



**Sam's Beauty Grows Business, Doubles Order
Fulfillment Productivity without Adding Headcount
with Numina Group Solution**

Background

Sam's Beauty is a hair and beauty supplier dedicated to beauty enthusiasts all over the world. The company has a thriving and growing online business segment, as well as brick-and-mortar stores in Chicago and Melrose Park, IL.



Challenges



Sam's Beauty growth strategy focuses on an omni-channel business model by adding additional retail stores, expanding product offerings, and growing the on-line ecommerce business segment. Due to several years of growth, the company knew it needed to investigate how to handle the increase in their warehouse order fulfillment shipping volume.

Its existing pick, pack, and ship processes were manual. Order picking was paper-based using totes. Orders were discretely picked and at pick completion the operators placed totes on a gravity conveyor for moving the totes to a series of manual packing stations. Each pack operator performed the same repetitive manual tasks of constructing cartons, packing the items, adding void, printing and inserting the packing sheet, hand taping/sealing the carton, and finally, hand taping the pick sheet to the outside of the carton.

The cartons were then placed onto the gravity conveyor and moved to three manual shipping/ manifesting stations. Operators at each manifesting station placed the carton on a scale, scanned the pick sheet barcode to print the shipping label and hand applied the label. Then they manually moved the cartons to the USPS and UPS carrier pallets.

"As business grew, our manifesting stations became a bottleneck during peak times. Packing and manifesting couldn't keep up with our E-Com order volume," said Jin Park, Operation Manager at Sam's Beauty. "We would have to continue to add more headcount to cover our growth. This led us to beginning to investigate automation options."

Automation to the Rescue

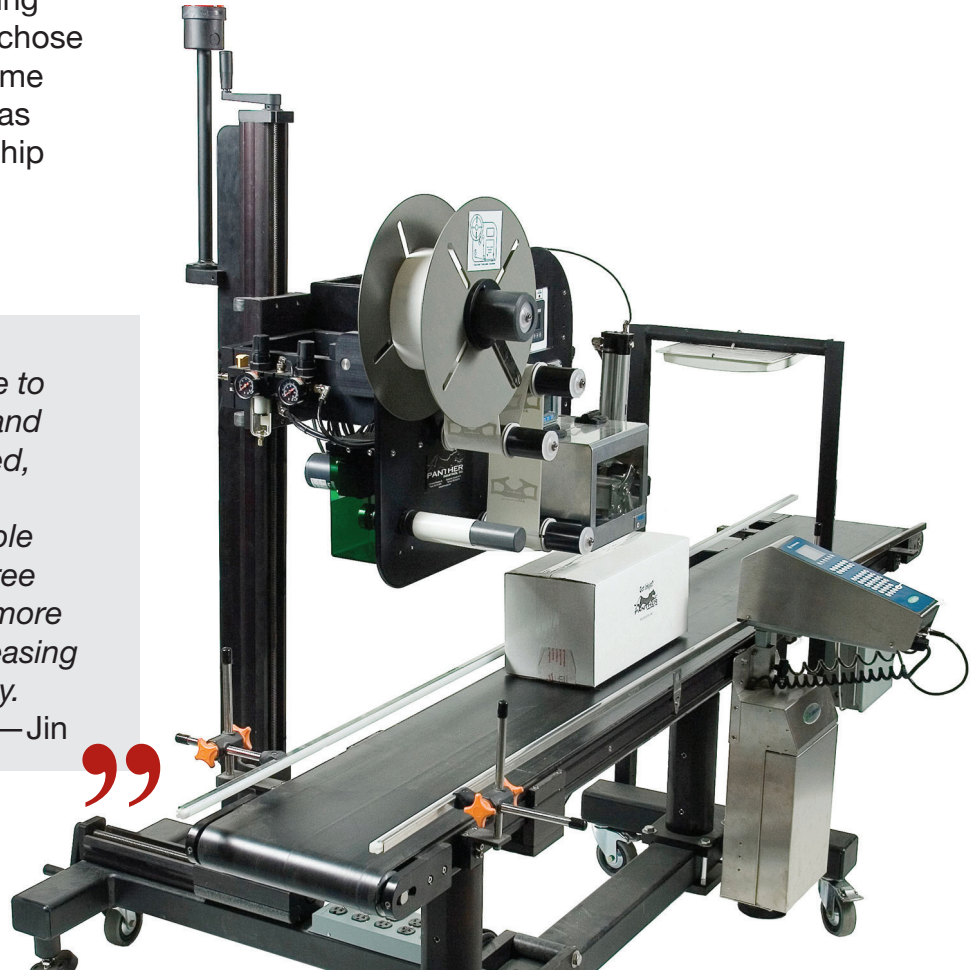
After reviewing three material handling systems integrators, Sam's Beauty chose the Numina Group due to its Real-time Distribution Software, RDS™ that has a proven pre-developed pack and ship automation module.

