

Orbiter™ improves your performance in the dock area

Learn how utilizing the Orbiter™ System as a Shipping Buffer in the loading dock area will lead to shorter load times and improved sequencing for faster trailer turn-around times.

By **Klaus-Dieter Wurm**, VP and Managing Director of Materials Handling at SSI Schaefer

What is new in deep-channel storage technology? Lately we are engineering more applications utilizing our Orbiter System as a Shipping Buffer in the loading dock area. In standard Deep Channel Storage applications, single SKU pallets are stored in an entire channel. Depending on the tractor-trailer loading pattern and the size of the load, up to 23 pallets have to be retrieved from the storage channels via forklift. This is an easy task when an entire truckload consists of just one SKU; however, much more time for loading and waiting is required when the truckload consists of 22 or 23 different pallet SKUs. On the other hand, what if a certain number of channels corresponding to the number of daily outgoing truckloads could be utilized as a pallet shipping buffer? In this application, pallets would not only be loaded into the shipping buffer channel precisely to the customer's order, but also utilized as a sequence buffer which would prepare outbound orders precisely to the customer's business- or warehouse-specific sequencing needs.

Schaefer's Orbiter™ is such a deep-channel storage system. Using power caps or capacitor technology in lieu of batteries - eliminating battery charging stations, battery replacements, and associated labor costs - the Orbiter™ offers a true cam-operated, mechanical lift, rather than more-problematic hydraulics. The Orbiter™ is especially efficient and reliable in deep-freeze environments, while also offering significant, yet standard, safety features protecting both people and equipment.

The solution already exists with the Schaefer Orbiter™ Shipping Buffer System. Even without a warehouse management system, the Orbiter will cut the customer's warehouse footprint and reduce the time needed to load a tractor-trailer. Delivery trucks can be 'turned around' more quickly and efficiently. The Orbiter also reduces labor and material handling costs, since outbound



The Orbiter™ can also be used in combination with automated storage and retrieval systems in deep-freeze environments.

tractor-trailers can be assigned to a specific loading dock corresponding to a buffer storage channel for that specific truckload. Pallets can be forklift-loaded, sequentially, by specific store location or truck route, reducing the distance between the Orbiter™ pick-face and the loading dock. In addition to providing more efficiency in the warehouse, the Orbiter also keeps the loading dock organized and therefore avoids accidental pallet mix-ups, resulting in better order accuracy.

Whether used traditionally as a single SKU deep-channel storage system or creatively as a sequencing shipping buffer for an outward-bound shipping order, the Schaefer Orbiter™ offers an efficient, super-high-density storage system with measurable benefits that include: reduction of the overall storage system footprint for more pallets in the same footprint or the same amount of pallets in a smaller footprint; cost savings through faster tractor-trailer load times and turn-around times due to

sequencing; reduction of forklift travel distances - lowering energy costs and the customer's carbon footprint, while increasing the forklift's mechanical life; and reduction of labor and handling costs, resulting in more Savings!

It's easy to understand why the feedback is so positive. Some Schaefer customers have reported an annual savings of hundreds of thousands of dollars simply by getting rid of battery-operated systems. And putting pallet storage back in a customer's warehouse allows for the use of existing floor space with several channel levels which means a quicker ROI when off-site storage locations are no longer required.

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