

Hero Spain upgrades its ThyStore WMS for Easy WMS

Implementing Easy WMS is a process that should not affect ongoing warehouse operations. Hero, the leading foods company in Spain, has changed its old ThyStore warehouse management software, which is used to manage its installations' logistics up till now, using the new Easy WMS system of Mecalux instead. This system has more features and is under constant growth to adapt to business development.

Location: **Spain** | Sector: **food & beverage**



ADVANTAGES

- **Efficient upgrades:** Easy WMS was implemented in the Hero Spain warehouse in seven distinct stages to ensure that no errors occurred during its commissioning and without any sort of operational stoppage.
- **The most efficient software:** Hero Spain now enjoys a much more modern WMS and one with more features, set up to be flexible during temporary fluctuations and changes in production.
- **High productivity:** the automated warehouse provides huge productivity, by being able to manage 2,500 incoming and outgoing pallets on a daily basis.



Conserving the goodness of nature

The Hero Group is a food multinational that opened in 1886 in Lenzburg (Switzerland). Since its founding, it has always stood out for offering naturally good products, with fresh, high-quality, nutritious foods, and also using original recipes.

The company arrived in Spain in 1922 and set up its headquarters in Alcantarilla (Murcia) where it crafted pulps and syrups. Up until now, this production plant has become one of the largest the Hero Group has worldwide, along with the one in Germany. Its annual production exceeds 250 million sales units, mainly preserves and jellies, and all the SKUs from the 'Hero Baby' (baby food brand), which includes fruits, desserts, special milks and cereals.

In these installations, Hero owns and operates a logistics centre where receipt, storage and dispatch tasks are carried out. In the year 2000, Mecalux built the company a clad-rack automated warehouse. "Beforehand, we had a bunch of distribution warehouses in spots nearby," explains Juan Francisco García Gambín, warehouse manager of Hero Spain in Alcantarilla. "But given our anticipated growth and the cost savings from renting space and transportation, we saw that the best solution would be to build an automated warehouse," he adds

Currently, the warehouse remains a strategic tool for the company. "We continue to believe that this was a wise choice, without which we would have never achieved the personalisation and level of service our customers expect," points out Juan Francisco García Gambín.

"From this production centre we distribute to almost the entire globe. Some of our most common markets are Spain, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands, Russia, and also, in smaller quan-

Three blocks of racks with Pallet Shuttles were installed in different areas to carry out distinct operations within the logistics process

ties, to Asia, the Middle East, Africa, North America and Latin America," he affirms.

In the last few years, Mecalux has helped retrofit the Alcantarilla centre to Hero Spain's requirements. The company has installed push-back racks and pallet racks run by the Pallet Shuttle system in the factory (used to house cardboard and packaging), another block of racks with a Pallet Shuttle and pallet racks to store types of flours. Lastly, racks with a Pallet Shuttle were enabled next to the automated warehouse for finished products, ready to be distributed.

The Hero Spain logistics centre in Alcantarilla

Order picking is one of the central operations of this logistics centre. It prepares 250 orders/day on average, each one comprised of 15 order lines.

The workers pick items guided by a system which optimises the route they must take and shows how to make up each pallet correctly. In doing so, they do not waste time running here and there. The operator receives on-





The shuttles and rails of the push-back racks are designed to slide pallets fluidly and with minimal effort.

screen instructions that show which position they must go to and how many units must be taken out. This is a preparatory step to implementing a voice picking system, something the company is considering.

The clad-rack automated warehouse fills a 10,000 m² surface area and comprises four aisles with double-deep racking on both sides. Overall, these provide storage capacity for more than 30,000 pallets with finished, ready to distribute products.

Each day it receives more than 1,000 pallets flowing from both production and suppliers. Product distribution in the racks takes their demand level into account. "The higher rota-

The warehouse stands out for being highly productive: everyday it does up to 2,500 combined pallet movements

tion items are placed close to the front of the warehouse, while low rotation ones are at the end of the aisle. Plus, the heavier pallets are housed on lower rack levels and lighter-weight ones above," points out García Gambín.

From ThyStore to Easy WMS efficiently

Hero Spain has dropped ThyStore definitely in order to start managing its automated warehouse in Alcantarilla with Easy WMS's latest version by Mecalux. According to García Gambín, "the main reason was that it is technologically obsolete. The current ThyStore works through Windows XP and once again it is more difficult to find compatible hardware, not to mention the lack of support for this operating system. So, the best option was to migrate to the Easy WMS system.



The technical team of Mecalux Software Solutions has updated the WMS in Spain, following these steps:

1. Defining the functional analysis. This document brings together all the functionalities that comprise the Easy WMS system at Hero Spain.

2. WMS configuration and development are suited to the specified layout and the functionalities established in the functional analysis.

3. Tests with the Galileo Conveyor Control System (SCT in Spanish) to validate that it is communicating properly with the Easy WMS in order to move the pallets through the warehouse.

4. Installation of a test environment so that the Hero Spain team could become familiar with the new WMS.

5. Communications testing and validation with the SAP ERP.

6. Start-up simulations to test Hero Spain's response to first using Easy WMS.





The Pallet Shuttles also have a highly intuitive, easy-to-use software to run the automatic shuttles

7. On-site system commissioning in the Alcantarilla warehouse installation.

Then, Mecalux carried out monitoring in the centre over the next two weeks to check that everything was running as planned and so it could contain incidents quickly. Presently, monitoring continues on a remote basis.

Advantages of installing Easy WMS

Exchanging ThyStore for the Mecalux Easy WMS constitutes a qualitative leap forward in warehouse's entire management. The reason being this system offers an extensive array of functionalities that fulfil any type of logistics need and is set up to grow alongside the business in its plans for future development.

Migrating the programme in different stages meant all the necessary test could be done, potential errors detected and solutions found all before its commissioning. "The update took place without any sort of interference with proper warehouse operations. Neither receiving, nor dispatching experienced setbacks during the days spent on commissioning," stated the warehouse manager of Hero Spain in Alcantarilla.

One of the biggest advantages of migrating from ThyStore to Easy WMS is that it facilitates stock control automatically, which minimises potential mistakes. This system shows the operators which containers must be extracted or which criterion must be applied to store the products, for example, the FIFO (first in, first out) methodology.

Like ThyStore did, Easy WMS's new version communicates on an ongoing basis with Hero Spain's SAP ERP. The company uses the WMS from Mecalux to manage both the production warehouse and the one for raw material and, also, to send the goods towards one of two destinations: to replenish the picking area or to dispatch full pallets.



"The Easy WMS of Mecalux is a solid, user-friendly tool. We enjoy the security of working with an updated system and one that includes a maintenance service. Additionally, we discovered a WMS that would let us be more independent when it comes to resolving potential incidents."

Juan Francisco García Gambín
Warehouse Manager of Hero Spain
in Alcantarilla (Murcia)

