

VARGO™ impresses L.L.Bean on returns revamp

“It is rare to find a vendor that I would identify as a true business partner,” said **Mike Perkins**, vice president of distribution and returns operations for **L.L.Bean Inc.** “But **VARGO™** certainly delivers in this manner in providing unique solutions and flexible service.”

PERKINS COMMENTED ABOUT THE SERVICE L.L.Bean received from VARGO™ Companies during the 2006 design and implementation of two complete sortation lines for its returns division. In his view, VARGO™ stands apart from the competition because it listens to customers and provides answers to their unique needs.



Mike Perkins, vice president of distribution and returns operations for L.L.Bean Inc.

“Too often, companies provide packaged solutions—what everyone else is using,” said Perkins. “They don’t look at the issues your company is facing with a fresh eye, and instead pull old solutions off the shelf. VARGO™ gained an understanding of our challenges before prescribing a solution. The solutions we received were not run-of-the-mill. They were designed to put us at a distinct competitive advantage. They are good listeners and can modify their thinking based on changing business needs.”

Perkins was also impressed that VARGO™’s key principals were as involved with daily operations as other members of the team. He noted that the kind of companies—operated by the owners—were often the companies he turns to again and again.

“We do not always give our business to the lowest bidder, but the one that gives us the best value,” Perkins said. “VARGO™ has shown they are not focused on earning a one-time profit, but instead value developing long-term relationships that everyone can benefit from. I know the folks that work there are dedicated to our success and will do what it takes.”

VARGO™ helps L.L.Bean with many happy returns

VARGO™ Companies completed a multifaceted design, installation and software implementation for **L.L.Bean Inc.** that dramatically increased efficiency and throughput for the returns division at the company’s Freeport, Maine, facility.

The challenge involved designing two complete sortation lines, installing a large conveyor system, motorized spiral conveyors and additional material handling equipment, along with implementing a custom software system to control the two lines. In addition to a rapid project timeline, the work had to be completed while one of the L.L.Bean returns lines continued to operate.

“The returns division handles a substantial volume of various sizes and types of packaging, particularly during peak seasons,” said **Lee F. Schomberg**, senior sales engineer for VARGO™ Integrated Systems. “Our goal was to provide an even flow of items and optimize the workload among line workers.”

VARGO™ Integrated Systems, the comprehensive integration facet of VARGO™ Companies, handled the system design and equipment installation for both lines. VARGO™ Adaptive Software, which specializes in custom software and control solutions, implemented its innovative optimization software, **MANDATE IP™**. The majority of the implementations were completed and the two optimized lines were operational by November 2006—just in time for L.L.Bean’s busiest season.

Founded in 1971, VARGO™ Companies is a team of leading fulfillment and distribution center specialists with expertise in system integration, innovative software solutions and specialized equipment. VARGO™ is comprised of three strategic companies, VARGO™ Integrated Systems Inc., VARGO™ Adaptive Software LLC. and VARGO™ Material Handling Inc. For more information call (614) 876-1163 in Ohio, (510) 548-0143 in California, (512) 851-2377 in Texas, or visit www.VARGOcompanies.com