

Case study: AS Healthcare

Streamline order preparation to increase warehouse throughput

Location: France



Mecalux automated a portion of the warehouse that AS Healthcare owns close to Paris in order to guarantee efficient picking, save on logistics costs and reduce the margin of errors during handling. The solution consisted of live pallet racking with the pick-to-light system and a conveyor circuit with rollers that joined the prep zone to the sorting and consolidation areas.

AS Healthcare is part of Bertelsmann, an international services and communications group, which focuses its business activities on outsourcing services for managing customer relations. Present in more than 50 countries, the Bertelsmann group is family based and continually adapts to technological breakthroughs to offer its customers advanced services worldwide.



The AS Healthcare division

In 2000, Arvato created the Healthcare division (AS Healthcare), from which it offers specialised services and technology for the healthcare sector to improve patient relations.

The logistics platform of 18,000 m² that AS Healthcare has in Chanteloup-en-Brie sends annually 700,000 orders.

Needs and the proposed solution

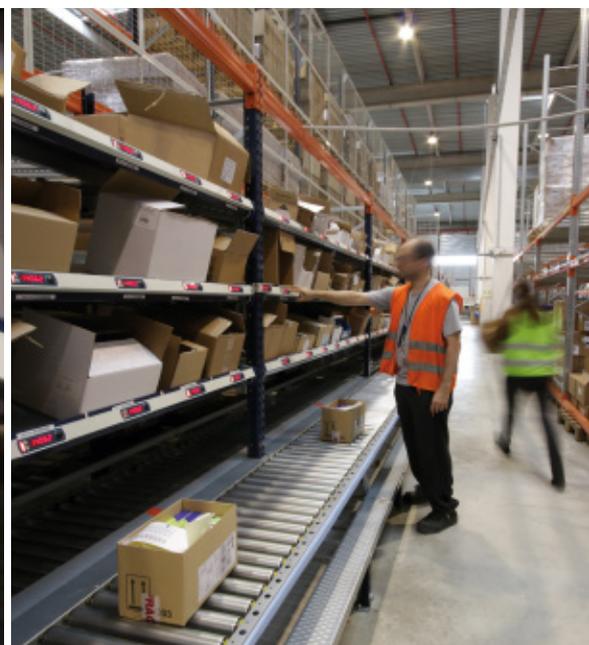
Order preparation constitutes a decisive aspect for a company like AS Healthcare.

The enterprise must offer quality service, which allows it to satisfactorily attend to a high number of orders that it receives, with many different SKUs and short prep times, regardless of the size or weight of the product.

Order received must be sent to the hospitals, health centres and pharmacies on the same day.

To do this, and after thoroughly examining the needs of the company, they opted to automate a portion of the order preparation process via a conveyor circuit with rollers. Automation guarantees efficient picking, as well as logistics cost savings and decreased error rates.

The conveyor circuit is the heart of the installation, which was supplemented with live pallet racking that incorporates the pick-to-light system, pallet racking and an ample consolidation, sorting and dispatch area for goods.





In addition to increasing productivity, the Mecalux solution diminishes the number of incidents in preparation processes at AS Healthcare, as well as costs related to the logistics centre

Picking area: 400 m of conveyors with pick-to-light

The order fulfilment area is composed of two live pallet racking blocks for boxes with pick-to-light systems allocated to high consumption products and a conveyor circuit that crosses the racks until it reaches the consolidation area.

The goods are introduced into the higher end of each racking level, which is slightly inclined so that the box moves via gravity flow to the opposite end, which faces the outbound or preparation aisle.

Each three level high rack is divided into multiple channels equipped with the pick-to-light system, which visually indicates the pick-up position and the quantity of

