

Handling soft drinks safely

# Beverages producer Britvic opts for UniCarriers warehouse technology





Fork spacers.

**The British soft drinks producer Britvic, the largest supplier of branded still soft drinks, has recently invested in high-performance logistics as part of its newly constructed high-bay warehouse with shuttle rack system. UniCarriers provided a complete materials handling solution for Britvic's business – from warehouse design and simulation through to the installation of high specification handling equipment.**

UniCarriers provided Britvic with eight robust & ergonomic high lift Reach Trucks, one wire guided Very Narrow Aisle machine and a bespoke Battery Changeover System which can change a reach truck battery in less than a minute, thus keeping the material flow moving in its newly completed facility. The trucks transport heavy pallets weighing up to 1200 kg and put away and retrieve loads to and from the 11.6 m high shuttle rack system. Britvic benefits from a UniCarriers service support package that achieves uptime levels in excess of 98.5%, as well as fleet and account management and financing services which form part of the UniCarriers 360° service concept.

Britvic is the largest supplier of branded still soft drinks in Great Britain ("GB") and the number two supplier of branded carbonated soft drinks in GB. The company supplies retailers and the out-of-home dining sector with its own brands and with licensed brands by other producers such as Pepsi, 7 Up or Lipton Ice Tea in over 50 countries worldwide. One of its four British production facilities is located in

Leeds, where a total of 150 employees are responsible for production, warehousing and shipment of fruit juices and mixed drinks.

Improving efficiency is a priority across the business, and Britvic strive to develop a best-in-class supply chain. In 2016 soft drinks producer constructed a new high-bay warehouse with just two aisles to maximise storage density and expand capacities at the location – around 15,000 pallet spaces. "It was our aim to create as many pallet spaces as possible in the available surface area," explains Edward Barnett, Network Development Manager, at Britvic, "To this end, we decided to build upwards and implement a system with a high storage density." Several warehouse scenarios were tested using Logistics Analyser, a UniCarriers material handling tool for simulation, calculation and logistics analytics.



## Getting to grips with heavy loads and great heights

As well as performance, stability and reliability, Britvic were looking for heavy lifting equipment that could lift pallets, some weighing 1.2 tonnes, to above eleven metres high. The equipment also had to be

highly manoeuvrable to position pallets on to the shuttle system. "With UniCarriers, the first thing that really stood out was their desire and willingness to help and understand our needs, as we were looking for heavy lifting equipment, that could reach above eleven metres", Edward explains. UniCarriers reach trucks are a great option

for both height and speed. "The Leeds warehouse solution involves 'Shuttle Racking' which meant that the 'Reach Trucks' provided were tailored to the Britvic requirement", confirms Edward.

"UniCarriers has made it as easy as possible for us to switch to the new vehicles," confirms Edward. "Trouble-free project management and product training on site enabled us to start our day-to-day operations as soon as the warehouse was put into service".

Britvic chose to have radio data terminals mounted on to the equipment bar to assist with the processing of orders and twin cameras were fitted to improve vision for the operator when handling the heavy loads. UniCarriers provided a wide range of truck options and accessories to help tailor the equipment specification in order to meet with the demands of the Britvic operation.



## Fleet

9 warehouse trucks consists of:

- 8 x UHX Reach trucks
- 1 x EK Very narrow aisle (wire-guided)
- Powerbed Battery Change-over System



## Facts

<b>User:</b>	Britvic PLC
<b>Industry:</b>	Supplier of branded still and carbonated soft drinks
<b>Established:</b>	1938
<b>Branches:</b>	GB, Ireland, and France
<b>Direct sales:</b>	Exporting to over 50 countries
<b>Employees:</b>	4,377



## Special equipment for handling heavy pallets

UniCarriers reach trucks were designed to meet the highest standards – Britvic's standards. Britvic made a few modifications to the reach trucks to make it easier and safer to handle heavy pallets. Edward explains, “the reach trucks have been modified to meet our specifications with dual cameras and fork spacers, in order to provide support for the ‘put away’ system”. The fitted cameras are used by the operator to view loads and fork arms whilst working at great heights. People-centric technology means a happier and more productive workforce. “The UniCarriers ergonomic design including the mini wheel and floating armrest helps protect drivers against repetitive strain injury”, confirms Edward.

## Swift battery replacement

Just like the warehouse, the forklifts are in operation 24 hours a day at Britvic, so vehicle batteries need to be replaced at

the end of each shift. For Britvic, changing batteries on eight UniCarriers reach trucks could be labour intensive, potentially hazardous, and mean significant, costly truck downtime. The solution was UniCarriers Battery Change System – “With the UniCarriers Powerbed Battery System, we’re able to change a battery on the reach truck within about one minute,” explains Edward.

The UniCarriers Powerbed Battery Change-over System was designed, manufactured and installed by UniCarriers and customised to meet with Britvic's operational parameters, “Within that there's the battery management system, which ensures each battery is used in turn, therefore optimising the life of those batteries within the term of the contract.” Britvic's downtime is cut to the very minimum, huge savings are made in manpower, and they fulfil their responsibilities under Health and Safety at Work regulations. “The Health and Safety expectations of having UniCarriers' ‘Reach’ and ‘VNA’ on site have been met and we'll

continue to work with UniCarriers exploring opportunities as they arise within the business”, affirms Edward.

## Full Service with UniCarriers 360°

Britvic required a total solution for their business, as well as equipment. As a long-term logistics partner, UniCarriers also provides Britvic with an all-inclusive care solution based on the UniCarriers 360° service concept. In addition to warehousing planning and the forklifts themselves, Britvic currently also makes use of the financing, fleet management system and service modules. “UniCarriers 360° is the total solution for the business, through our long term rental, short term rental finance solution, fleet management, all of which we are using as part of Britvic,” explains Edward.

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Edward Barnett, Network Development Manager, Britvic





11.6m high shuttle rack system.

All the vehicles are leased, for which UniCarriers has drawn up need-based financing and for which their need will be reviewed again in six years. The fleet management system, VOM (Vehicle and Operation Management), supports Britvic's operational overview and cost control and is employed to ensure that the forklifts are used to optimum capacity throughout their service life. The VOM units, mounted on each truck, transmit operating data from the forklift to the cloud in real time, where the Logistics Manager can access them via all terminal devices. "The VOM data enables us to visualise and compare our forklifts' performance figures. The fleet management system thus helps to identify improvement potential in the warehouse and make optimum use of our fleet," explains Edward.

#### Regular performance measurement

As part of the UniCarriers 360° service module, Britvic significantly improve the truck uptime at their facility. UniCarriers

provides regular inspections and maintenance measures, to the highest quality standards, to ensure that the agreed availability of at least 98.5 percent is maintained for vehicles at all times. Edward explains "the engineers are able to come to site as quick as possible – we're looking for four hours or better and UniCarriers will provide that for us". UniCarriers meet with Britvic every three months to evaluate the cooperative partnership's ambitious goals and optimise processes on a continuous basis. Tasks include scheduling pending service visits and evaluating the condition of the fleet. The VOM System helps with evaluation and also sends operating data to UniCarriers on a regular basis.

"For us, UniCarriers is much, much more than just a vehicle supplier. All areas of the business were combined to implement and equip our new warehouse, to ensure an ideal solution was provided. We are highly satisfied with this model of comprehensive customer care," summarises Edward.

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