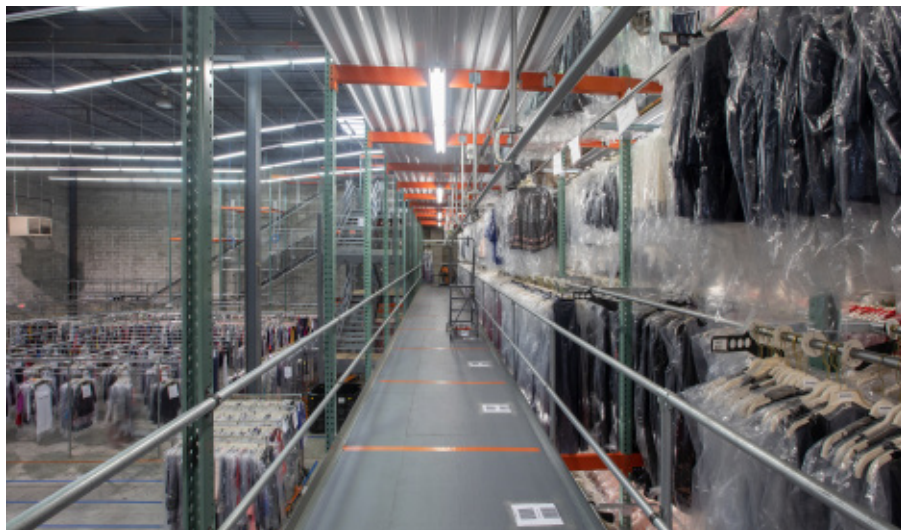
At two of Rent the Runway's facilities in Secaucus, ABCO Systems installed multi-level pick modules featuring Interlake Mecalux rack specifically designed for hanging garments. On each level, space is available to



Seth Weisberg
Owner of ABCO
Systems Inc.

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With the new pick modules for garments, Rent the Runway more than doubled the amount of product it could store while ensuring the safety and productivity of its operators



allow for the circulation and classification of garments. Operators access the various levels of the pick module using strategically located pedestrian staircases.

The pick modules are a flurry of activity on any given day. According to Forbes Magazine, Rent the Runway's software handles more than 65,000 dresses and 25,000 earrings, bracelets and necklaces destined for any of its 5 million current members. Forbes notes that the company's warehouse in Secaucus employs more than 200 people who handle returns, remove stains from clothing, sterilize jewelry and fix tears.

Forbes Magazine describes a multi-step process that takes place in the warehouse. First, operators scan thousands of bar-coded envelopes into Rent the Runway's computer system, which decides what items will ship and which ones will remain in the

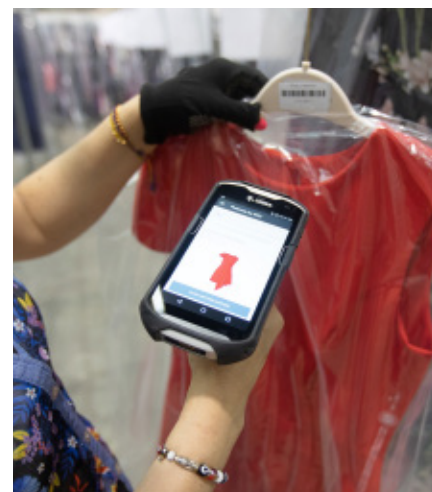
warehouse. Operators then inspect dresses and sort them into bins designated for regular cleaning, stain removal or repairs.

After that, workers remove stains from clothing by consulting a database that recommends the best chemicals to use. The warehouse also has automated steam cleaning machines that instantaneously sterilize and smooth gowns, according to Forbes. Workers then repair any tears to clothing and reattach beads and sequins, after which, operators will assemble, check and bag orders. Lastly, the Forbes article mentions how the company's computer management system predicts dress demand and selects the most cost-effective shipping method for returns.

Much of this work occurs in the Interlake Mecalux pick modules. ABCO Systems and Interlake Mecalux worked with the operations team of Rent the Runway to deter-

mine the best layout for the system based on Rent the Runway's specific storage and distribution requirements. ABCO Systems then designed the structures to capitalize on the height of the buildings. *"The system design revolved around creating flexibility and the ability for Rent the Runway to grow into it as time went by,"* said Seth Weisberg, owner of ABCO Systems. *"The focus was on maximizing storage space and allowing for all of Rent the Runway's other processes to move to, from and through the pick module."*

And this is not the first time Rent the Runway has called upon Interlake Mecalux and ABCO Systems to supply a solution for the company's storage needs. ABCO Systems, which has been working with Rent the Runway for more than five years, has built all of the company's distribution centers and has used Interlake Mecalux products for each project. *"As Rent the Runway continues to grow, ABCO Systems and Interlake Mecalux continue to support them,"* Weisberg said.





Advantages for Rent the Runway

- **Space optimization:** the pick modules have maximized space and doubled the amount of product Rent the Runway could store.
- **Enhanced safety:** the design of the pick modules ensures the safety and productivity of Rent the Runway's workers.
- **Greater flexibility:** Rent the Runway's system has the ability to adapt to the company's needs in the future.

