

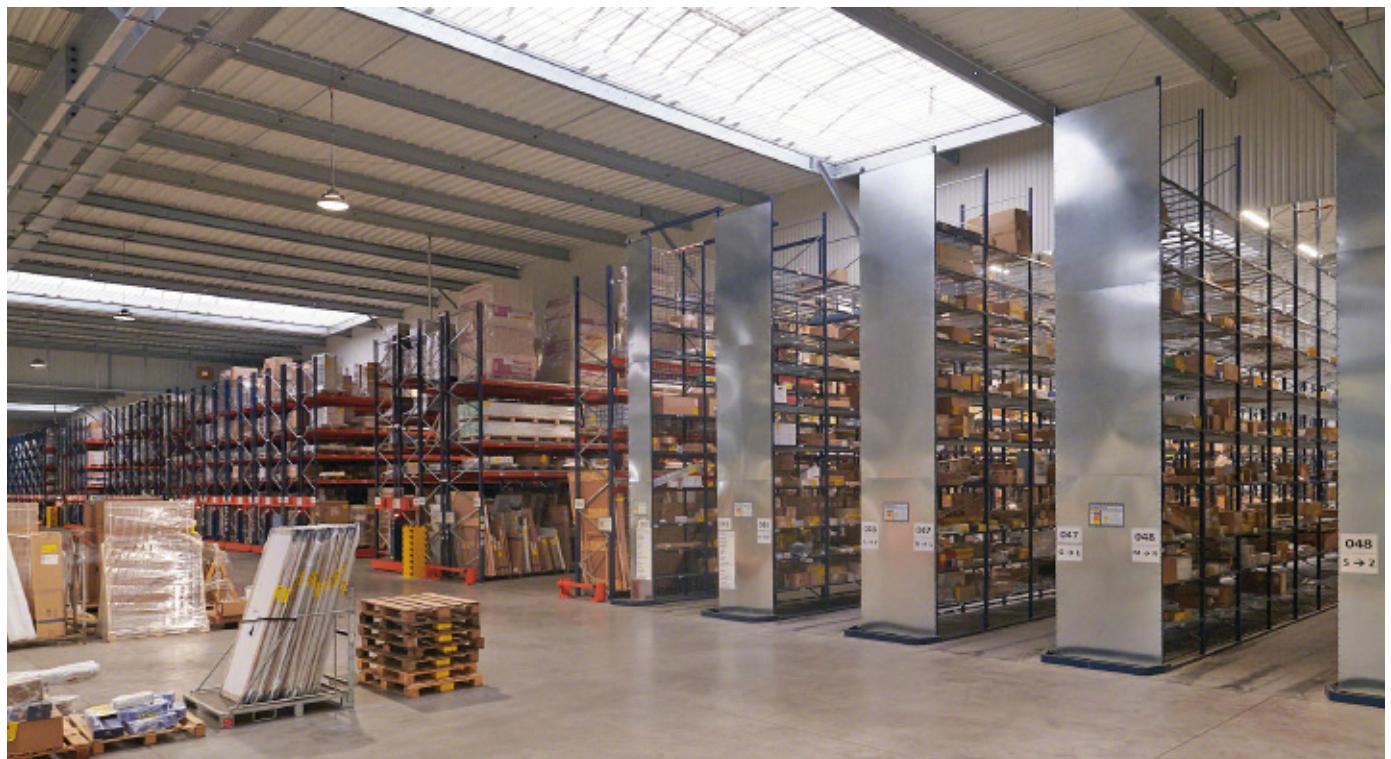
Case study: VST

Two versatile systems to prepare 200 orders a day

Country: France



Cooperative VST has expanded its logistics center in Les Essarts, France, and Mecalux has equipped it with Movirack mobile racks and multi-tier picking shelves. They have capacity for over 13,000 containers, which are stored according to their physical characteristics and weight. With this combination of solutions, VST has optimized its available space, sped up order preparation, and reached its goal to dispatch more than 200 orders a day.



France's first industrial workers' cooperative

Active since 1976, VST (Vendée Sani Therm) is a French cooperative that accompanies and supports the activities of some 750 members (plumbers, electricians, and roofers, among others). Its daily activity consists of supplying all the materials these professionals need to provide their customers with good service.

