

Case study: MR Logistique

Children's fashion e-commerce gets picking warehouse

Location: France



The expansion of e-commerce has made it essential to transform company warehouses, which must be prepared to handle a large number of orders and make deliveries as quickly as possible. MR Logistique's children's fashion brand, Sergent Major, is a good example of this trend. The company has recently opened a warehouse in Saint-Vulbas with pallet racks and shelves for picking, designed to speed up the order fulfilment process (either purchased off its website or in its shops in France).



Supporting Sergent Major's growth

Founded in 2002 in Saint-Vulbas, near Lyon (France), MR Logistique is a logistics operator that owns different brands such as Sergent Major, a popular clothing shop for children up to the age of 11.

MR Logistique is in charge of storing all Sergent Major's stock, preparing the orders and distributing them to the shops in all over France, as well as to the customers who have purchased over the Internet. Created in 2002, Sergent Major has 652 boutiques in France and 208 in Europe.

E-commerce challenges in children's fashion

It is tricky for this fashion e-commerce business to compete with the experience customers get when they touch and try on the clothes in traditional shops. On top of that, the challenge is twofold in the case of children's clothing: it is a very competitive sector; and it involves selling items for growing children who, quite quickly, grow out of and no longer need the item.

When shopping online, parents are always afraid of selecting the wrong size. Although websites usually have a size guide with the exact measurements of each garment, these items might not end up fitting the child well and, as such, will need to be exchanged.

From a logistics point of view, managing the wide variety of models and sizes of clothing boutiques is not easy (Sergent Major's catalogue is very broad, with gar-



ments for children between 0 and 11 years old). To do so, it requires making the most of warehouse space and distributing all merchandise correctly.

It is also essential to organise the operation of the warehouse well to speed up the distribution of products to the greatest extent possible. Time is money, children grow up fast and parents need their clothing as soon as practicable. Moreover, both orders and returns must be managed in the same space.



The warehouse consists of two areas: one for clothing and the other for childcare articles (cradles, change tables, prams, etc.)

Storage of children's clothing and childcare products

At the beginning of 2017, MR Logistique leveraged the space it had set aside for further expansion to increase its storage capacity. *"A part of the warehouse was empty and we needed to use that space well we had a lot of work to do,"* says MR Logistique.

The company was looking to expand storage capacity to ensure uninterrupted supply of products to all Sergent Major, DPAM and Natalys outlets, as well as to their own customers. The Mecalux technical team took a close look at the logistical needs of MR Logistique and proposed a solution for *"receiving thousands of articles from Asia on a daily basis and, at the same time, distributing orders through-*

out France (both to Sergent Major outlets and to consumers who have placed orders via the website)," says Paret. The project was carried out over a period of several months.

The system consists of two large areas equipped with pallet racks and shelving for picking, which span almost the entire surface area. *"Textiles are deposited in one of them, with all the Sergent Major brand garments, while the other holds childcare articles such as cradles, changing tables, walkers, prams, etc."*

The pallet racking has a height of 9 m, with a maximum of eight levels, and offers storage capacity for 7,668 pallets. On the other hand, the picking shelves are 2 m high and house smaller boxes.



Picking: the core operation

“Every day, we prepare and distribute hundreds of orders that can consist of a maximum of 200 lines each,” says the head of Administration at MR Logistique. Pallet racks and picking shelves are the most suitable solutions for preparing that many orders, as they offer direct access to the products, which helps to handle them much more easily.

Operators walk the warehouse aisles with trolleys locating the items that make up each order. Following the instructions of the Warehouse Management System (WMS) via a radio frequency handset, they go to the corresponding locations, collect the items directly from the shelves and place them in the trolley.

For multi-item orders or very bulky products, operators use low level order pickers. Unlike trolleys, these machines can move pallets to set the products picked for the different orders. According to MR Logistique, *“replenishment takes place during the night, although it also takes place during the day when fewer orders must be prepared.”* As a result, the warehouse always has the products needed for picking and no interruptions occur in operations.

Once the orders have been completed, they should be checked to ensure that no errors have occurred. The boxes are then packed, labelled and grouped on pallets and all the necessary documentation is printed for dispatch.

Shelving for picking provides high accessibility and flexibility when preparing orders



Administrator of MR Logistique

“When it came to equipping our warehouse in Saint-Vulbas, we chose Mecalux because the technical team assessed our needs and provided us with proposals that dealt very nicely with whatever we had requested from them. The pallet racks and picking shelves have given us speed in all tasks, as well as straightforward control over our stock.”



Advantages for MR Logistique

- **Space utilisation:** pallet racks and shelving for picking occupy almost every millimetre of the warehouse to achieve greater storage capacity.
- **Agile order picking:** direct-access storage systems are essential for order picking. Operators simply need to pinpoint the storage slot to extract the products stored there.
- **Well distributed goods:** the warehouse is divided into two areas. One of them stores textiles and the other childcare articles. How the goods are arranged makes the operators' work much easier.



Technical data

Pallet racks

Storage capacity	7,668 pallets
Pallet size	800 x 1,200 mm
Max. pallet weight	600 kg
Racking height	9 m

Picking shelves

Racking height	2 m
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