



Ganahl Lumber needed to squeeze a 20-acre operation into a 4-acre lot.

The site was small, but our solution wasn't.

So, you've just bought a 175,000 square-foot facility that was originally a car dealership, and its located smack dab in the middle of Pasadena's main strip. But you sell quality lumber and building materials for custom home construction and remodeling. Now what? That's just the question the folks at Ganahl Lumber faced with their most recent expansion.

With 10 lumberyards in Southern California and 130 years in the business, the Ganahl team knows a thing or two about putting together a customer-friendly, highly effective LBM operation. And, like most successful businesses, they have a short list of key vendor partners that support their success.

When general manager Barrett Burt outlined the situation to Clint Darnell at CT Darnell Construction, Clint relished the challenge.

“This is exactly what we love to do. We help our clients get the absolute most out of their available space. Sometimes we'll build the best solution from the ground up with new construction, or – as in this case – we'll design space-saving racking systems and customized warehouse buildings around the existing structure. Our main goal is maximum efficiency for their business.”

Clint Darnell, Owner, CT Darnell Construction

The Challenge

How to maximize the footprint without compromising operational excellence.

Ganahl needed help re-imagining the existing car dealership space to address their specific needs as a lumber retailer. But they knew going in they'd have an uphill battle trying to turn their design dreams into reality in regulation-heavy historic Pasadena.

Before they could even address the challenges of LBM inventory management and warehouse traffic flow, they faced a number of hurdles with a slew of local agencies,

the city itself and the historical society. From the size and functionality of the marquee to the mandated requirement for a two-story parking ramp – they knew it was going to be a challenge, but they were undeterred.

Regulations and space restrictions aside, Ganahl required this 4-acre parcel to deliver the same customer experience found at their 20-acre facilities, including the same number of SKUs and fast and convenient customer access.

The Solution

Work with a trusted partner, and never say never!

“When you're starting with an existing space, you have to be willing to compromise,” said Burt. “You want more and more, but the facility is only so big.”

And Darnell agreed. “Retrofitting space is always more challenging than new builds. You have to be creative and flexible as the project evolves.”

So the CT Darnell team went to work designing a functionally focused solution. Based on Ganahl's historical and projected inventory turns, they provided a comprehensive solution that incorporates CT Darnell Construction's proprietary Sunbelt Rack storage systems:

Multiple Power Bin Systems

These innovative automated rack systems are designed to handle and store multiple types of lumber and building materials. Sunbelt Rack's proprietary Power Bin system is one of the most efficient solutions available. By eliminating time- and labor-intensive hand loading, Ganahl was able to enjoy the benefits of reduced labor and a safer work environment. This was particularly effective for them as their space limitations meant moving multiple smaller loads quickly and efficiently.

Millwork Mezzanine

Ganahl appreciated the inclusion of this flexible high-density storage solution. In another nod to space maximization, this two-story unit was customized to fit within the footprint and is used for windows, doors and special orders.



A-Frame Racking

A simple racking solution that allows for vertical display and easy access to long items like trim and molding. A-frames are a key piece of the storage puzzle for a customer-friendly retail operation like Ganahl's.

T-Sheds

Ganahl's unique layout and inventory demands made the Sunbelt Rack T-sheds an obvious choice. These outdoor roofed cantilever racks are highly efficient. For Ganahl, they created well-organized and easily accessible covered storage for multiple units of lumber and engineered products.

Pushback Racking

These versatile racks are ideal for the space limitations faced by Ganahl. Pushback racks use free-rolling steel carts to push the inventory back into the system as additional pallets are added. When the front pallet is removed, the ones behind it automatically flow forward. Pushback racks allowed Ganahl to triple their storage footprint for their heavy bagged products (sand, concrete, mortar, etc).

Cantilever Racking

These hard-working steel racks frame the entrance to Ganahl's drive-thru warehouse. In an effort to fit even more rebar into their space, CT Darnell recently re-tooled one of their cantilever units, increasing its holding capacity by 30%.

Pallet Racking

Given the unique nature of Ganahl's space, with its legacy columns and odd floor plan, these traditional, versatile and accessible storage racks are currently used for sheet goods, pallets and general storage. Incredibly, they were customized to fit within one-eighth of an inch!

The Experience

On a comprehensive project like this, a true partnership is key. Meetings to establish space parameters, inventory flow and SKU details were essential for CT Darnell's final racking and storage design. According to Burt, "The number of questions that need to be asked and answered [on the front end] are staggering – but critical."

Clint Darnell agreed. "Like most things, the thought, detail and time spent on the front end will ultimately determine the final product."

"To make something like this work, it takes trust on both sides and a commitment to detail. This was a team effort from the very beginning, and Clint was patient with me throughout the process."

Barrett Burt, General Manager, Ganahl Lumber

After a little over two years of business in Pasadena, Ganahl's vision has clearly paid off. The location is a shining jewel in their company and in the industry. "It's an operational wunderkind," said Burt. "With just four acres of space, CT Darnell delivered a full-service lumberyard with at least 95% of the SKUs and conveniences found in our other facilities five times the size!"

The business and the customized rack solutions have exceeded expectations. And based on labor savings alone from Power Bin units, Ganahl has already realized its return on investment for the racking systems.



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