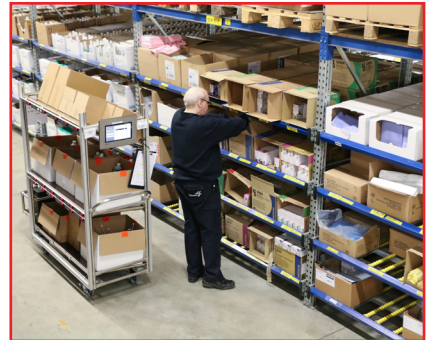


Alpheios moves ahead of the competition with Pcddata's PickCart





Multi Order picking increases picking efficiency by up to 45%

Alpheios moves ahead of the competition with Pcdatalogistics PickCart

By implementing a new warehouse management system (WMS), adding scanning capabilities and installing multiple Pcdatalogistics PickCarts, Alpheios has automated its logistics operation making it more efficient and dynamic. Although, using PickCarts clearly reduced the picking error rate, reducing order picking time was the biggest advantage. Due to Pcdatalogistics Multi-Order picking concept they achieved productivity gains up to 45 percent.

Alpheios is one of the largest companies in the Benelux area, selling commercial cleaning products, developing commercial cleaning systems and providing professional strategies. The company not only offers products, services, methods and systems but also professional training and full concepts. By offering a wide range of services and products has established Alpheios as a strategic partner in both the healthcare and cleaning industries. To retain and strengthen its leading position within the commercial cleaning market an optimal logistics strategy is crucial to ensure continue future growth.



DC Major Expansion

After the major expansion in 2014 at the DC in Hoensbroek, Netherlands, Alpheios decided to install Pcdatalogistics PickCarts in order to further optimize their supply chain process. "With the expansion of our DC, the space has tripled" says Hub Gerritsen, DC Manager at Alpheios. "This was also necessary, since inventory levels, as a result of our growth have increased substantially." In order to keep control of the increased stock amounts and the other increased activities, Alpheios also decided to implement a new warehouse management system (WMS). Currently, the Hoensbroek DC ships over 100,000 orders annually to customers in the Benelux, France and Switzerland areas.



Hub Gerritsen, Thijs Schoffeleers and Ron Ramaekers confirm: "This is a very intuitive system and the acceptance in the workplace was very good."

Improved Efficiency

Scanning was initially introduced during the DC expansion. "To further increase productivity, to further reduce errors and to gain more control into the order picking process and our inventory. In short, to improve efficiency" Mr. Ramaekers says (Alpheios' other manager).

The intended efficiency improvement was accomplished. "However, using scanners resulted in a delay in pick times," says Gerritsen. To compensate for the time loss in picking, Alpheios decided to search for other options. "At a logistics service provider in Venlo, NL we saw a pick-to-cart concept we liked" says functional manager Thijs Schoffeleers. "This PickCart makes multi-order picking possible, thereby creating an enormous productivity improvement. After all, order pickers only need to walk to a location once to pick multiple orders."

Users Acceptance

All three managers were so convinced of the Pick Cart concept that they decided to design their own Pick Cart. For the technology behind the concept, Alpheios selected Pcddata. "Of all the vendors we approached, Pcddata was the best fit for us. Our core business is supplying goods. We deliver these goods within 48 hours. Every delay can create a problem. It is therefore important for our vendors to react instantaneously when we need them to. And that is exactly what Pcddata does" claims Gerritsen. "Pcddata is was also the only company that does not require a WMS to work with their PickCarts" adds Schoffeleers. Since, Pcddata's PickCart is a modular system it communicates easily and seamlessly with SAP.

A feature within Pcddata's software, determines the walking route throughout the warehouse. This walking route is shown on the tablet that is mounted onto the Pick Cart. This is a unique feature and is clearly an advantage. "Having this feature makes it extra fun and easy for our employees," said Ramaekers.



Effective and Intuitive

In the summer of 2015, the first three PickCarts were installed in Hoensbroek; to pick the smaller items. Smaller items can be either fast movers or B and C type items. With these carts a minimum of at least 9 boxes and maximum of 18 boxes at one time can be picked. At the end of 2015 the DC adopted a fourth cart. This cart can pick a maximum of 6 boxes. "Only the bigger items are being picked into these boxes. This is done in half a day, while in the past this would take us an entire day": explains Ramaekers.

Within the workplace it becomes clear how effective the system is. To pick orders, the order picker can choose from multiple box sizes. "We have a total of eleven sizes, and we always try to put as many products in one box as possible; with a maximum weight of 10 kilos" said Gerritsen.

After the Pickcart has been loaded with the correct number of boxes, the order picking starts and the order picker pushes the cart to the first location that appears on the tablet. Once that location is scanned, various lights on the cart light up. "Those lights indicate in what box the picker needs to put the goods. The number next to the light shows how many units need to be picked" explains Ramaekers.

Schoffeleers adds: "It's a very intuitive system. This helps accepting PickCart in the workplace. Often you see people disengage when a system is too complicated, or if it even just looks complicated. That is what we wanted to avoid at all cost. "

Higher Productivity Gains

The use of PickCarts have led to a huge Productivity gain. In the areas where the carts are being used Alpheios picking time improved between 40 to 45 percent. These improved performances make it possible to better cope with spikes and bottlenecks. The fact that fewer picking errors are being made in relevant areas is obviously a bonus.

The Company

Name: Alpheios

Activity: One of the largest companies in the Benelux area, selling commercial cleaning products, developing commercial cleaning systems and providing professional strategies.

Location: Heerlen (NL), Hoensbroek (NL) en Wilrijk Antwerpen (B)

Employees: 180

The order picking system

Pick-to-light system

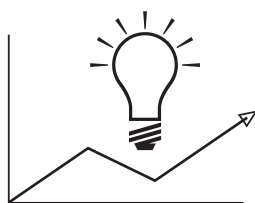
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Number of PickCarts: 4

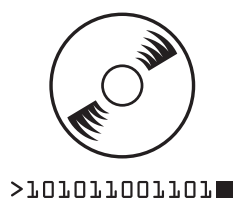
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