

CASE STUDY

Automatic Distribution Solution for Abercrombie & Fitch

Greater efficiency for A&F through an increasing use of sortation



Abercrombie & Fitch

Bergen op Zoom, Netherlands

- ▷ **Abercrombie & Fitch is a popular All-American fashion retailer brand selling upscale women's, men's, and kids' casual clothes and accessories. Due to Abercrombie & Fitch's worldwide success influencing a rapid rise in consumer demand for its products TNT Fashion required an expansion of their premises. Dematic had already worked on a project to extend the existing TNT distribution centre facility for A&F in Roosendaal.**

INITIAL SITUATION

Having successfully accomplished the tasks on this project in 2009, Dematic were also one of the chosen parties invited to tender on the new distribution footprint building in Bergen op Zoom in which Dematic had won the contract on the basis of price and design. Dematic has now won the order for installing a second FSU sorter on top of the existing sorter. The new ANF Bergen op Zoom facility is unique in its design of flexibility, sortation equipment and the large quantity of daily volumes it can handle.

CHALLENGE

Dematic were well experienced in understanding the requirements and need to make use of every available inch of space within the premises. Achieving high throughput levels and optimised storage space for the thousands of SKUs kept in the high bay segment of the facility is what TNT strived for.

With a constant high demand for the A&F brand which is already prominent amongst fashion conscious consumers in the Netherlands, TNT Fashion Logistics required an expansion of their existing services for A&F which serves the whole of Europe.

A&F TNT wanted to create an entirely new and unique working process within the DC. As Dematic had already worked on a successful extension of the A&F DC in 2009, Dematic had experience in demonstrating their full potential, this new task enabled them to continue to prove that they could provide the best solutions. Dematic's experience and in depth consultancy prowess was called upon at every phase of the project.

SOLUTION

The responsibility for the whole site was given to Dematic who provided A&F with exactly what was required even though some extreme challenges were presented along the way. A main element of this was because TNT needed to bring their workforce up to speed regarding engaging a more automated way in which to work.

Once commissioned Dematic set about overseeing the building of the new four storey facility, incorporating a high bay storage area, a narrow aisle capability, an in/out and unit sortation operation and created a software program that would run this operation. The building covers an area of 32,000 m² where a staff of 120 work. The building houses 94,000 SKUs from different brands and has been designed to increased its capabilities at the seasonal ramp-up times that feature in fashion retail.

TARGETS

- **Establish new working processes**
- **Extension within limited space**
- **Increase throughput and efficiency**



A lot of unique processes went into this facility, especially in the sortation section as the job demands an extreme throughput capability. It was a very demanding project that had to be managed to very tight time lines, which it was. A&F now have a brand new building and a workforce that has easily adapted to the new automated working process.

KEY FIGURES

- Dematic has designed and installed a complete 7,500 carton per hour cross belt sorter system with inline weighing, scanning and cubing system capturing all of the required data for the end customer. The cartons entering the building will all be individually weight, cubed and scanned to ensure a complete record by box for internal use. The Cross belt sorter that runs along all of the Inbound dock doors will receive and sort the cartons down one of the 10 chutes.
- Dematic has designed and installed two 9,000 carton per hour cross belt sorter systems with inline scanning. The location and special design setup of these two outbound cross sorters will allow for the customer to have the use of a total outbound capacity of 18,000 units cartons per hour. The cartons that leave the building either by the FSU sorter and or the E-Commerce area will travel on either of these sorters.
- Dematic has designed and installed a 220 drop point FSU sorter running at 28,000 carriers per hour for the sorting of the single and or pre-packed single garments. The FSU sorter through its capability of the In and Declining sections has allowed for the operators to be standing on the ground floor level making the working environment of the operators friendly and clean. The sorter has also been designed to allow for another 220 drops to be extended to the outer ring of the sorter allowing the customer to grow and expand chutes when they so require without having to close down the sorter or compromising more floor space.



- Dematic has developed and installed a complete materials handling system to handle all of A&F E-Commerce and European Retail Sales.
- Dematic has onsite dedicated maintenance team to look after the complete system and gives 24 hours a day a week support on software and electrical.

RESULT

Dematic has developed and installed multiple cross belt sorters, conveyor and FSU sorter-based automatic distribution solutions featuring some of its own mechanical and computer technology within the main European distribution centre of A&F located in the Netherlands.

Dematic has developed and installed a complete E-Commerce system to handle all of A&F's E-Commerce business. Dematic has on site dedicated maintenance team to look after the complete system and provides a 24/7 aftersales software and electrical support and maintenance package.

The Abercrombie and Fitch project demonstrated a continuing drive to even greater efficiency through an increasing use of sortation, and growing demand for flat sortation. This project also revealed increased use of sortation technology by the client A&F in order to reduce distribution centre picking costs and improve stock availability at the store.

Working in partnership, Dematic, A&F and TNT developed a tailored package streamlining their maintenance process to achieve minimum downtime, lower overheads and a reduced administrative burden; ensuring maximum up time for order fulfilment system.



ABOUT ABERCROMBIE & FITCH

Established in the USA in 1892, the company has developed into an international, popular retailer operating some 1,070 stores in North America, Europe, and Japan, as well as online and through catalogues.

The company has grown into an organization with 5 brands (Abercrombie & Fitch, Abercrombie Kids, Hollister Co., RUEHL 925 and Gilly Hicks). Commencing as an upscale sporting goods store during the 19th century, it now markets itself as the go-to label for status and appearance-conscious teens worldwide. A&F is running a fast-growing chain of some 540 stores - Hollister Co. targeted at teens, and Abercrombie Kids targeted at boys and girls aged 7-14, as well as about 20 stores for its three-year-old women's only brand Gilly Hicks.

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▷ If you are interested in learning more about this topic and how we can help, please contact us.



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