

Warehouse transformation for Broekman Logistics

Interview with Jos Kanters, Director Contract Logistics at Broekman Logistics

Among other things, the contract logistics division of Broekman Logistics is specialized in warehousing and distribution for machinery. In this context, Broekman has recently started a spare parts operation for Liebherr at its facility in Born, the Netherlands. It brought in Groenewout's experience and expertise to achieve optimally efficient spare parts logistics.

As an all-round logistics service provider, Broekman Logistics provides end-to-end supply chain solutions for customers worldwide from its locations in the Benelux, Central Europe and India. Among other things, the company's contract logistics division is specialized in warehousing and distribution for machinery. The division handled logistics for Kubota, a Japanese digger manufacturer, for 18 years at its 60,000m² warehouse in Born. "That started with a few machines and grew to about 30,000 machines a year," states Jos Kanters, Director Contract Logistics at Broekman Logistics. As Kubota continued to grow, the location in Born became too small. "Together with the customer, we decided to look for a new location. We found a suitable solution in Weert and set up a new, dedicated warehouse for Kubota's operations there," Kanters continues.

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Jos Kanters, Director Contract Logistics at Broekman Logistics: "Groenewout has an unrivaled ability to convert data into compact and easy-to-understand scenarios, including the financial consequences."

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Spare parts for Liebherr

The relocation of Kubota's logistics activities freed up space in Born, and not long afterwards Broekman was approached by Liebherr. "They were looking to expand their European spare parts division," Kanters says.

In 2022, Liebherr and Broekman signed an agreement for spare parts logistics in the Benelux and France. However, the warehouse in Born was not optimally equipped for the new customer. "For Kubota, we had mainly handled the warehousing and final assembly of excavation machines, meaning that everything was done at floor level. The layout requirements are very different for the storage and distribution of spare parts," Kanters explains.



Spare parts are shipped quickly and reliably to Liebherr customers in the Benelux and France from the redesigned warehouse.

Data-driven process efficiency

This meant that the warehouse needed a completely different layout, with pallet racks, shelving, packing tables, and inbound and outbound areas. For support with this transformation, Broekman decided to bring in Groenewout's expertise. Kanters: "Liebherr provided us with details of the product range and the data. But you need experience to analyze it all and make the right choices. And Groenewout is unrivaled in that respect. Based on concrete data, they can design an efficient logistics process for a million order lines, including the associated investment and operational costs."

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Multiple scenarios

First of all, Groenewout helped Broekman to understand the necessary processes for Liebherr. The data was analyzed promptly and then used to develop multiple scenarios. "Those scenarios were also presented in a compact and understandable manner, which helped us to communicate the concepts clearly – both internally and to the customer," Kanters says. And this was particularly beneficial in Liebherr's case, as the project was the German manufacturer's first outsourcing experience. "At Broekman we are successful with first time outsourcing. That makes it even more important to involve the customer every step of the way and fully explain all the options. After all, you're entering into a long-term partnership, so clear and open communication is crucial," he adds.

Another huge benefit of working with Groenewout was the financial insight into the various scenarios, according to Kanters: "For each scenario, Groenewout calculated the associated operating expenditures (OpEx) and capital expenditures (CapEx). Those indications turned out to be very accurate which proves that they are experts in their field."

Time pressure

Once Broekman and Liebherr had agreed on the preferred scenario, Groenewout helped with the tendering and installation of the various new systems. "And that had to be done under considerable time pressure because of the agreements we'd made with Liebherr," Kanters recalls. "Groenewout's help came in very useful once again, because our own team was already under more pressure than normal due to the extra workload."

Diversity and speed

The logistics process itself is relatively simple and straightforward. Inbound goods are put away onto shelves and into the pallet racks with space for 20,000 pallets and the internal transport equipment is operated manually. After order picking, goods are taken to the packing tables and then the outbound area.

According to Kanters, the main strength of the concept lies in the combination of diversity and speed. "The diversity is due to both the large number of SKUs – 45,000 – and their size: from tiny screws to huge machine parts. In addition, we offer very fast delivery. Goods ordered before 5 p.m. are dispatched to the customer on the same day by 6 p.m. at the latest," he comments.

In close consultation with Liebherr, Broekman decided to phase in the new operation gradually. "We wanted to avoid a 'big bang', which almost always leads to problems," Kanters explains. Today, the redesigned warehouse in Born

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is fully operational and the logistics processes are running smoothly. "We could probably have achieved this without Groenewout's help. But I'm convinced that we reached the finish line faster and more professionally thanks to Groenewout," Kanters concludes.

More information

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About the author

Mark Dohmen has been working as a journalist in the logistics sector for 25 years. After studying Logistics Management, he worked as an editor at the trade publications *Transport+Opslag*, *Logistiek* and *Logistiek.nl* and was editor-in-chief of *Logistiek Totaal* and *Warehouse Totaal*. Nowadays, he works as a freelancer. His assignments include producing articles and videos for *logisticsinside.nl* and *logisticsinside.eu*.