

Tarkett

Automation with added value

STILL automates logistics processes at Tarkett

In 2020, Tarkett, the international market leader for innovative flooring solutions, acquired a new distribution centre in Waalwijk, Netherlands. The logistics processes in the new building have been fully automated to the greatest possible extent with help from STILL iGo systems. "Our operations are safer, more reliable and more efficient," stresses Supply Chain Manager Michiel van Trijen.

With approx. 12,500 employees across 36 production locations, Tarkett distributes 1.3 million m² of floor coverings for sectors such as hospitals, schools, homes, hotels, offices and commercial premises around the world every day. Since acquiring Desso in 2015, the company now also has its own production site in the Netherlands, including a production location for carpet tiles in Waalwijk. These

Sector: Flooring solutions

Company: International market leader with approx. 12,500 employees across 36 production locations and distributing 1.3 million m² of flooring every day.

Challenge: Maximising safety and optimising internal logistics at the new site in Waalwijk.

Solution: Implementing a fully-automated very narrow-aisle warehouse with automated STILL EXV iGo systems high lift pallet trucks and STILL MX-X iGo systems very narrow aisle trucks plus all racking systems.

carpet tiles are largely stored automatically in the new distribution centre, where they are prepared for dispatch to the customer.

Absolutely essential

"This step was absolutely essential to make our processes safer," states Michiel van Trijen, Supply Chain Manager EMEA at Tarkett. "There was a lack of visibility in the old warehouse. It was often very hectic and this could lead to unsafe situations. We had definitely outgrown our space."

At the old site, Tarkett had storage space for 1 million m² of flooring tiles. During peak periods, however, the company's storage requirements were often twice as high. Carpet tiles were stored at their Dendermonde production location in Belgium and in an external warehouse. This created additional handling, and, as such, an increased risk of delays and reduced delivery reliability. Additional transport kilometres also had to be covered, which was not exactly commensurate with Tarkett's sustainability vision. "In short, there were plenty of reasons to assess whether this could not happen in a safer, more reliable and more efficient manner," summarises Van Trijen.

Sustainability in Waalwijk

Considering the shortages in the labour market that make it difficult to find suitable employees and to retain them, particularly in a logistics hotspot like Waalwijk, it quickly became clear that automation could help the company realise a large portion of its desires and requirements.



"This step was absolutely necessary to increase the safety of our processes"

Michiel van Trijen, Supply Chain Manager EMEA, Tarkett

The new distribution centre in the Prologis Park Waalwijk industrial estate covers 26,000 m². Just over half of this is rented by Tarkett.



However, Tarkett did not have the requisite knowledge within the organisation itself to bring such an automation project to fruition. The company called in Groenewout with their specialist knowledge and experience and commissioned the consultancy company to carry out a location and feasibility study for the logistics design of the new distribution centre.

Five scenarios were developed in total, from which an automatic very narrow-aisle warehouse in Waalwijk emerged as the best and most suitable solution.

The new distribution centre, which was built by Prologis, covers 26,000 m², of which



The logistics processes were automated by STILL to the greatest possible extent. In addition, the company supplied and installed the racks for the very narrow aisle warehouse.

more than half (14,000 m²) is rented by Tarkett. The building achieved a 'very good' BREEAM sustainability certificate and is also certified as a 'WELL Building'. The site is also only a stone's throw from Tarkett's production location.

"The distance between our production and distribution centre is minimal, which limits the transport kilometres and means we can shuttle between the two sites ourselves. Thanks to the electric terminal tractor that we have ordered, this will soon be carried out in a sustainable manner," says Van Trijen. In addition, once again deciding on Waalwijk meant that a majority of the employees could be retained.

Fully-automated very narrow-aisle warehouse

A profile of requirements for logistics solutions was created based on the data analysis. The decision was ultimately made in favour of a solution from STILL, which supplied and implemented a fully-automated very narrow-aisle warehouse. As part of

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Michiel van Trijen, Supply Chain Manager EMEA, Tarkett





After the incoming pallets are scanned and made available in the warehouse management system, the automated STILL EXV iGo systems high lift pallet truck brings the pallet to the shape control.

this concept, the series-produced trucks automated by means of STILL iGo systems continuously take over the storage, retrieval and transfer of pallets. Van Trijen: "Our carpet tiles are ideal for automatic handling. Tightly packed in boxes weighing around 20 kg, the tiles (50 x 50 cm) are stacked on nice, straight pallets. Due to the size of the tiles, we also use special pallets with the dimensions 108 x 108 cm. The distribution centre was thus built completely according to our requirements and dimensions."

After entering the distribution centre, the pallets are scanned and are then available to our warehouse management system.

An automated EXV iGo systems STILL high lift pallet truck passes them to shape control and then transports the pallets to the desired transfer point in the rack area. Here, the pallets are taken over by the automated STILL MX-X iGo systems very narrow aisle truck and are stored in the location supplied by the warehouse management system (WMS). Even the picking process is fully automated.



Distribution centre as a role model

In total, STILL supplied six automated iGo systems series-produced trucks: three MX-X very narrow aisle trucks and three EXV high lift pallet trucks. The automated trucks can also be manually operated if desired. In addition to the automated high lift pallet trucks and very narrow aisle trucks, STILL also supplied an FM-X reach truck and three EXU-S electric pallet trucks for loading and unloading.

Even the racks were supplied by STILL. The new distribution centre has 21 aisles, of which only two are operated manually with the STILL FM-X reach truck. "Here, we store non-standard pallet sizes and items from our sister companies, e.g. laminate, so we can also meet short delivery times for these items," says Van Trijen.

The solution supplied by STILL offers Tarkett high storage density and space for 18,000 pallets. As the process is now automated to the greatest possible extent, safety has been significantly increased. There are fewer manual transport movements on the floor and a clear physical separation between driving routes and walkways. This clarity guarantees safety.

"The expected savings have also come to fruition," says Van Trijen. In addition, reliability has also increased thanks to the automation. There are fewer errors, and processes are running in a more efficient manner – "essential optimisations to remain the leader in a highly competitive market," says the Supply Chain Manager.

The Waalwijk distribution centre now serves as a role model for other Tarkett sites. Initial plans for further automation within the group have already been made. The organisation hopes to go live with a second automation project in this year alone.

And action! Automation at Tarkett:
higher levels of safety and more efficient
processes at the international market leader.

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