

## BYBOX THINVENTORY AT THE CORE OF GAMESTEC PARTS SUPPLY CHAIN REVOLUTION

What a difference a year makes. Twelve months after it started using in-night parts distribution specialist ByBox, Gamestec's supply chain is almost unrecognisable and the leading gaming and amusement machine operator is now working smarter than ever.

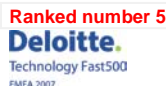
Gamestec uses a team of 275 mobile engineers to service and repair over 40,000 gaming and amusement machines installed at customer premises throughout the UK. Keeping them working is essential and following an operational review in 2007 the company began rolling out a new parts supply system devised in conjunction with ByBox that utilises its unique 18,000-strong, 1,200-location box bank network.

Previously, Gamestec's engineers worked into 17 company depots, to which they travelled to collect parts to take to customer premises which was time consuming.

Gamestec began by reducing the number of depots and replacing them with four Regional Distribution Centres. It then consolidated all stock in the Leeds workshop and started using the ByBox network to get parts to the engineers. The iBoxes are arranged in banks and can be configured in a variety of different sizes. They include an embedded RFID capability that provides real time audit of all parts passing through their doors, which effectively turns the network into a virtual warehouse.

At the start of the contract, urgent parts ordered by engineers through Gamestec were consolidated in Leeds and collected each day by ByBox. These were taken to its central hub, sorted and delivered overnight (six days a week) into a box nominated by the engineer based on its proximity to him or the customer's premises, ready for collection by 8.00am the following morning. Meanwhile, a second service used the network to make two essential parts replenishment deliveries a week to engineers, returning unwanted, unused or replaced parts as part of the same process using the simple but ingenious ByBox Blackstripe returns facility.

The benefits of this switch were felt almost immediately. The new system got parts to engineers faster and their travel time was reduced dramatically, making them far more productive. At the same time Gamestec saved money by operating from fewer locations.



But this was always designed to be an evolving system that continued to streamline the supply chain and deliver new opportunities to meet customer demand, whilst saving money.

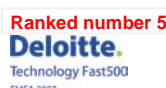
Several enhancements have already been made in the intervening months and more are planned. Gamestec's engineers now carry consumable stock for example, i.e. that required by every engineer to perform their daily duties, which is replenished weekly, and an 'essential spares' kit to increase the opportunity for a 'first time fix'; a key part of the company's service strategy.

In operation, once an engineer uses a part from his essential kit, he orders another to replenish it for delivery the next day. To facilitate this process, each Gamestec engineer now carries a PDA with bespoke software that is linked to the ByBox ThinInventory system. Developed in-house by ByBox, ThinInventory is a cohesive end-to-end technology that maximises stock visibility whilst minimising stock holding by managing each of the key stages of the supply chain process seamlessly – order, pick, pack, distribute – with serial number visibility.

The engineer uses his pda to order the part direct from ByBox via ThinInventory, which automatically arranges its picking and delivery to the specified box in the company's network. Gamestec currently consolidates and delivers the essential parts in bulk into ByBox stock once a week. ByBox presently holds around 180 individual lines in stock for Gamestec engineers, though the number is increasing all the time. An average 1,000 parts movements a week are made using this system.

Meanwhile a second process has been introduced to take account of situations where an engineer requires a part that ByBox does not hold in stock and which has to be ordered direct from the supplier. In this case the part is ordered from the supplier by Gamestec. ByBox collects daily from five key suppliers, and an order for a part placed with a supplier by 4.00pm is guaranteed to be delivered to the engineer by 8.00am the next morning.

Another improvement to the service is the introduction of a new call system that schedules and routes engineers to customer sites using their post code. The additional flexibility this provides enables customer call outs to be prioritised, for the nearest and most suitably qualified engineer to be selected, and for parts to be delivered either to an engineer's home box or to the box location nearest the customer premises, with the appropriate box access code sent to an engineer's PDA. It helps ensure customer promises are met, because engineers' tasks are scheduled more effectively and the right parts are in the right place for them to work to tight timescales.



“Working with ByBox has enabled us to revolutionise our supply chain efficiency. The system improves the way our engineers work greatly and has added a new layer of flexibility to our operations” comments Gamestec Inventory Manager Chris Carr.

“We have achieved a lot in 12 months but still have a way to go. In future we would like ByBox to manage the repair of returned parts by sending them to nominated third parties. Further consolidation of stock holding and encouraging parts suppliers to deal directly with Thinventory whilst retaining full visibility of the supply chain will also be a challenge we face for the future.”

