

Doubling capacity with a high-density system

Pet food company Vitakraft has revamped the supply chain of its Italian division to meet growing customer demand.

Country: **Italy** | Sector: **pets**



CHALLENGES

- Streamline the storage of **high-turnover** finished goods.
- Optimise space to **expand** food warehousing **capacity**.

SOLUTION

- **Semi-automated Pallet Shuttle** system.

BENEFITS

- **Semi-automated** storage of pet food and accessories.
- Management and organisation of **6,100 pallets** weighing up to 900 kg.



Vitakraft is a German pet food manufacturer with a history dating back nearly two centuries. The organisation has undergone continuous growth over the years, and today, it stands as one of the most well-known brands among pet lovers. Over 5,000 business partners distribute Vitakraft's wide range of products in more than 50,000 retail outlets worldwide. The multinational arrived in Italy in 1998, following a merger with Pet Company, a leading distributor of accessories for small animals.

- » **Headquarters: Bremen (Germany)**
- » **Founded: 1837**
- » **International presence: Europe, the Americas and Asia**
- » **No. of employees: 1,600**



Pet food company Vitakraft has upgraded the supply chain of its division in Italy. Its aim? To satisfy increasing customer demand. "We're a leading German multinational in our sector. We have 12 manufacturing plants in Europe to supply retailers throughout the continent. From the Italian subsidiary, we serve clients in our country, Greece and Cyprus," says Claudio Sciorpa, CEO of Vitakraft Italy.

Logistics is a key process for the German business, as it determines the timely and accurate delivery of products from its production centres to retail outlets nationwide.

"Our facilities in Castiglione del Lago store and distribute goods throughout Italy, so we needed a fast, reliable supply chain," says Sciorpa.

With an ever-growing number of customers, Vitakraft Italy realised the time had come to modernise its logistics operations: "We had run out of space for storing products and were stacking pallets on top of each other," says Sciorpa. The company decided to purchase land adjacent to its facilities and open a new warehouse. It equipped this building with Mecalux's semi-automated Pallet Shuttle system.



"Mecalux offered us the best solution in terms of value for money and the level of assistance from the sales department."

Claudio Sciorpa
CEO, Vitakraft Italy

“We chose Mecalux because it offered us the best solution in terms of value for money and the level of assistance from the sales department,” says Sciarpa.

Mecalux also satisfied an essential requirement for Vitakraft Italy by providing it with a seismic-resistant storage system. The warehouse is located in the province of Perugia (Umbria region), at the foothills of the Apennine Mountains. This area has a high degree of seismic activity. Therefore, the pallet racking was manufactured in line with the specifications outlined in Italian standard NTC 2018 and European standard EN 16681. This entails reinforcement to withstand any potential ground motion that could occur.

System to increase storage capacity

“The semi-automated Pallet Shuttle system boosts our throughput, leverages the available surface area and ensures maximum safety in material handling. We wanted to double our storage capacity and improve the organisation of our logistics operations. We can now say we’ve achieved that,” says Pasquale Luna, Logistics Manager at Vitakraft Italy.

High-density storage systems such as Mecalux’s Pallet Shuttle make the most of warehouse space to accommodate a larger number of products. Vitakraft Italy houses 6,100 pallets, each weighing up to 900 kg, in four large racking blocks. The racks stand 9.3 m tall.

In addition to maximising the existing space, the semi-automated Pallet Shuttle enhances the flow of incoming and outgoing goods. It does this by means of a motorised shuttle that moves inside the storage channels autonomously. “The agility provided by this

system allows us to stock high-turnover finished goods and ship large quantities of pallets as quickly as possible,” says Luna.

Another Pallet Shuttle advantage that has greatly benefited Vitakraft Italy is the optimal organisation of pet supplies. “We have an extensive catalogue of 1,500 SKUs, and in the warehouse, we typically manage the 200 most frequently ordered by customers,” says Luna. In each storage channel, the company houses pallets of the same SKU for an efficient putaway process.

Stock is organised following the FIFO method. Short for first in, first out, this inventory strategy ensures perfect product turnover.

“Orders are generally made up of individual pallets or complete lorryloads of 33 pallets. Orders with few items, on the other hand, are prepared in the sorting and consolidation zone,” says Luna. To perform this operation, the warehouse was outfitted with a large staging area in front of the docks. There, operators group pallets on the floor before loading them onto the lorries.

Logistics management at the service of clients

With its new warehouse, Vitakraft Italy has optimised its logistics operations. It can now offer high-quality pet products to a growing number of clients throughout the country.

“We’re extremely satisfied with the benefits the Pallet Shuttle system has brought us. We’ve ramped up our throughput, enhanced safety throughout the facility and expedited product movements. Plus, operations are more effective now that we’ve organised our SKUs strategically,” says Luna.



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