

Case Notes

halfords

What's behind the bicycle shed at Halfords?

The objective

For a period of six weeks during November and December, Halfords' branches had to be supplied with almost 125,000 bicycles. This represented a significant peak of activity compared with other parts of the year and with continued growth in the business Halfords' managers were concerned that the existing warehouse would not be able to cope. THE LOGISTICS BUSINESS was asked to investigate the problem and come up with some quick solutions.

The Logistics Business approach

Time was short and it was clear that detailed analysis of the business would simply not be possible. We therefore spent time on site following day to day activities and talking in detail to warehouse management, buyers and systems staff. There was no shortage of ideas but there was a need to bring these ideas together with a few new ones, evaluate them logically and then put together a plan of action. This we did within a few weeks, giving Halfords time to implement the changes and be prepared for Christmas.

Simple solutions are often the best

Consultancy is about bringing new skills and experience together with the Client's detailed knowledge of the business. This does not mean complicated or expensive recommendations, and a good consultant will always be looking to achieve results in the simplest way possible. As was shown at Halfords, simple solutions are often the best and results can be achieved which more than justify the cost of the external support.

The solution

A number of simple changes were recommended, the most significant of which was no more than the extension of one doorway to allow easier vehicle access and hence increased loading facilities. Other recommendations included small changes to the storage arrangements to increase capacity, changes to the call off of deliveries from the bulk stocks at the point of import to the UK, the use of a modified form of picking trolley and extensions of the shift arrangements. Each change in its own right provided only small improvements, but taken together the result was dramatic.

Successes and Benefits

- ∞ Recommendations were made well within the required deadline giving plenty of time to allow changes to be made.
- ∞ The expenditure involved in following the recommendations was minimal and far less than would have been the cost of renting temporary facilities.
- ∞ Managers and supervisors were involved in discussions at every stage so there was wide acceptance of the changes that were made.
- ∞ The Christmas peak in activity was met with capacity to spare, thus giving confidence that growth in the following year could be accommodated.



The **LOGISTICS**
Business