

**Case study: Rexel**

Omnichannel strategy: 1,800 orders dispatched daily

Location: France



The electrical materials distributor Rexel has driven business growth in France. To do so, it has relocated to a new logistics center in the town of Cestas. The company has acquired space and picking speed, while strengthening its omnichannel strategy. Mecalux has equipped the warehouse with three different storage solutions: selective pallet racks, shelving for picking, and cantilever racks. All these systems make it easier to manage 26,000 SKUs and prepare 1,800 daily orders.



### Energy sector products

For more than 50 years, Rexel has stood by its customers in implementing innovative, sustainable solutions for the energy industry.

With a presence in 26 countries, this company provides its services to clientele all over the world.

As a result, it runs a 2,000-strong network of sales outlets, 104 logistics centers and has a staff of 27,000. In 2018, revenues rose to 15.1 billion dollars, while its future growth is also bright.

### Transfer to a new warehouse

Rexel owned two warehouses in France near Bordeaux, spanning a 1.73 acre surface area in total.

However, the company needed more space to accommodate more products and better meet its customers' requirements. The company moved to a new logistics center very near these two ware-



### Patricia Marais

Manager of the Rexel logistics center (France)

*"One year after commissioning, we are very satisfied with our logistics center's performance. Workers have adapted well to the storage systems. The space we have gained allows us to better serve our customers."*

houses in the town of Cestas; an ideal location to continue serving customers in the New Aquitaine region. This move has proved beneficial for Rexel: it now has 4.46 acres of space (plus 32,292 ft<sup>2</sup> of outdoor area) where it manages the 26,000 SKUs in its catalog.

These include different sized products with distinct weights, characteristics and demands. Rexel wanted to capitalize on its new warehouse and fully exploit its poten-

tial. Proper stock management was clearly a priority. So, it needed a solution that would help the business handle such a wide variety of goods efficiently. In recent years, the company has built its multichannel strategy in order to create a richer customer experience.

Customers can buy the products they are looking for through the Rexel website or by visiting one of the 460 national points of sale.



Without a doubt, omnichannel business has posed an enormous hurdle for Rexel, as it must speed up warehouse operations to prepare and distribute 1,800 orders a day.

Mecalux was contacted in this situation and, according to Patricia Marais, manager of Rexel's logistics center in Cestas, *"the proposal Mecalux presented to us completely satisfied our specifications, both from a technical and financial point of view."*

Mecalux has equipped the warehouse with three different storage solutions that make it possible to organize Rexel's huge variety of articles, these include: selective pallet racks, picking racks and cantilever racks.

#### **Selective pallet racks**

*"We have designed pallet racks for bulky products such as electric boilers, heat pumps, cable reels or lighting equipment,"* Patricia Marais said. One advantage of these racks is they contain components and

Direct access to shelved products makes it easier for operators to locate the SKUs for each order



elements to adapt the levels and shelves to any kind of load, weight and volume.

Another special feature is the direct access to all 9,336 housed pallets, which translates into faster handling of goods and order preparation.

Products are picked directly from the pallets on the lower levels and stocked on the upper levels (max. 33' high). With this system, the right goods are available at all times and disruptions in order picking avoided.

Operators walk through the warehouse with order prep machines locating the SKUs that comprise each order, with a radio frequency handset prompted by the warehouse management system (WMS).

### Shelving for picking

The bulk of the warehouse is equipped with 13' high shelving for picking *"where small products like tools, plumbing fixtures, etc. can be stored,"* the logistics center manager said.

These shelves, as well as those for pallets, feature easy product accessibility so workers can remove items from inside the boxes conveniently.

Wave picking is carried out, i.e. multiple orders are prepared on the same route simultaneously. Operators use a trolley divided into separate compartments, one for each order to be prepped. As they take the articles from their locations, they sort them into the different orders. When these are completed, the trolleys are rolled



to the packing area, where the orders are checked, packed and, finally, distributed.

Additionally, carton flow storage racks have been erected, comprising roller tracks so the boxes can move along by gravity. Sloped display trays are also available, which facilitate access to merchandise stored inside the boxes.

Replenishment takes place in the loading aisle, located opposite the order picking aisle. Operators insert boxes into the different levels and these slide to the pick aisle automatically.

This system allows simultaneous picking and replenishment of goods to be carried out, with no interference between the two operations.

### Cantilever racks

They are formed by 28' high columns and cantilevered arms on which the longest and largest loads are placed, *"such as profiles and pipes,"* Patricia Marais pointed out. This system features easily configurable parts, so that shelving levels can be modified to suit different load heights and dimensions.

### A pick-focused warehouse

Rexel has moved to a new warehouse in France with the goal of accommodating the broad array of products with which it works. Furthermore, through this logistics center it has bolstered its omnichannel strategy and is now able to more efficiently serve customers who make purchases through its website or at its points of sale.

Like any omnichannel warehouse, picking is this center's core activity. Therefore, the storage solutions installed by Mecalux have made a positive contribution to improving the work organization for operators and, as a consequence, the dispatch of 1,800 orders a day.

Choosing Mecalux pallet racks, shelving for picking, and cantilever racks is based on the direct access they provide to the goods facilitating storage tasks. The result is an organized warehouse where streamlined order picking is the norm.

## The storage solutions help to manage the 26,000 SKUs that Rexel carries in its logistics center efficiently and error-free





### Advantages for Rexel

- **Turning out 1,800 daily orders:** Mecalux's three storage solutions offer direct access to the products, which is fundamental for faster picking.
- **26,000 SKUs managed:** the racks are fitted with add-ons and accessories to adapt the shelves to the merchandise's dimensions (from small boxes to very bulky items).
- **Greater storage capacity:** Rexel has gone from managing two warehouses with an overall area of 1.73 acres to just one with 4.46 acres. With such a space, it can house all the essential products required to meet customer needs.



### Technical data

#### Pallet racks

Storage capacity	9,336 pallets
Pallet size	32" x 48"
Max. pallet weight	1.1 t
Max. racking height	33'

#### Shelving for picking

No. of locations	32,540
Shelving height	13'

#### Cantilever racks

Arm length	49"
Racking height	28'