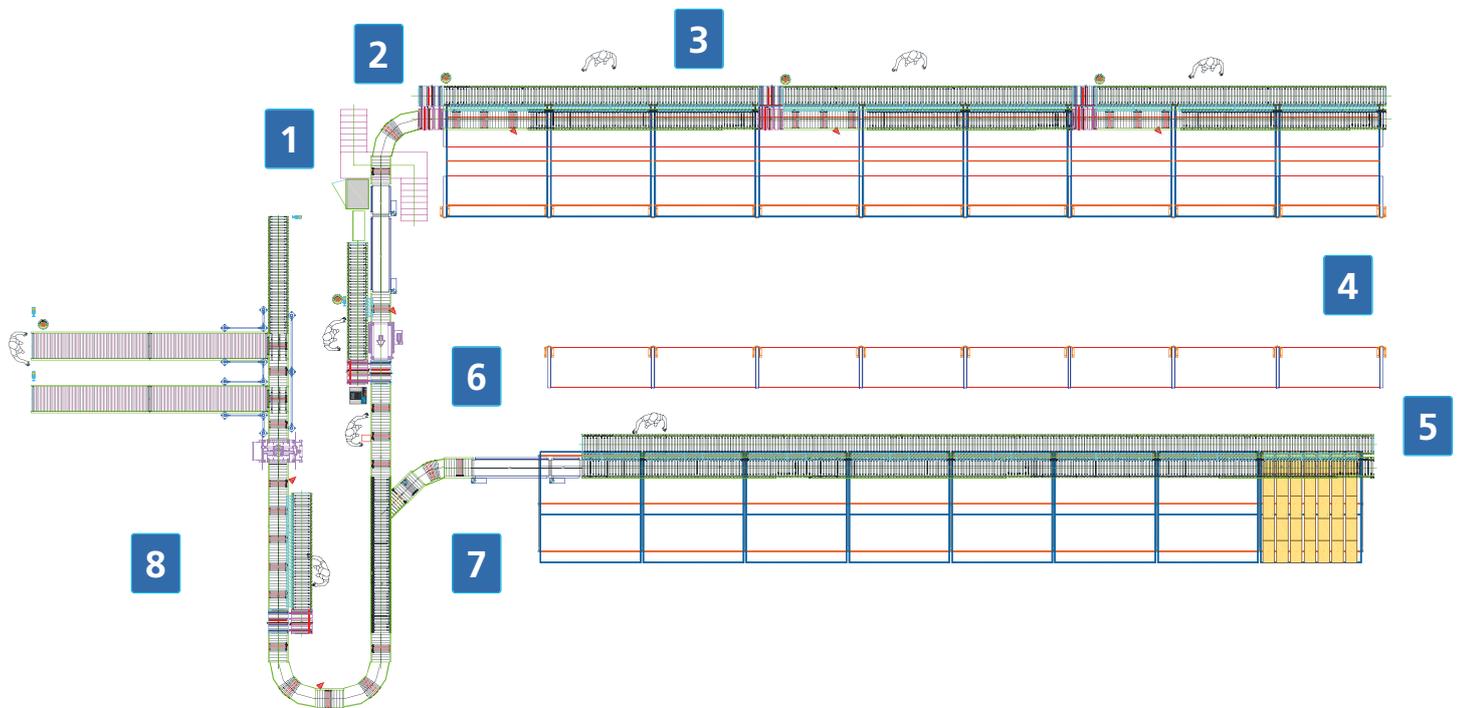
SKUs the operator must extract for each order. Once the products are selected and placed into the box, the operator presses a button and confirms the performed operation.

The automatic conveyor passes through the inside of the racks. Manual conveyors were installed, outside and in parallel to the racks, which are used as prep tables.

When orders are completed, they are pushed onto the first conveyor and move to the sorting/consolidation zone.

In the upper part of the racks and on the side of the replenishment aisle, various levels for storing pallets with reserves of the products located in the live channels were set up.

The pick-to-light system guarantees maximum speed and productivity when selecting and extracting items. In addition to being user friendly for operators, it is a hands-free system with no need for an external device to be carried





Consolidation area

In this area, operators pack, verify and prepare packing lists, while they issue and stick shipping labels to the orders.

To complete the operation, there are packing boxes of different sizes, prep tables, computers and printers. At the end of the circuit, the orders are sorted into several channels assigned to different customers

or delivery routes. Afterwards, they place the boxes on the shipping pallets to stretch wrap them in one of three stretch wrapping machines installed right in front of the loading docks.

The stretch wrappers are used to secure the load that is deposited on pallets via plastic film, safeguarding it from scrapes and other damage.



Once the orders are completed, they are sent to the pre-load areas located in front of the loading docks to be sorted into dispatch routes





Area for pallets

The remainder of the AS Healthcare warehouse consists of pallet racking of up to seven levels high, allocated to bulky high, medium and low turnover products, as well as reserves in live pallet racking.

This solution offers direct accessibility to each pallet and optimal location occupancy.

The operator uses reach trucks to handle pallets.

Light-duty shelving was also set up, separated by levels, for low turnover and small sized products.





Advantages for AS Healthcare

- **Increased order prep speeds:** the conveyor circuit and the live racking with the pick-to-light system optimise movements during order preparation.
- **Lower operational costs:** the number of personnel and allocated resources are minimal, since management, transport, sealing and sorting are automated.



Technical data

Racking length	25.1 m and 22.3 m
Racking height	6.5 m and 6 m
Max. weight per box	10 kg
Maximum pallet weight	800 kg
Conveyor speed	45 m/min