Due to the growth VST has experienced year after year, the cooperative decided expand its logistics center in Les Essarts by 78,577 ft² with a single objective in mind. *"We wanted to bolster our growth prospects for the next few years,"* says Logistics Center Manager Thierry Guillon.

The new addition is divided into two large areas. The first is the storage zone, which, thanks to optimization of the surface area, occupies only 40% of the space (32,292 ft²). The second is the order picking and dispatch zone — VST's main activities — which covers 60% of the total area (46,285 ft²).

The storage systems are versatile enough to manage 13,000 SKUs of very diverse sizes. Guillon says: *"By starting-up this warehouse, our aim was to come up with the best way to organize and store a large number of pallets with extremely varied characteristics and turnovers. A quarter of these are large items, but we also have over 4,000 boxes."*

To that end, the cooperative contacted Mecalux. Guillon says: *"It's been a great partner for many years, so we knew we'd count on its collaboration again for this new logistics center. We store our products on 31.5" x 47.2" pallets, so the Mecalux racks adapt to our needs perfectly."*

Two storage solutions in a single space

Taking into account VST's requirements, Mecalux set out to equip the logistics center addition with two different storage systems: Movirack mobile racks and wide span shelving for picking. Guillon says: *"We chose these two solutions because they would optimize space in our logistics center and facilitate storage and order picking tasks."*

Every day, the warehouse receives 150 pallets sent by suppliers and quickly distributed on the racks based on product type, characteristics, and turnover.

Each storage system is allocated to specific items. The Movirack racking houses bathroom renovation materials, radiators, heat pumps, and household appliances.

The fixed racks on the ends of the Movirack system store shower enclosures, shower bases, and insulation materials. Finally, the wide span shelving is used for electrical, plumbing, and HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) tools and supplies.

Thierry Guillon Logistics Center Manager, VST (Les Essarts)

"Movirack mobile racks are the ideal solution for our warehouse, and we couldn't be more pleased with them: they leverage all the available space to provide storage capacity for more than 6,000 pallets. Meanwhile the wide span shelving also houses a large number of items and facilitates order prep. The combination of these two systems will definitely boost our growth."

"We're thrilled with the expansion of our logistics center. Mecalux understood our needs and proposed a solution 100% tailored to our business. And it did this while respecting the delivery deadlines," says Guillon.

Movirack mobile racking

Mecalux has installed three blocks of racking on mobile bases with a total storage capacity of 6,318 pallets. *"We were able to see how they worked in the Mecalux showroom in Barcelona and in other companies' facilities. And that really helped us make our decision,"* says Geoffroy Krieg, Deputy Executive Director.

The racks stand 23' tall and have four levels. They are installed on mobile bases that move sideways autonomously. *"It's a very innovative system because it provides high storage capacity in small space. In addition, the rack levels have been adjusted so that we can store 9.8-foot-tall products,"* says Guillon.

In total, the system comprises 21 working aisles, of which only three remain open. Direct access to the goods is enabled by opening the required aisle by means of a remote control or directly via the onboard control panel.

The other 18 aisles, which are completely compacted, make it possible to optimize



13,993 ft² of floorspace. *"Since we've been using these racks, there have been no malfunctions. By following Mecalux's advice in terms of cleaning, upkeep, and maintenance, our day-to-day work is more efficient,"* says Guillon.

The racks have been specifically calculated and reinforced to ensure safe operations as well as the integrity of the operators, the goods, and the system itself. Manufactured according to the directives of the NF EN 15095+A1 European standard, the racks meet legal and technical safety requirements. They incorporate de-

