

BLUESTAR IMPROVES EFFICIENCY WITH MANHATTAN SCALE™

OPERATIONS

HQ in Hebron, KY, USA; European DC in Eindhoven, NL

MANHATTAN SOLUTIONS

Manhattan SCALE™



CHALLENGE

BlueStar wanted to take its European logistics into its own hands and was looking for a flexible, robust and proven system to get from a greenfield situation to an operational warehouse in just six months.

SOLUTION

Manhattan SCALE™ enables BlueStar to adapt processes quickly and flexibly. The system is intuitive and gives exactly the insight that is required to optimise processes. In addition, Manhattan Associates offers local support.

PROGRESS & RESULT

Manhattan SCALE makes warehouse operations easier and more efficient. Onboarding time for new staff is kept to a minimum and the goal - click-to-ship- within six minutes - is achieved effortlessly.

“Thanks to the ease and simplicity of Manhattan SCALE, we were ‘wizard on the system’ in no time and were able to configure and optimise new processes ourselves.”

SANDER BLOMMENSTEIJN, WMS MANAGER, BLUESTAR EUROPE

BLUESTAR AND MANHATTAN

OPTIMISING PROCESSES WITH VISION AND MOBILE APPS

In the summer of 2018, BlueStar Europe decided to insource their logistics operations, and in 2019 they moved into a brand new distribution centre in Eindhoven. Here, together with Manhattan Associates and Zebra Technologies, the company integrates smart innovations and new technologies that improve efficiency, increase productivity, and minimise onboarding time for new employees.

As a global distributor of point-of-sale solutions, BlueStar is much more than a 3PL provider. Specialising in electronics, automatic data processing and RFID, BlueStar provides a wide range of value-added services such as online information and ordering platforms, Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) and marketing events. Since 2008, the American origin service provider has also been active in Europe, where, as a result of various acquisitions and an annual growth rate of 25 to 30 percent, an impressive footprint has now established. "Our European division is now the second-largest and one of the top 3 in Europe", says Doug Bivins, COO at BlueStar US. With the start-up of a brand new, almost 8,000 m² European distribution centre in Eindhoven, the Netherlands, BlueStar Europe added a new chapter to its success story in the summer of 2019.

MORE EFFICIENT IN-HOUSE

Since 2012, the logistics operation for the EMEA region has been run from a warehouse in Veldhoven, the Netherlands, where orders were processed in cooperation with a logistics partner. "However, we were convinced that this operation could be run more efficiently in-house. And that we could further improve the service to our customers", says Manel Baranera, EMEA COO at BlueStar Europe.

BlueStar identified that a new logistic centre was required to meet the efficiency objectives and quickly. In under six months, the entire greenfield project had to be operational; from premises, staff and facilities, the logistics set-up, associated processes, and the overall warehouse management system.

"We benefit from the user-friendliness of the system. We can easily make changes ourselves and further optimise processes."

CRAWL, WALK, RUN

"We chose Manhattan Associates because we were confident that with their warehouse management system, Manhattan SCALE, we could very quickly gain ownership and control", continues Baranera. "The WMS is robust, proven technology and could be seamlessly integrated with our ERP. Also, Manhattan was able to provide local support, which was critical to the project given the time pressure and activity to complete.

Because of the enormous time pressure, BlueStar chose a 'crawl-walk-run' strategy. "Starting easily and adapting where necessary during the project, based on what we learn and experience", clarifies Baranera. Manhattan SCALE makes it possible to support and optimise processes in a flexible way. For example, by using the best practices offered by the system.

"Thanks to the ease and simplicity of Manhattan SCALE, we were 'wizards on the system' in no time and were able to configure and optimise new processes ourselves", says WMS Manager Sander Blommensteijn.



“We have business-to-business customers; however, they have business-to-consumer expectations. As a value-add distributor, we obviously do everything we can to live up to those expectations, every day.”

OPTIMISING FLEXIBLY

Adjustments could be made easily and flexibly during implementation. One of these adjustments is the implementation of a conveyor belt, including a label applicator and sorting installation, which enables collected orders to be processed even more efficiently. To create a more flexible choice of parcel services, BlueStar requested a carrier integration tool to be added. As the external carrier integration tool uses a standard interface, the adaptation was completed quickly and without any significant problems.



“Manhattan SCALE has made it possible to use best practices fully and to understand all aspects of an often complex WMS implementation quickly. This is one of the reasons why we were live within the set time limit”, Baranera looks back.

During picking or cycle counts, the apps also offer benefits that support users in their daily work and reduce the chance of errors.

Every day, 750 to 1,000 orders are processed in Eindhoven and sent via various parcel services to customers throughout Europe. The goal is click-to-ship within six minutes. “With the solutions from Manhattan Associates and Zebra Technologies, this is no problem at all”, says Baranera.

PLENTY OF ADVANTAGES

The advantages of the innovative systems are clear to Blommensteijn: “Manhattan SCALE makes our warehouse operation a lot easier and more efficient”, says the WMS Manager. “First of all, we benefit from the user-friendliness of the system. We can easily make changes ourselves and further optimise processes. A second advantage is the simplicity with which we can train new staff. Within just a few minutes, our people can start working independently. The interaction with the user, via mobile apps and tablets, also makes it a pleasure to work with the solutions. And the third and biggest advantage is the insight we have thanks to Manhattan SCALE. As a result, we know exactly how we are performing and where we can improve that performance by, for example, adjusting the allocation of products. In this way, we can continuously work towards maximum efficiency.”

“And that is necessary”, concludes Baranera. “Because we have business-to-business customers, however, they have business-to-consumer expectations. As a value-add distributor, we do everything we can to live up to those expectations. Every day.”