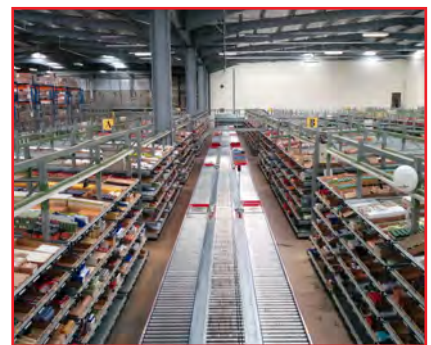


# Holland & Barrett

Pcdata modernises and optimises logistics process





## Holland & Barrett chooses Pick-to-Light again

Working as a system integrator, Pcd data has modernised and optimised Holland & Barrett's logistics process at its Burton-on-Trent DC with the installation of a new pick-to-light system.

Since the turn of the century, Europe's largest vitamins, minerals and herbal supplements retailer Holland & Barrett has been using a Pcd data pick-to-light system at its main distribution centre in Burton-on-Trent.

"The system is used to pick orders for single items for our stores," Mark Kendrick, distribution director at NBTY Europe, says. NBTY Europe is part of NBTY, a global leader in the production of nutritional supplements. NBTY Europe has more than 650 Holland & Barrett shops in Great Britain, NBTY Europe also has more than 100 De Tuinen shops in The Netherlands.

The whole pick-to-light system was replaced and expanded during the 2014 summer. As system integrator, Pcd data also optimised the logistics process at the same time.

### 'no brainer'

Due to the many years of intensive use, the pick-to-light system in Burton-on-Trent needed to be replaced. The choice to continue using the technology was a no-brainer for Kendrick: "Over the years, we've also gained experience with other technologies. For instance, we make use of voice picking at the picking of our web orders and our bulk picking (large items and full cartons). But it was very clear to us that we would choose pick-to-light again for the picking of the single items for our stores. It is the most productive solution beyond a doubt."

Pcd data was also chosen again. The decision to work with Pcd data was also one that the distribution director didn't take long to make. "Of course we looked at other suppliers too. That is only to be expected in this kind of large projects. But it quickly became clear that Pcd data is still first choice," Kendrick states. "They know our processes and needs like no other. What's more, they always provide excellent service.

Excellent service is essential, because pick-to-light is a crucial component of our logistics process. System stoppages must be avoided at all costs."

### Rebuilding with a limited time period

This is also why the old pick-to-light system was completely renovated within a period of only five weeks. To avoid supply problems, Holland & Barrett had temporarily increased store stocks. "But even so, we still needed twice as many people as usual for the remaining orders. This was only because we couldn't make use of the pick-to-light system," says Kendrick.

Together with Pcd data, Kendrick put together a detailed plan for the replacement that was closely monitored on an hourly basis by the main logistics contractor. These meticulous preparations helped in the smooth implementation of the project.

"Our customers didn't even notice the major modernisation of the system that was taking place," the distribution director happily notes.







### Up to date

Pcdata replaced almost all of the pick-to-light hardware during the project. The only thing that did not replaced was the flow racks. “This is also possible because the Pcdata solution can easily be implemented on older, existing racking,” Kendrick says.

Distrib PTL, the order picking software, was upgraded to the latest version.

With a view to expected future growth, the number of order picking zones was expanded from 24 to 28 during the project. So far, about 3,300 different items were being picked at a single item level. Holland & Barrett’s range of items is rapidly increasing though. The renewed configuration is able to handle almost 4,000 SKUs at single item level.

### New features

Holland & Barrett also made use of the modernisation of its system to further optimise the logistics process.

As system integrator, Pcdata replaced all conveyors, including the logistics control, and introduced several new features that make the logistics process more efficient, such as an integrated lid closing machine, an automated in-line label applicator, and a sorting unit for all picked orders.

After the ordered items are collected in the order picking zones at the mezzanine, the order cartons are transported to the ground floor on the conveyor belt system where they are sorted into different trolleys (for transportation to the stores). “The sealing and labelling of the order cartons was always carried out by hand in the past. The automation of these processes within the system makes the whole system more efficient and saves us a lot of time,” says Kendrick.

### Increased structure, greater efficiency

Holland & Barrett also saves time during the sorting of order totes to the correct trolleys. “This used to be the full-time occupation of six staff members. We now only need two, because the work is carried out in a very small space. Walking distances have been drastically reduced, and the whole system has become markedly more structured,” Kendrick explains.

The sorting system installed by Pcdata automatically shoots

the order totes out onto the correct chute. Ten trolleys – enough for 10 stores – are filled per chute. After the scanning of an order carton, a display lights up above the correct trolley, so that the worker knows which store the order should go to. The display also indicates the status of the order. As soon as an order is completed, the trolley is replaced and a new order is released by the pick-to-light system. This is because only those orders for which locations have been allocated in the sorting zone on the ground floor are collected by the system.

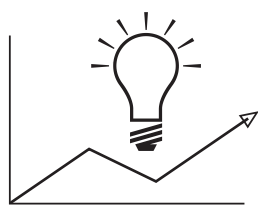
Kendrick concludes: “It was very clear to us that we would choose pick-to-light again. It is the most productive solution beyond a doubt.”



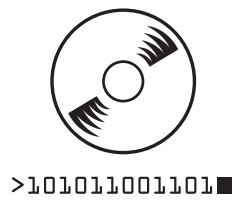
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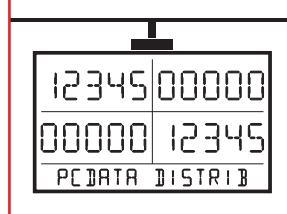
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