

## Case study: Zuidnatie

Logistics operator optimises warehousing space

Location: Belgium



Zuidnatie, a well-known logistics specialist in Antwerp, has reworked its distribution flows in one of its warehouses in this city with two blocks of racks with Mecalux's semi-automatic Pallet Shuttle system. The installed solution provides a storage capacity for 2,875 pallets.

## About Zuidnatie

It is one of the largest logistics operators in the Port of Antwerp (Belgium). The company offers a multitude of services, such as the loading and unloading of heavy loads and maritime containers, storage of all types of products, as well as the distribution of goods in Belgian or international territory.

Zuidnatie has a strong, dedicated team, state-of-the-art infrastructure and top-of-the-line technology to provide comprehensive, customised logistics services to customers in a safe setting.

## The Pallet Shuttle has delivered outstanding productivity to the Zuidnatie warehouse by boosting the inflow and outflow of goods



## Zuidnatie's warehouse

Recently, the logistics operator has reorganised the distribution of one of its warehouses. It occupies an 8,554 m<sup>2</sup> area, although 1,050 m<sup>2</sup>, have been allocated to storage. Most of the products of one of its customers, a food company, are stored there.

Before that, the company had pallet racks, but needed a solution that would optimise space much better to deliver more capacity. With this in mind, Mecalux installed high-density pallet racks served by the semi-automatic Pallet Shuttle.

Two blocks of 9 m high racks are used, each with five levels and 29 m deep. In a total of 125 channels (each corresponds to one SKU-type and can hold up to 23 pallets), the result is storage capacity for 2,875 pallets. *"We are extremely pleased with this solution because it harnesses existing space, as it can store up to five pallets high,"* says Paul Van Werveke, the head of warehouse operations at Zuidnatie. Most products are industrial

bags (better known as big bags) placed on pallets for easy handling. *"The rack structure is adapted to the unit loads' characteristics and dimensions, mainly very heavy products, of up to 1,050 kg,"* explains Paul Van Werveke.

This storage system has yielded two major benefits for Zuidnatie. On the one hand, *"more storage capacity thanks to space savings,"* notes Paul Van Werveke and, on the other, *"faster pallet entries and exits,"* he adds. Within the compacting-type systems, the Pallet Shuttle is the one that guarantees the fastest load handling.

*"Every day, we receive around 200 pallets from our customers all over the world and distribute a significant number of palletised loads, mainly in Europe,"* mentions Paul Van Werveke. A semi-automatic solution such as the Pallet Shuttle has been chosen to reach this work pace. The shuttle executes the load movements inside the channels rapidly. Pallets can be stored for as long as needed, as their extraction process is very quick when customers need them.



Workers deposit the Pallet Shuttle in the corresponding channel. Soon afterward, they insert the goods in the channel's first position and the motorised shuttle takes it directly up to the first open location it finds inside the channel. Operators use a tablet with a WiFi connection to interact with the shuttles and organise the introduction and extraction of the pallets. And, seeing that operators do not need to enter the lanes to handle the goods, this reduces potential damage to the racks.



#### Advantages for Zuidnatie

- **Multi-SKU storage space:** each one of the rack channels is set aside for a specific SKU. With this solution, Zuidnatie has obtained a large pallet-housing capacity for their many SKUs.
- **Maximum space usage:** the two blocks of racks have made full use of the available warehousing area.
- **Streamlined operations:** the Pallet Shuttle carries out fully-autonomous inputs and outputs of the merchandise, which translates into much faster pallet management.



#### Technical data

Storage capacity	2,875 pallets
Pallet size	1,000 x 1,200 mm
Max. pallet weight	1,050 kg
Racking height	9 m
Racking depth	29 m

