

**Case study: Groupe Bert**  
Same storage capacity, 73% less surface area

Country: France



The relationship between logistics provider Groupe Bert and Mecalux continues to bear fruit. So far, they have commissioned six warehouses together, reaching an overall storage capacity of approximately 70,000 pallets. A few months ago, Groupe Bert moved its head office to a modern, 7.4 acre logistics center in Albon, France. Mecalux has equipped it with pallet and cantilever racks as well as racking served by the Pallet Shuttle system, a high-density solution perfect for optimizing storage surface area. As a result, in 86,000 ft<sup>2</sup>, the company manages practically the same number of pallets it used to store on pallet racks occupying 322,900 ft<sup>2</sup>.

## A delivery every 12 seconds

Founded in 1964, Groupe Bert is a renowned French logistics provider that offers its services to thousands of customers all over Europe. The company has an annual turnover of over 243 million dollars, 1,650 employees and 25 logistics centers throughout France, adding up to 86 acres of total storage area.

Groupe Bert's volume of activity is extremely high. With a fleet of 3,100 vehicles, its drivers travel 174,000 miles/day to serve nearly 10,000 daily customers. In other words, Groupe Bert delivers an order every 12 seconds.

Over the years, Groupe Bert and Mecalux have developed a close partnership, reflected in the start-up of six warehouses. Mecalux has equipped them with storage solutions capable of accommodating a wide variety of products with different characteristics and turnovers and from very diverse sectors.

Mecalux's racks in these six installations provide total storage capacity for around 70,000 pallets and are noted for their flexibility and efficiency in order preparation. According to Sébastien Hoog, Warehouse Manager at Groupe Bert's logistics center in Albon, *"Mecalux is a tried-and-trusted partner of our group. After working together for many years and on several projects, our relationship remains strong and beneficial for our logistics systems."*

### New headquarters

The year-on-year growth experienced by Groupe Bert has forced this logistics provider to change the location of its central office on various occasions. Over the past three months, it has moved to the town of Albon in the Rhône-Alpes region, very close to the French A7 motorway that connects with the major European roadways.



In a surface area of 7.4 acres, Groupe Bert has built a modern logistics center divided into three warehouses. Each has its own area for loading and unloading goods, in addition to its corresponding docks.

The Warehouse Manager notes, *"Our priority when building this new center was to make the absolute most of the available storage area."*

At the same time, there were two essential conditions for Groupe Bert that Mecalux had to satisfy. On the one hand, the group would have to house a large variety of products, which is usual in the case of logistics providers. On the other, it would need to have a storage system capable of managing bulky products for one of its customers. In view of this situation, Mecalux installed three completely different yet efficient solutions: pallet racks, cantilever racks for bulky products, and

racks serviced by the semi-automatic Pallet Shuttle system.

In total, the facility can store more than 5,000 SKUs on 23,783 pallets of varying sizes. Moreover, the warehouse is prepared to receive around 700 pallets from customers and to dispatch another 700 to be delivered primarily in France.

### Semi-automatic Pallet Shuttle system

Previously, Groupe Bert stored approximately 24,000 pallets belonging to one of its customers in an area of 7.4 acres and on pallet racks. With this new installation, one of the company's main objectives was to minimize the surface area required to store these goods, specifically, big bags containing food.

Mecalux suggested the semi-automatic Pallet Shuttle for three reasons: it saves space, raises productivity in goods storage and removal tasks and is ideal for managing a large number single-SKU pallets.

Consequently, Mecalux installed seven racking units standing 38 feet tall with a maximum of seven levels and up to 15 pallets deep. Thus, 23,264 pallets are stored in approximately 86,000 ft<sup>2</sup>, accounting for 73% less surface area when compared to the former system. The arrangement of the two units makes it possible to manage goods based on two criteria: FIFO (first in, first out) and LIFO (last in, first out).

*"Mecalux's semi-automatic Pallet Shuttle system has given us multiple advantages. The most obvious is the optimization of the storage surface area. I'd also highlight increased efficiency in storage tasks and a notable improvement in goods management,"* enthuses Sébastien Hoog.



**Sébastien Hoog**  
Warehouse Manager at Groupe Bert's logistics centre in Albon

*"We're thrilled with our new installation and the storage solutions from Mecalux because it knew how to solve the main issue we were concerned about: how to store close to 24,000 pallets while occupying as little surface area as possible."*



To operate this system, the worker merely needs to place the shuttle in the corresponding channel by means of a forklift; then, he/she places the pallets in the first racking position, and the shuttle automatically brings them to the first available location in the channel. To remove the goods, the same operation is performed but in the reverse order.

The operator uses a WiFi-connected tablet to guide the movements of the motorized shuttle. This tablet has a very intuitive interface that allows the employee to take inventory, select the shuttle he/she will work with, and load and unload a channel without interruption.

### Cantilever racking

Two units of 197-foot cantilever racks have been set up to hold large wooden boxes belonging to one of Groupe Bert's other main customers.

The structure of these types of racks is very simple, as they are formed by columns to which a series of 4-foot-long arms (which

hold the loads) are attached. These arms are easily configurable, so the locations can be adapted to the dimensions of the goods.

The racks provide direct access to the products, facilitating manual handling of the wooden boxes as well as visual monitoring of each one.

### Pallet racks

Finally, Mecalux installed pallet racking with capacity for 519 pallets. As these racks are specifically designed to store loads of varying measurements, weights and shapes, Groupe Bert uses them for palletised goods and certain wooden boxes.

This storage system stands out for its exceptional strength, adaptability and versatility. For example, shelves have been installed to house the wooden boxes in a completely secure manner.

Pallet racks are the perfect all-rounder for storing very diverse products safely, which is vital for any logistics provider. Likewise,

direct access to the goods facilitates loading and unloading operations.

### Mecalux and Groupe Bert: a successful alliance

Groupe Bert's new warehouse in Albon is a further testament to the excellent and fruitful relationship between the logistics provider and Mecalux.

Warehouse Manager Sébastien Hoog affirms, *"We're extremely satisfied with the various storage solutions; they were installed on schedule and in line with the particular peculiarities of our business. You can tell that Mecalux is a specialised company with expertise in logistics needs."*

Mecalux has been by Groupe Bert's side from the beginning, helping it to become a benchmark logistics provider in France and throughout Europe. This new logistics centre constitutes a step further in the growth of Groupe Bert. With this facility, it will continue to efficiently serve its nearly 10,000 customers all over the continent.





### Advantages for Groupe Bert

- **Surface area optimization:** the Pallet Shuttle system provides significant space savings. Approximately the same number of pallets are stored in 73% less surface area.
- **Varied goods:** the three storage systems can manage over 5,000 SKUs of a broad range of sizes, characteristics and customers.
- **Flexible operations:** Mecalux's three warehousing solutions are designed specifically to facilitate storage tasks and ensure the receipt and dispatch of around 1,400 pallets per day.

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### Technical data

#### Cantilever racking

Racking height	29.5'
Racking length	197'
Arm length	4'

#### Pallet racks

Storage capacity	519 pallets
Pallet sizes	32" x 47"
Max. pallet weight	2,200 lb
Racking height	29.5'

#### Pallet Shuttle system

Storage capacity	23,264 pallets
Pallet sizes	39" x 47"
Max. pallet weight	2,600 lb
Racking height	38'