Case study: Heidelberg
A future in high resolution

Country: Spain

Companies are tending to computerise their supply chain to modernise their businesses and gain a competitive edge. Printing industry supply company Heidelberg has entrusted Mecalux —through its partner company Code Biting— with the installation of the Easy WMS warehouse management system at its warehouse in Barcelona. This WMS has helped to increase operator performance and improve the management of the 1,933 SKUs the warehouse works with.

A promising future

Heidelberg is a German multinational that was established in 1850 and arrived in Spain in 1963. Today, it has become the printing industry's main supplier, providing a wide-ranging catalogue of printing machine components and equipment.

In recent decades, the company has modernised to cope with the constant changes in the market and thus ensure that its activities create added value as compared to its competitors. *"In this context,*
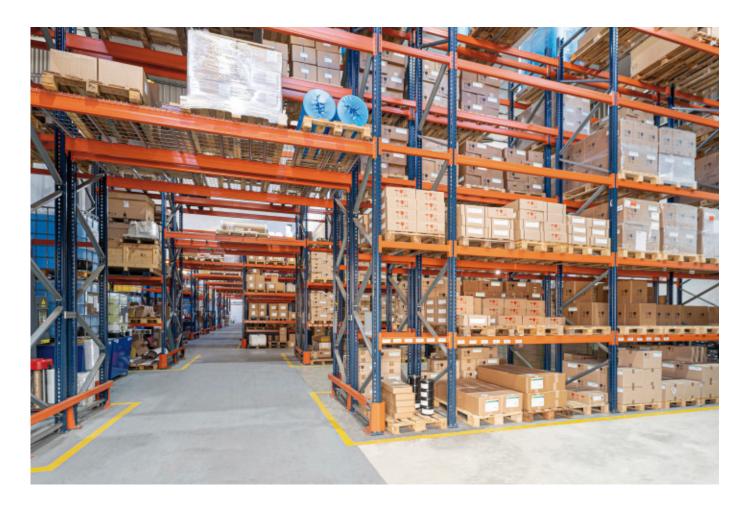
the concept of 'efficient logistics' is one of the strengths of the company's strategic plans," explains Heidelberg Logistics Manager Sonia Ros.

To have efficient logistics it is essential that the supply chain be flexible, with agile processes that are adapted to each customer's requirements. It is also important that orders be delivered as fast as possible.

Modernising and updating the supply chain has led to very good results for the company. Sonia Ros states, *"in the last*

two years we have doubled our turnover, and we expect to continue growing. An excellent product portfolio, accompanied by an extraordinary team, makes us look forward to the future with great optimism."

Previously, Heidelberg had worked with a logistics operator that handled storage of all the items. *"The ERP communicated with this company to make sure that warehouse operations were being coordinated according to our needs,"* explains the Logistics Manager.

When the company decided to bolster its logistics, and therefore to have its own warehouse, it contacted multiple storage solution providers. After putting this project out to tender, it opted for the Mecalux technical offer: 6.5 m high pallet racking with a storage capacity of 1,549 pallets.

This versatile storage system is ideal for storing a large number of pallets of varying weights and volumes. At the same time, direct access to all products facilitates the handling of the goods and order preparation.

Once the warehouse was operational, Heidelberg's main concern was how to manage 1,933 SKUs of different sizes, characteristics and demand levels with maximum effectiveness. The company decided to implement a warehouse management system (WMS) to supply a high level of service to its customers, with punctual and error-free deliveries.

Code Biting, a technology firm specialising in software solutions for all types of businesses, and part of the Mecalux partner programme, proposed the setup of Easy WMS, the warehouse management system developed by Mecalux. This system displays

Sonia Ros
Heidelberg Logistics Manager

"With Easy WMS, we have improved response times, product slotting and item quality controls. Above all, we have simplified inventory management as a result of the new software."

a wide range of features, but the main reason it was chosen is its flexibility and scalability. This ensures it can be adapted to Heidelberg's processes and cope with market changes and increased sales.

Order is productivity

The first step in supervising stock is to identify all products as they arrive in the warehouse (50 pallets are received daily from suppliers). Operators read the barcode on each of these pallets with the help of a radiofrequency (RF) terminal so that Easy WMS can assign a location to them taking into account the defined strategies.

Workers communicate with Easy WMS via RF terminals to receive orders and confirm that they have been carried out correctly. This supervision by the WMS minimises the possibility of error, *"which has improved operator performance and perfected location management,"* says Sonia Ros.

According to the Heidelberg Logistics Manager, *"Easy WMS organises the warehouse and the products based on the type of material received and the dimensions of its packaging."* WMS thus knows the status of the stock and the exact location of each pallet in real time.

Proper organisation of the goods results in a faster and more efficient operation. Order preparation needs to be perfect to prevent returns and second deliveries that would generate added cost for Heidelberg and undermine customer confidence.

Between 50 and 55 orders are prepared every day with a very different number of lines. Orders are classified by product type: consumables, replacement parts or spare parts for technicians who repair printing machines.

Easy WMS instructs operators where to go, what products to collect and in what quantity to collect them to make up each order. The system designs a route for the operators to travel the shortest distances and therefore complete the orders in the shortest time.

Easy WMS identifies all 1,933 SKUs as soon as they arrive in the warehouse and assigns them a location

The warehouse distributes around 30 pallets a day to Heidelberg customers in Spain and Andorra. Easy WMS sorts these pallets in advance depending on the order or route, streamlining their subsequent loading onto the transport lorry.

Only advantages, no downside
"Good value for money was a decisive factor in our choice, not to mention the human factor. The Mecalux technical team was very helpful and approachable, and their way of communicating was clear and frank. This is something we considered vital when we started this project, because we were completely unaware of how to deal with the installation of a WMS," says Sonia Ros.

The Heidelberg warehouse has undergone a radical change following the Easy WMS implementation. Operators do their work following Easy WMS instructions, avoiding interference between entries, exits and the order picking area.

As a result, Heidelberg has a highly productive warehouse capable of handling the company's growth prospects.

Advantages for Heidelberg

- **Updated logistics:** Heidelberg has strengthened its supply chain by commissioning a warehouse in Barcelona. With Mecalux's Easy WMS it has increased the productivity of all operations.

- **Management of 1,933 SKUs:** the WMS organises the products in the warehouse and assigns them a location based on their characteristics and level of demand.

- **Order in picking tasks:** operators follow Easy WMS orders to prepare between 50 and 55 orders per day with a highly disparate number of lines.

Technical data

Storage capacity	1,549 pallets
Pallet sizes	800 x 1,200 mm
Max. pallet weight	1,000 kg
Rack height	6.5 m
Warehouse Management System	Easy WMS

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