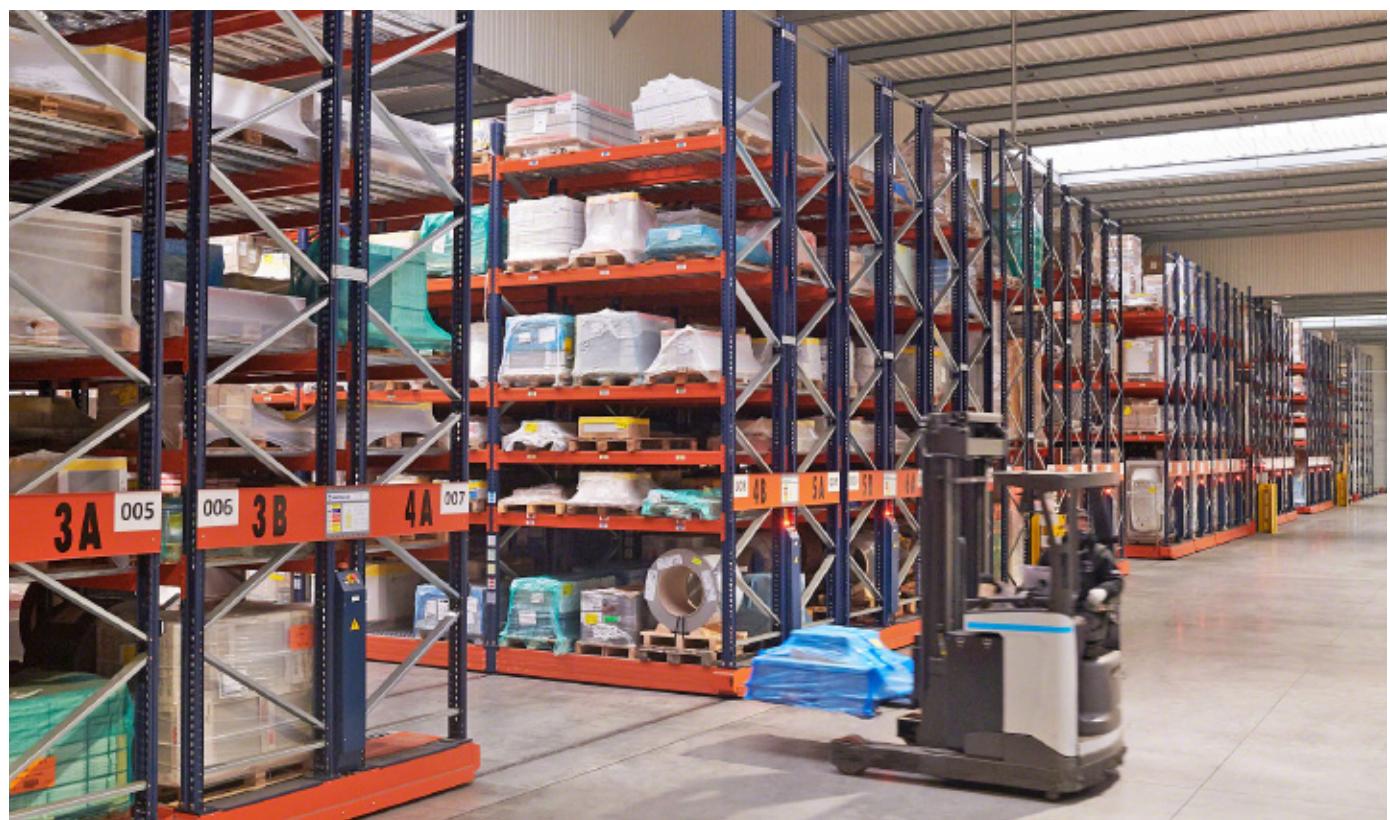
vices that guarantee efficient, nonstop operations:

- **Exterior safety barriers** cut the power to the racking the moment an operator enters the aisle.

- **Interior safety barriers** detect the presence of objects or people in the aisle that would prevent the system from operating properly.

- **Emergency buttons** serve to stop the racks from moving in the event of an incident.

Proximity photocells ensure that the racks come to a smooth, safe stop.



Multi-tier wide span shelving for picking

Mecalux has set up five 98-foot-long aisles with wide span shelving for picking on each side. The shelves stand 23' tall and include a wide range of accessories to adjust the locations to goods of varying sizes and characteristics. The shelving holds around 6,900 boxes.

