

YARD OPTIMISER™ THE SMART WAY TO OPTIMISE DISTRIBUTION CENTRE OPERATIONS



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Jari Pirhonen
General Manager,
Kalmar Terminal Development

Kalmar, in cooperation with leading supply chain provider, Wincanton, has developed a new tool for simulating yard operations at distribution centres – Yard Optimiser™. This new software tool further strengthens Kalmar’s ability to assist customers and consultants when planning new distribution hubs and improving the efficiency of existing centres.

Yard Optimiser™ – a spin-off product from Kalmar’s proven Port Optimiser™, a tool for simulating container handling systems – optimises distribution tractors and vehicle transportation inside distribution centres. The

simulation’s principle advantage is its ability to estimate the optimum number of vehicles needed in the yard for various operating scenarios. “Yard Optimiser™ helps us to estimate how many vehicles are needed in distribution centres,” says Richard Conneely, Head of Transport Consultancy, Wincanton.

Greater efficiencies

With 400 locations across Europe, Wincanton is focussed on achieving greater efficiency results by optimising its distribution tractor handling operations. With the help of Yard Optimiser™ Wincanton can employ the correct number of distribution tractors to ensure smooth and efficient trailer transfers in and out of its yards.



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In a typical logistics centre operation, a supplier's goods are transported on trailer to the distribution centre where they are offloaded and stored at the facility. When needed, the goods are simply loaded onto another trailer and transported to their final destination. When handling trailers, unnecessary waiting times can create efficiency problems for distribution companies if handling operations have not been optimised.

Wincanton receives numerous vehicles every day at its distribution centres and in order to increase turnaround times, it employs distribution tractors to handle trailers in and around the yard. Distribution tractors, such as Kalmar's recently launched TT612d, have been specifically designed to move trailers between loading bays and parking areas efficiently and safely. In fact, the new TT612d can turn trailers around in less than half the time it takes a conventional road truck, providing a tremendous increase in operational efficiency. Yard Optimiser™ takes these efficiency gains even further by optimising the number of distribution tractors needed.

Flexible evaluation

Yard Optimiser™ can be easily adapted to different handling operations. The software was designed to accommodate three basic scenarios: small, medium and large distribution yards. A customer can choose the closest size based on their operation and then modify the yard, removing or adding parking and door slots. An even more detailed model based on the customer's actual layout is also possible. Other information, which is necessary to input into the system to achieve the most accurate equipment estimation, includes information such as gate and bay processing time for trucks, trailer hook-up and detachment times

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and bay priorities. Yard Optimiser™ provides an easy way of estimating the efficiency and cost of different scenarios.

"With the help of Wincanton's expertise in logistics and supply chain solutions, Kalmar has been able to gain essential information for building the simulation tool based on actual figures rather than theoretical models. This helps us to better understand customer requirements in distribution centre operations," explained Jari Pirhonen, General Manager, Kalmar Terminal Development.

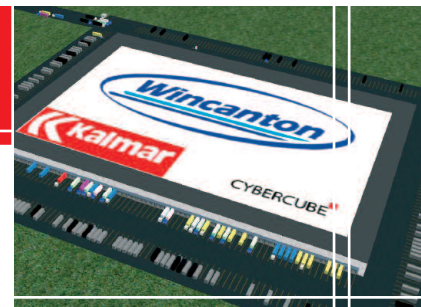
"This has also been a unique opportunity for Kalmar to deepen its cooperation with one of the largest distribution companies in the UK. Wincanton's in depth knowledge of logistics and distribution centres has been the key in developing an understanding of what is required in this business sector," added Peter McCance, Sales Director, Kalmar Ltd.

Fast and easy to use

Wincanton will be using Yard Optimiser™ for both new developments and existing projects, where it hopes to improve operations.

Conneely said that one of the most important features of Yard Optimiser™ is that it is easy and fast to use. "The three main scenarios we use are enough to get all the critical info that is needed in a short time period to support, for example, a tender process. The tool is simple enough to get fast answers which make it possible to change parameters for different scenarios and to compare the results," he said.

Wincanton is a leading European provider of supply chain solutions with a turnover of £1.93 billion and operations in 15 countries, employing more than 30,000 professionals. It strives to achieve operational excellence, focussing closely on customer needs, to maintain and expand product leadership and deliver value for money.



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