

Case Study: alphabroder



RETAIL CASE STUDY

Overview & Challenge

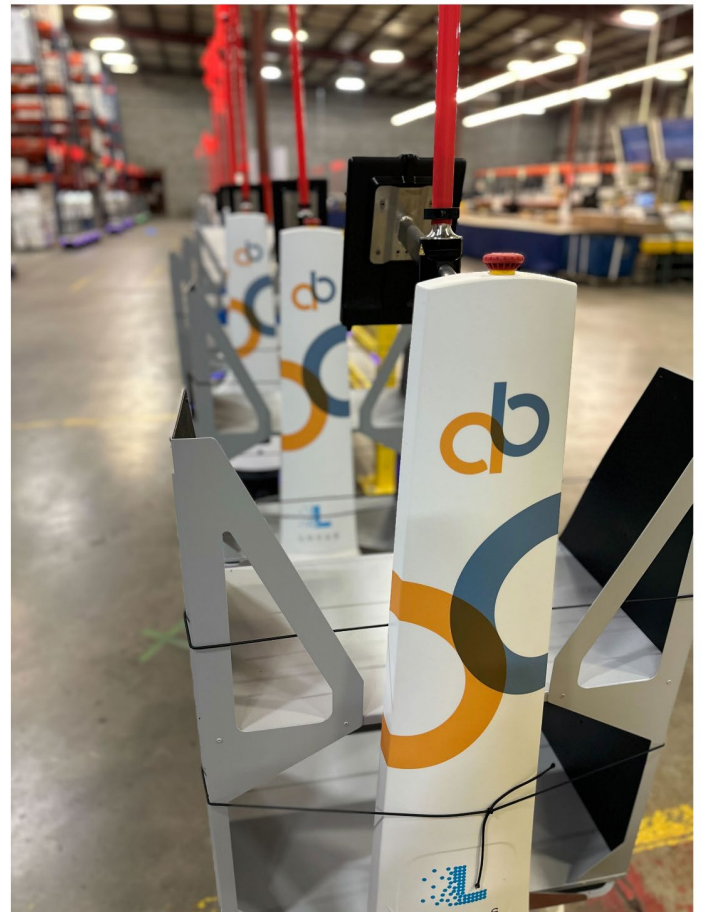
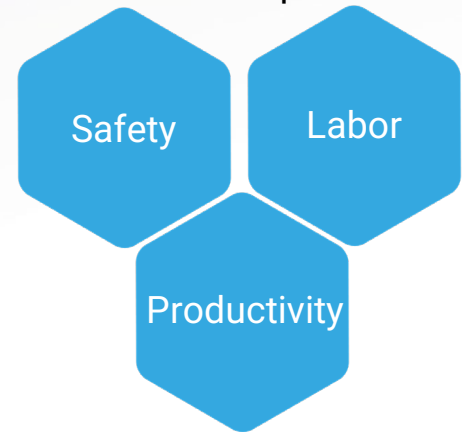
alphabroder is a combination of many companies whose people, products, and personalities have been successfully integrated over the past two decades. The companies that make up alphabroder have rich histories going back more than 100 years.

alphabroder offers 80+ brands in 6,500 styles of classic and trending apparel and products like drinkware, bags, journals, and technology. They have positioned their nine distribution and production facilities to cover 99% of the US population in a one to two-day ship.

Two years ago, the alphabroder team had a hard time finding new workers due to the limited labor pool. At the same time, they were focused on improving work life balance and safety after an EX survey with their associates.

Ron Wittebort, VP of Operations, said, "We have pack mules, which are large pieces of equipment that people ride in the facility. It was also a strain on associates as they had to step up and down on the mule's platform throughout the day. So, we looked at automation to see if we could create a safer location for people to work, which would help our labor pool, create a better work life balance, and get us to where we needed to be."

Critical Factors for Implementing Automation at alphabroder



Retail company reduces training time with LocusBots



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Results

alphabroder has now automated nine of their sites in two countries with the Locus Robotics' solution including autonomous mobile robots (bots) that work alongside the associates.

“After we automated one facility, we took those learnings along with the management team and the leads to the next location to help them automate,” said Wittebort. “Even before the bots were on site, those facilities were trained and ready.”

Associates enjoy working alongside the bots for several reasons. First, it's a safer environment for them when they're not riding on the pack mules. Although they're walking instead of riding, the associates have thanked their leads because they feel healthier, and they no longer have the strain on their legs of stepping up or down on the platform.

The alphabroder team adjusted their order flow after working with the bots and learning the platform. They're able to meet SLAs and sort times with their small package providers and realized they could move out the order schedule. That adjustment reduced overtime and lessened their need for temps, which provided security and stability for associates along with a more predictable work schedule, adding to an improved work-life balance.

Once the bots had been in the facility for six months, alphabroder, which moves 8-10 million units per week in their facility, looked at the data and heat maps from the Locus solution for high movement in the facilities. Thanks to that data, they moved around 55% of their areas to further boost their productivity.

Results



Improved Safety



Decrease in Training Time



+ Employee Retention

+ Work-Life Balance

