

# Hänel Case Study



## Mississippi Valley Stihl



**Location**  
Peoria, IL

**Category**  
Distribution

**Product**  
Lean-Lift VLM

**Website**  
[www.stihlusa.com](http://www.stihlusa.com)

Mississippi Valley Saw was founded in 1978 by Bob Joynt in Peoria, IL. It began serving the nation's heartland by shipping chain saws, log splitters and accessories to about 70 independent dealers and lawn centers. Growth was swift, and in 1981 the company moved into a new location. Soon after, Mr. Hans Peter Stihl visited and asked them to drop all other lines and become an exclusive Stihl dealer. Mississippi Valley Stihl (MVS) was born.

By the end of the 1990s business had grown to proportions unheard of at the inception of the company. The need for more inventory, better training facilities and additional support staff led to the purchase of new land and the construction of a new 32,000 sq/ft distribution center. Growth continued and MVS soon faced a space crunch.

At that time, spare parts inventory was kept on 8,500 sq/ft of fixed shelving. Staff had to walk the rows of shelves and pick parts from paper order slips. The process was slow, prone to inaccuracy and the shelving took up valuable floor space.

MVS investigated all possible solutions to their time, inventory and space issues and chose the Lean-Lift® Vertical Lift Module from Hänel Storage Systems. A bank of three units were installed initially, with a fourth lift added shortly after to keep pace with demand.

The benefits of the Lean-Lifts were immediate. Before the lifts, 5-6 people would work well into overtime to fill the day's orders. After the lifts, a single person could get all orders received by 2 p.m. out by 4 p.m. the same day.



*Stihl dealers in the Midwest can expect fast, accurate service when they need equipment, accessories or spare parts.*



<<more>>

Orders are picked faster with less walking and no more overtime. The total footprint of the 4 lifts is only 128 sq/ft, which freed a large area to accommodate pallet racks to store bulk products.

Accuracy increased to 99.9% with the implementation of Nova inventory management software.

Totes and boxes are used to collect the various parts for each order, with a put-to-light system ensuring the right parts go into the right container. The same part may be required on several orders, so up to 14 orders can be processed simultaneously to save time. A pick-to-light system is used to pull fast moving items from bins nearby.



Orders are sent to the system and displayed on a monitor at the operators station. The screen directs the operator to the appropriate lift where an overhead LED display quickly directs them to the correct location on the provided tray and the correct quantity of the part.

The lifts work together to cue the next part automatically so that the operator can move from lift to lift, minimizing any potential wait time for trays to be delivered to the access point.

The system provides a packing list and address label that go into the bin before it is sent directly to the packing area for shipment.

The increased speed and accuracy afforded by the Hänel Lean-Lifts allowed MVS to keep its commitment to its dealer network to provide the right part within 24-48 hours, even while stocking an ever-increasing inventory of parts. The success of Mississippi Valley Stihl led to their transition to a corporate Stihl branch in 2008.



*"I can leave here at night and I know that every order is gone, and I know that every order is gone accurately."*

**-Mike Joynt  
(President)**



*See the Mississippi Valley Stihl story on our YouTube Channel at: [youtube.com/user/HanelStorageSystems](https://youtube.com/user/HanelStorageSystems)*