Digitization brings Van der Meulen more efficiency, sustainability and customer satisfaction

Van der Meulen a total supplier of toys and summer and recreation articles has successfully renewed its entire order picking process

Objective

Van der Meulen takes care of small and very large orders. Sometimes with only one article, but often also with many different articles. Hence the logistic process is complex and the need to modernize the process to replace the paper order flow became more and more important.

Approach

Replacing the paper-based processes with a totally new system including a new Wi-Fi infrastructure and modern scanning equipment

Van der Meulen is a wholesaler, importer, and distributor of high-quality toys from well-known brands such as LEGO, Clementoni and Miffy. Until recently, the entire order picking process was done manually. In 2021, van der Meulen enlisted the help of CaptureTech. Since then, they have been working with Memor™ 10 mobile computers from Datalogic and portable ProGlove barcode scanners. In addition, the entire warehouse is equipped with fast and reliable Wi-Fi, and they have switched to new order picking software. The result? A saving of up to ninety hours per week in effective order picking time. This represents a considerable cost reduction because less flexible labor is needed and there is much less paper consumption.

As operations manager, Anne Bijlsma is closely involved in the automation process. "In fact, I was the instigator of the whole process," he says. "We have successfully been supplying toys for 140 years. Nevertheless, it became time for modernization. The immediate reason was the purchase of a new distribution center that we wanted to use as efficiently as possible. In addition, our customer base, and therefore our orders, is becoming increasingly diverse. Our customers are toy stores, web shops and everything in between. We take care of small and very large orders. Sometimes with only one article, but also often with many different articles - a complex logistic process.

"It is high time for a digital improvement to replace the paper order flow with modern scanning equipment. Their implementation is not only much more efficient, but also much better for the environment."

Anne Bijlsma
Operations Manager

Once it was clear what van der Meulen's wishes and requirements were, a tender was issued. Of all the entries, CaptureTech ultimately emerged as the winner. "They understood from day one how our logistics work and the complexity of our order flows," says Bijlsma. "The CaptureTech team immediately came up with applicable solutions. They considered optimal preparation just as important as we did, looking at both sides the technical one as well as the human one. There are employees who have worked with paper for fifteen years and now suddenly had to switch to scanners. You must prepare and guide something like that well. CaptureTech got that. "

Before Van der Meulen started this process, nothing had been set up on the subject of automation no Wi-Fi, no ICT programming hours, no scanners. "Together with CaptureTech, we analysed our warehouse, where they listened carefully and prepared along with us. A plan was made and rolled out for the Wi-Fi infrastructure in the short term. This was necessary, among other things, to allow the scanners to do their work. In the choice of scanners, all our colleagues in the warehouse were closely involved. After all, they are the ones who must work with the scanner daily. We took them into a shop setting, where they tested all possible scanners. "

Finally, the choice was made for a combination of Memor 10 mobile computers from Datalogic and portable ProGlove barcode scanners. "The big advantage of the ProGlove scanners is that they are quick and easy to use. They fit in seamlessly with the natural movement of the warehouse employees during the order picking process. In addition to the ProGlove readers, the order pickers use the Datalogic Memor 10 PDA which provides them with the most recent information about both product and sales order in real time. Because of the simplicity and user-friendliness, our colleagues deal only with important data. They do not receive unnecessary information and they can optimally concentrate. Because we involved our employees in the process from day one, the transition from paper to digital went smoothly. The user-friendliness of the hardware and the good guidance from CaptureTech have certainly contributed to this."

The complete implementation was realized in one day. "Unique," says Anne. "The big advantage was of course the professional preparation, so everything ran smoothly that day. And it still does, thanks to the good integration of CaptureTech Connect (formerly Holon software, ed.) with our ERP system Navision. I think it's a big plus that we were able to buy everything from one party. Not only the hardware and software, but also the Wi-Fi infrastructure. This way everything is optimally coordinated, and it is never possible to 'point fingers' if something goes wrong. "

"We are now six months further since implementation and I can only say that we are very satisfied. Even the colleagues who were quite wary of digitization say that they never would want to go back to the former situation. It saves them a lot of walking every day, because the paper orders no longer must be picked up.

This greatly improves efficiency. We save about twenty hours a week in order picking time and benefit from a significant cost reduction because fewer temporary workers are needed. In addition, we already achieved a 75 percent reduction in the number of shortcomings in the first month and we also save twenty packs of paper per year."

If we ask Bijlsma about his plans for the near future, he says that Van der Meulen wants to use the possibilities of CaptureTech Connect even further. "The cloud-based Connect environment is regularly updated, with CaptureTech not only including our solutions, but also those of other Connect users. In this way, they ensure that Connect perfectly matches the wishes of the professional field and that our processes are in line with Connect again. A win-win situation for all parties. "

Van der Meulen will soon also use a new feature with which the company can take photos during the entire order process. Bijlsma wants to eliminate the final inspection and increase customer satisfaction. They will also soon receive composite orders. "Given the complexity of our incoming goods flow, this is a very large efficiency gain for us. The expectations for the future are high! "

Capturetech

By connecting systems, data and people, CaptureTech makes it possible to improve working together at the office and in logistics. CaptureTech helps their clients to digitise, optimise and manage work processes and IT environments. This makes them more productive, and makes work easier for their employees, who enjoy their work more.

CaptureTech makes thorough analyses, gives advice, and supplies reliable hardware, intuitive software and related IT services. They implement and manage technologies such as Voice Picking, RFID, Barcoding, Cloud services, IT infrastructure and IT security.

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