

Records management company rescued by Dexion

Following some poor advice and a bad experience with its previous storage supplier, Fort Knox turned to Dexion for advice regarding its new 4,780 m² facility. The Dexion solution included the design and installation of a three-tier mezzanine storage system within an extremely tight time line.



Fort Knox is a family owned business that boasts 8 self storage, 3 wine storage facilities in Victoria and a Records Management warehouse located in Altona North 10 minutes from the city centre. Fort Knox Records Management is a Government Approved Storage Supplier that endeavours to provide the most comprehensive Records Management package available.

The Fort Knox records management business was launched in 2003 following 12 months of research into the industry. According to Guy Wilson General Manager, conducting the research wasn't easy.

"We were confident that a records management company offering a tailored package for its customers would be successful. Rather than tell our customers how we will store their records we've created a business based on 'tell us how you want your records stored'" he said

"and being a new business we were determined not to be dictated to by industry standards.

"We've invested in the O'NEIL records management system, arguably the most state of the art package available, and this enables us to offer tailored billing, reporting and records management options" he said.

"We basically started the business from the ground up, we knew there was potential but we had limited experience in this area. As you can imagine the Victorian records management industry wasn't about to welcome us with open arms so we researched the best storage and retrieval techniques by examining interstate operations" he said.

"The key to records management is storage density, how many boxes you can store in a given foot print as well as how quickly the pickers are able to locate and retrieve any given order" said Wilson.

"In 2003 we employed a specialist storage company to advise us regarding our storage requirements" he said "although we always planned to go to a mezzanine system in the long term, we didn't have enough business to warrant that sort of investment immediately."



Fort Knox was advised that bays of shelving would suffice in the short term and that a mezzanine could be added to this shelving at a later stage. At the same time Fort Knox was tendering for new business and expected to grow and understood its storage partner would be an integral element of future plans.

"As the business grew we added to the shelving until we tendered for and secured a major government contract. It was at this stage we realised our storage partner had provided the wrong advice, that the shelving couldn't be integrated with a mezzanine and that our storage approach had been wrong from the word go" said Wilson.

Fort Knox pitched for and won a significant order and were contracted to receive a certain number of boxes every day, 5 days a week. "It's at this stage we met with Matt Bell and the guys from Dexion" said Wilson.

Dexion quickly assessed the situation and were able to plan, advise and show via 3D computer graphics how the warehouse needed to function. The decision was taken to abandon the existing shelving installed on the eastern side of the warehouse, and construct new shelving with structural uprights, in preparation for the mezzanine, on the western side.

Dexion had to manage a construction plan that delivered completed sections on given dates to accommodate the delivery of boxes.

"We realised it was an extremely tight time line but Dexion said they could meet the dates and we put our faith in them" said Wilson "and they delivered on their promise".

According to Matt Bell, account manager from Dexion this was an important project for the company "Once the decision was made to go with our plans we had to manage the construction process in an extremely tight time frame" he said. "To further complicate matters we were faced with the challenge that, due to the National steel shortage, product wasn't readily available and we had to manage resources efficiently" he said "and with the support of the Operations Team at the Manufacturing Plant in Sydney we were able to manage the issue seamlessly".

The mezzanine is designed around a central loading area that services each level and incorporates a central walkway capable of handling 2 pallet widths.

The pallet racking based structure has 3 levels of storage covering a total area of 9828 square meters. It's fitted with steel mesh flooring

and mesh decks. Dexion worked closely with fire engineers to ensure the fire prevention systems installed throughout the structure meet strict guidelines and industry's best practice. Accurate modelling of the mezzanine assisted in creating the highly sophisticated fire prevention systems now in place.

Being a Government Approved Public Office Storage Supplier occupational health and safety is key issue for Fort Knox and the storage system is designed with the pickers in mind. Boxes are stored on a narrow gauge mesh featuring a smaller aperture to allow easy movement. Boxes are stored so that staff only have to move one box to get to pick a required order. With the help of a local company recommended by Dexion, Fort Knox had manufactured specialist picking trolleys incorporating a ladder with box storage capacity.

"After our initial problems we now have a facility that we can be really proud of" said Wilson "and we're now very happy with our choice of storage partners. We're particularly grateful to Dexion for managing this complex project and assisting to position this company in such a positive light" said Wilson.