

3PL NRI BRINGS SCALABLE PROCESSES TO OLUKAI'S DC



“Our company is seeing unprecedented growth and NRI’s been able to handle the increased volume, both inbound and outbound.”

Jason Ekinaka,
Operations Manager,
OluKai

THE 3PL ENABLES LUXURY SHOE BRAND TO MEET UNPRECEDENTED DEMAND IN RETAIL REPLENISHMENT AND DIRECT-TO-CONSUMER FULFILLMENT.

Founded in 1997, NRI provides 3PL fulfillment services to domestic and international brands in the U.S. and Canada. In Chino, California, NRI fulfills orders for Archipelago brands, including the fast-growing footwear company OluKai.

OluKai was struggling to fulfill both retail and direct-to-consumer orders on their own, so they turned the operation over to NRI, a long-trusted business partner from their Canadian operations. NRI, who prides themselves on staying at the forefront of industry technology immediately saw areas for improvement to meet the growing challenges of an expanding retail business.

Balancing retail replenishment with direct-to-consumer fulfillment was the main challenge for this warehouse. The nature of footwear: multiple sizes and colors for each style, paired with the physical size of a shoebox resulted in long distances between picks as well as inventory challenges. As a result, each associate was only able to pick a few orders per day.

“HUNDREDS OF UNITS PER HOUR”

6 River Systems’ autonomous mobile robot, also known as Chuck, is easy to learn and ramps up time to productivity quickly. Chuck’s interactive screen and guidance lights show associates where to go and what to pick. Mickey Quiroz, Training Manager at NRI said, “With training, people start performing within hours rather than a few days. They’re already hitting hundreds of units per hour, which is substantial.”



FULFILLING MORE VOLUME, FASTER

NRI has seen a 44% YoY growth in e-commerce orders at the OluKai warehouse — 14% higher than forecasted. Without cutting down on the long walks to pick orders, it would be very challenging to handle the volume. “It’s in our best interest to reduce footsteps wherever we can. Technology that optimizes a path through a warehouse for the user to walk the shortest distance possible, and spend the least amount of time possible performing a task means a lot,” said Ryan Dale-Johnson, VP of Sales at NRI.

“...RIGHT TO THE HEART OF THE PROBLEM”

Upon taking over OluKai’s fulfillment operations, NRI noticed some inherent design problems within the warehouse. “It’s somewhat invisible in a human environment because people problem-solve.” says CEO, Peter McKenna. “But the bots pointed the finger right to the heart of the problem.”

After gaining access to operational data in The Bridge, NRI was able to find and fix design problems in areas regardless of whether Chucks operated in them.

“From the first meeting with 6RS they talked beyond the robot and about the ecosystem—opportunities about future strategies. I felt like it wasn’t just a static solution implementation. We were going to be part of an evolution in processing opportunities.”

Peter McKenna
CEO of NRI Distribution

AT A GLANCE:

CHALLENGES:

- Manual picking process with associates walking long distances
- Prolonged training times
- Needed to lower labor and variable costs

SOLUTION:

- 20 Chucks

RESULTS:

- 1M units picked with Chuck from go-live through February 2022 and tracking to pick the second million before the end of 2022
- Saved 60% in labor costs
- Reduced variable cost per unit by 12%
- 2x pick rates over manual picking