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They were knowledgeable and able to help our team define and understand the process improvements required, and due to their existing software automation modules they were able to implement a solution within three months, resulting in our ability to more than double shipments while increasing the pack and ship area productivity.

—Jin

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According to Jin, Sam's Beauty chose Numina Group for three reasons:

1

Technical Expertise and Experience. The Numina team knows DC process optimization and was very helpful in explaining the operational changes and project's technical details to our team. "The project included new conveyor, upgrading an existing conveyor, adding a significant amount of new automation technologies and software integration – areas that are not strengths of our expertise," said Jin. "Mark Hejmej, Numina's sales engineer and their design team answered all our questions and helped us justify the project investment."

2

Site Visits. "We were able to visit existing companies using Numina's automated packing and print-and-apply labeling automation. It was important for our team to see similar systems in action and hear the benefits firsthand from the users," said Jin.

3

Customer References. The Numina Group was also able to provide multiple references for Sam's Beauty, which was essential in their final selection process.

Numina Group's Pack and Ship Solution:

The Numina Group's RDS™ Warehouse Execution and Control System (WES-WCS) eliminated several manual touches from Sam's Beauty operation, eliminating two minutes of labor costs from every order shipment. The new pack-and-ship solution includes an in-motion carton weight capture scale, dimensioner, and print-and-apply label applicator integrated into the automated pack-and-ship conveyor system.

Here's how the new processes work:

The existing pack stations were relocated along a powered 24VDC accumulation conveyor. Operators pack the order contents into the shipping carton, peel off a removable order identifier barcode from the pick sheet, insert the pack sheet and apply the order barcode label to the side of the carton.

The operators place the carton on the conveyor that automatically transports them to a centralized void fill and semi-automatic carton taper/sealer. The station includes overhead void fill for the operator to add void, folds down the flaps and pushes the carton into the powered taper.

Cartons exit the taper and transport to the in-line barcode scan-weigh-dimensioning system. RDS™ captures the data and transmits the order and carton data to the shipping manifesting system.

The manifesting system selects the carrier and returns the shipping label to RDS™ which tracks the carton to the top apply print-and-apply label applicator that prints and applies the label to the top of the carton. Camera-based barcode scanners are positioned after the applicator to verify both the correct shipping label and carton order barcode.

Validated cartons transport to the shipping sorter that diverts cartons to the proper carrier for staging and pickup.

Benefits:



Doubled order fulfillment throughput with existing staff. Sam's Beauty is now processing 2X greater than pre-Covid-19 volume surges. They are doing this without additional operators in the pack-and-ship area.



Business agility. Due to COVID-19, Sam's Beauty had to close its retail stores and experienced a dramatic spike in e-commerce orders. "We were suddenly receiving what were historically peak season volumes every day," said Jin. "At the same time, we lost some of our DC work force due to Covid-19 fears, and had to use our office staff in the DC to meet the surge in E-Com orders. The Numina solution was the easiest process for our staff to operate, it is very intuitive, so training is minimal, and we were able to meet the order demand."



Eliminated shipping errors. Before implementing the system, errors occurred in packing. The leaner, lower touch pack process reduced the chance of a pick sheet falling off or being attached to a packed carton. The improved pack process and automated labeling and validation has eliminated labeling and manifesting errors. Results: decreased labor, higher customer satisfaction and reduced quality control labor.



Ability to rapidly launch new product lines with minimal impact on order throughput. Sam's Beauty gained efficient order flow with the Numina Group solution, so adding new hair care products that increase order volume is no longer a concern at the DC. The system can handle today's and future E-Com order volume growth.



Summary

With the Numina Group's solution, Sam's Beauty now has a scalable order fulfillment solution that handles 2 to 3X the pre-automation volumes, with a lower headcount. As a result, the efficiency, scalability, and reliability of Numina's Group' pack and ship solution has become the cornerstone of Sam's Beauty's business growth. "In the future, we'll be exploring Numina's pick by voice for automating the picking process as our business continues to grow," concluded Jin.