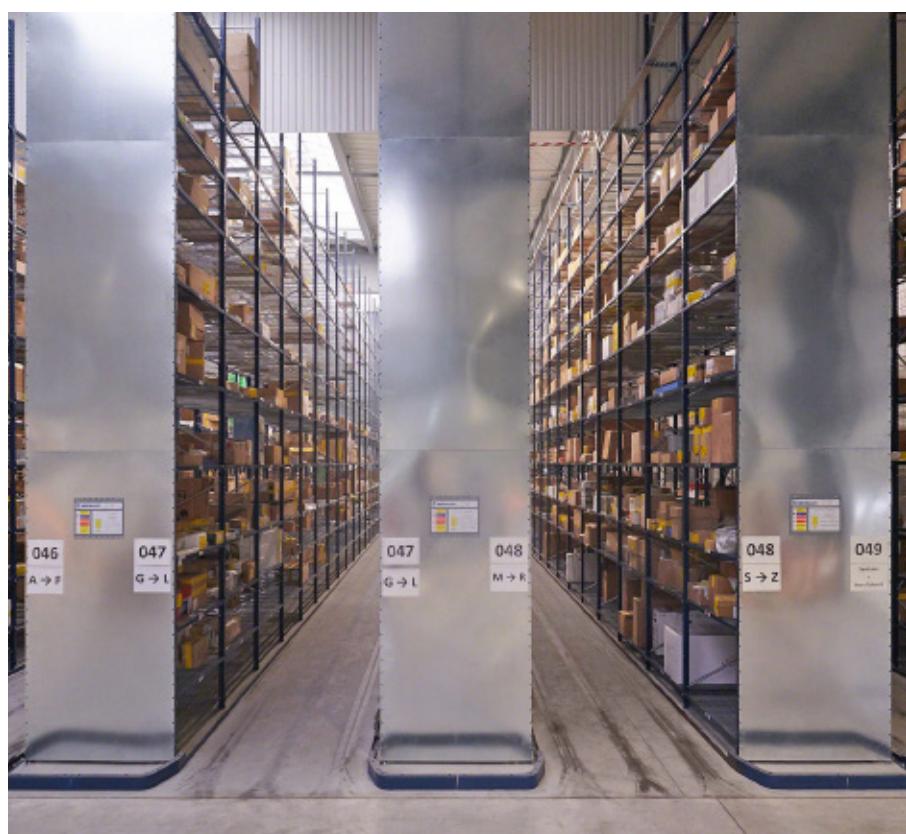
Besides its versatility, this solution stands out for its great strength (each location can store up to 330 lb of products). Additionally, it offers direct access to the goods, which is essential for facilitating storage and order prep tasks.

Each aisle, spanning only 4.8' wide, is equipped with a guide rail to guarantee the correct movement of the man-up order pickers. In these machines, the operator stands in the cabin and is lifted with the load. From that height, they pick the items that make up each order directly from the shelves.

Every day, around 200 orders are prepared and delivered to industrial workers in the area. Once the orders are complete, they are grouped in the 46,285 ft² dispatch area, ready to be distributed among 12 loading docks.

Optimized warehouse

VST has enhanced its entire supply chain with this new addition to the logistics center in Les Essarts. This facility serves the



750 members that form part of the cooperative. With the installation of two storage systems in one space, the company has achieved its goal.

Movirack mobile racking is the only compact system that provides direct access to the goods in addition to optimizing the

surface area to boost capacity. And the wide span shelving is ideal for speeding up picking and storing a wide variety of goods by unit.

As a result, operations in VST's warehouse are seamless, and order picking is much faster.

Advantages for VST

- Space optimization:** the racks make the most of the available space to store a larger number of products (over 6,300 pallets).
- Management of very varied goods:** the 13,000 SKUs are distributed in the warehouse according to their particular features, size, and demand level.
- Efficient picking:** every day, 200 orders are prepared with products from the Movirack mobile racks and wide span shelving. The direct access provided by these solutions facilitates this operation.



Technical data

Movirack mobile racking

Storage capacity	6,318 pallets
Load size	31.5" x 47.2"
Max. load weight	2755 lb
Rack height	23'
Rack length	95'

Wide span shelving

Storage capacity	6,900 boxes
Load size	15.7" x 23.6"
Max. load weight	55 lb
Rack height	23'
Rack length	95'