



Dexion Comino Case Study

A fresh approach

The Bristol Port Authority Limited



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Market leading storage solution company, Dexion Comino, and its local storage centre, Dexion South West (Bristol Storage Equipment), have extended a highly successful working relationship with The Bristol Port Company by successfully installing a racking system to the complete satisfaction of the client.

The Bristol Port Company's Fresh Produce Terminal, known as 'S' Shed within the Avonmouth docks where it is located, has a taste of the world about it. This vast building houses fresh produce such as fruit and vegetables as well as other ambient foods arriving from different parts of the world, from the southern hemisphere through to the northern hemisphere, as the year moves through the seasons.

Fresh produce is a new business to the port with the original, 'Phase One' section of 'S' Shed opening in January 2003 to provide 8,000 pallet spaces in nine chambers, known as cells, with each cell capable of being independently temperature controlled. Business picked up quickly and Phase One soon became full during the height of the seasons, it soon became clear that a Phase Two would be needed. This extension to 'S' Shed was designed to provide an additional 6,000 pallet spaces in eight, smaller cells. Facilities for packing and repacking would also be incorporated.

When The Bristol Port Company put out the storage solution contract for Phase Two to tender, local Dexion Storage centre Bristol Storage Equipment, with its scheme to install Dexion Comino Equipment, came out as the clear winner. This would continue the relationship that Dexion had successfully established during Phase One which was maintained during the interim period by the supply of spares and services by Bristol Storage Equipment prior to the commencement of Phase two.

"Our experience on Phase One confirmed Dexion's reputation for providing a quality product. We had received excellent service, when working closely with the company during this phase," says Wayne Birch, senior supervisor at The Bristol Port Company.

There would be a difference from Phase One in terms of the storage requirement for the extension, as Wayne explains:

"The pallets stored in Phase Two of S shed are generally heavier than those stored in Phase One. So we therefore required a storage system that would allow us more flexibility in the type of pallet loads we could deal with."

Furthermore, the cells in Phase 2 are smaller than in Phase 1. This allows the Bristol Ports Company to accommodate produce that requires special attention to factors such as climate and the variety of required by different types of fruit as well as other storage considerations: Kiwi fruit, for example, gives off ethanol so can't mix with other produce.

The solution devised by Bristol Storage Equipment and Dexion Comino comprised Dexion's P90 Adjustable Pallet Racking and Deepstor Drive-In racking configured three levels high. P90 is a versatile adjustable pallet racking system with a wide range of components and accessories. Individual systems can be tailor-made to meet the client's precise requirements, which can also include the safe storage of non-palletised loads.

Deepstor Drive-In Pallet Racking is a high-density storage system providing continuous racking without dividing aisles. Pallets are deposited and retrieved from the cantilevered rails by forklift trucks, which drive into the racking structure.

With its cellular interior design, rather than the open plan interior found in most warehouses, the racking would be installed in 8 cells of various sizes. Bristol Storage Equipment commenced installation of the storage system in January 2005.

"We were involved from day one of the installation process, liaising with Bristol Storage Equipment. In conjunction with Dexion, working with the builder, McAlpine and its contractors," said Wayne. We set very tight time schedules for the installation and Dexion met them all. We set an important deadline for a number of cells to be ready for by the end of March, in time for the beginning of our season. Bristol Storage Equipment met this challenge and completed all the work on time." Phase Two went on to become fully operational in June 2005.

Wayne is happy to report an extremely smooth installation process, helped by a good team relationship between all the parties involved.

"During the design Dexion and Bristol Storage Equipment guided us all the way through the process," he says. "They would also co-operate on anything that we wanted to alter during the installation, lending their advice where necessary."

One such instance where Bristol Storage's expertise came into play was a solution for supporting the large chiller units that maintained the atmosphere in the cells at the required temperature. Bristol Storage Equipment designed a special system involving the racking to support these heavy units, rather than have them suspended from the ceiling. Beams extending out from the end of the racking fully take the weight of the chillers and are supported close to the end wall on uprights. In an additional safety feature, the bottom sections of the uprights are sacrificial legs. This means if the upright is damaged in a lift truck accident, the sacrificial leg can be easily replaced without having to replace the whole upright.

'S' Shed in operation

The Bristol Port Company's Fresh Produce Terminal supplies fresh produce to a number of major supermarkets, which have their own quality control managers on site. Bristol Ports receives product, stores it for the client and makes it ready for dispatch, maintaining a quality throughout the process that adheres to the clients' own rigorous standards.

Goods come into the terminal during the morning and outgoing deliveries are dealt with in the afternoon. In addition to road deliveries bringing in goods, ships berth immediately adjacent to the facility and palletised cargo is unloaded. Between 500 to 4000 pallets per ship at the height of the season, depending upon the size of vessel and delivery are unloaded directly into a temperature controlled reception area between the two phases of 'S' Shed, where product is scanned into the Warehouse Management System (WMS). At the height of the season there are between 20 to 30 fully loaded delivery vehicles going out every day to wherever the goods are required in the UK, though mostly deliveries are made to clients'

Stores in the South West.

The Dexion racking is served by a fleet of counterbalance forklift trucks, powered pallet trucks and reach trucks. Using Radio Data Terminals the WMS tracks the location and status of each pallet until it is redelivered. It also monitors the warehouse temperatures in each of the cells.

Wayne is completely satisfied with the storage system now in place in 'S' Shed and with the work carried out by Dexion Comino and Bristol Storage Equipment.

"Dexion and Bristol Storage Equipment were there for us at the end of the phone whenever we needed them," he says. "They are a professional organization. They produce a quality product and the service we get from them is exceptional."

Editor Notes

The Bristol Port Company. In 1991 First Corporate Shipping Limited, a private company owned by Terence Mordaunt and David Ord, purchased a 150 year lease of the Avonmouth and Royal Portbury Dock Estate from Bristol City Council. Since 1991 the tonnage throughput has increased from 4m tonnes to 12m tonnes and annual revenue from £22m to £63m. Over £330m has been invested in the dock estate and the Port is now recognised as being one of the most productive and technically advanced in Europe.

Dexion Comino provides practical storage solutions for warehouses, factories, offices, workshops and archives. The long established Dexion brand is synonymous with storage.

The Bristol Storage Equipment Group comprises the following companies, Bristol Storage Equipment Limited and Westcountry Storage Equipment Limited. Formed over 30 years ago, the main function of the company was to provide Dexion Limited with a source of sub-contract labour for the installation of major rack and shelving projects. As members of the British Safety Council all site-based employees are registered with the Storage Equipment Installers Registration Scheme (SEIRS) for the industry of which Bristol Storage Equipment are founder members. The Group members are especially conscious of Health and Safety requirements on any site where they are employed. Over the years the relationship between Dexion & Bristol Storage Equipment blossomed such the company became the authorized Dexion Distributor for Bristol and the South West of England providing a local friendly professional service to all our customers.