



## Case Study: U10

The home to 16,000 SKUs

Country: France



Decorative item manufacturer U10 has opened a new, 30,000 m<sup>2</sup> distribution centre in Erstein (Strasbourg, France) where it stores all the products of its main brands, Homea and Love Story. At this warehouse, the company manages 16,000 SKUs of different volumes, characteristics and demand levels. Mecalux has installed pallet racks, a three-storey mezzanine floor and picking shelves with walkways and conveyors. Proper organisation of space and of operations is essential for distributing 150 pallets a day to the business's customers in 90 countries.

### No place like home

Up and running since 1994, U10 is a French company devoted to making homes pleasant, comfortable spaces. Its day-to-day activities consist of designing, manufacturing and selling all kinds of pet and home décor items: decorative pillows, scented candles, bed sheets, towels, curtains, tablecloths and rugs, among others.

U10 boasts three successful brands (Homea, Douceur d'intérieur and Love Story) that are marketed in more than 5.000 sales outlets throughout 90 countries. Logistics is one of its primary activities, and, to supply all its points of sale, the firm dedicates approximately 80,000 m<sup>2</sup> to storage and order preparation. One of its priorities is to ensure order deliveries in under 72 hours.

### A new home for Homea

In the past, the products of the Homea and Love Story brands (home decoration and pet well-being items, respectively) were spread among four warehouses in the Strasbourg area. This was not very practical for U10: *"We set out to bring the goods together in a single installation. From there, we could prepare orders and distribute them to the various sales outlets,"* states Elveren Hudayi, Logistics Manager at U10 Strasbourg.

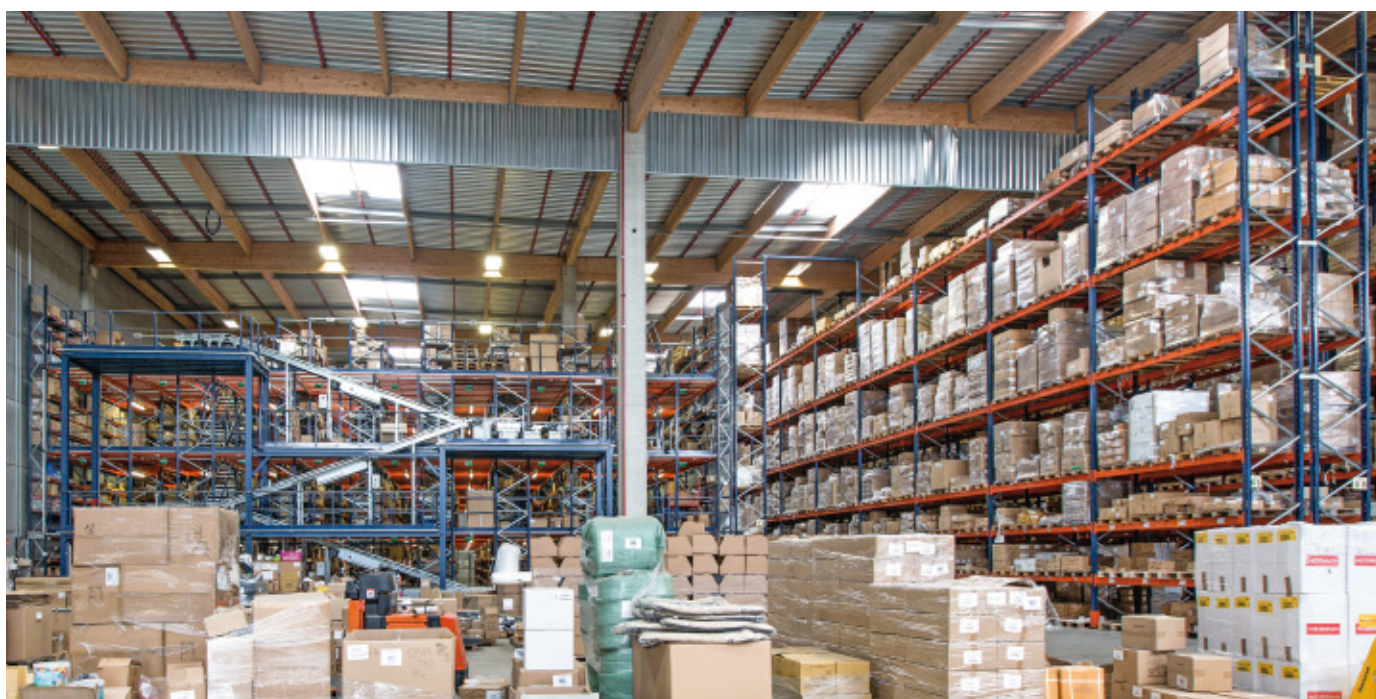
With this in mind, U10 Strasbourg has commissioned a new, 30,000 m<sup>2</sup> distribution centre in the town of Erstein (northern France) dedicated exclusively to goods management and order picking.



### Elveren Hudayi

Logistics Manager at U10 Strasbourg

*"Our warehouse is highly effective because it's equipped with storage solutions that make the most of the available space. For example, the pallet racks are 12 m tall, allowing us to store a large number of products in them."*





## U10 Strasbourg's racks stand out for their versatility, as their locations can be adapted to the sizes of the various pallets and boxes.

This installation stores 16,000 SKUs of varying sizes, characteristics and demand levels. To facilitate their management and prevent any possibility of error, the warehouse has been divided into five zones, each of which houses products with similar attributes.

The company contacted Mecalux when it came time to fitting out the installation with storage systems that would make goods handling easier. After analysing U10's needs, Mecalux set up pallet racks, a mezzanine floor and picking shelves with walkways. *"We knew these solutions were right for us because of their quality-price ratio,"* acknowledges Elveren Hudayi.

### Home is where the heart is

*"The three solutions adapt perfectly to our business,"* affirms the U10 Strasbourg Logistics Manager. Each of them was de-

signed for a specific product and operation: the pallet racks store high-consumption goods and palletised reserves, while the mezzanine floor and racks with walkways are used to prepare orders with low-demand items.

The pallet racks and picking shelves were chosen due to the fact that they offer direct access to the goods, which is crucial for streamlining storage and order prep (even more so for this warehouse in view of its high workload).

Every day, this centre receives 142 pallets sent by suppliers. Immediately afterwards, operators are tasked with placing them in their designated locations to facilitate picking. Nearly 100 orders made up of an average of 100 lines each are prepared, and 150 pallets are shipped to customers in Europe and Africa.

### Pallet racks

These are rather tall — standing 12 m in height with 6 levels — so, in the words of Elveren Hudayi, *"They leverage all the space to boost the storage capacity."* U10 Strasbourg's warehouse can accommodate 14,422 pallets measuring 800 x 1,200 mm with a maximum unit weight of 775 kg.

The racks store reserve products subsequently placed on the picking shelves as well as type-A items, that is, those with a higher demand level and that call for smooth inflows and outflows. With this solution, U10 has on hand at all times the reserve goods necessary for preparing the orders, which prevents any possible disruption to operations.

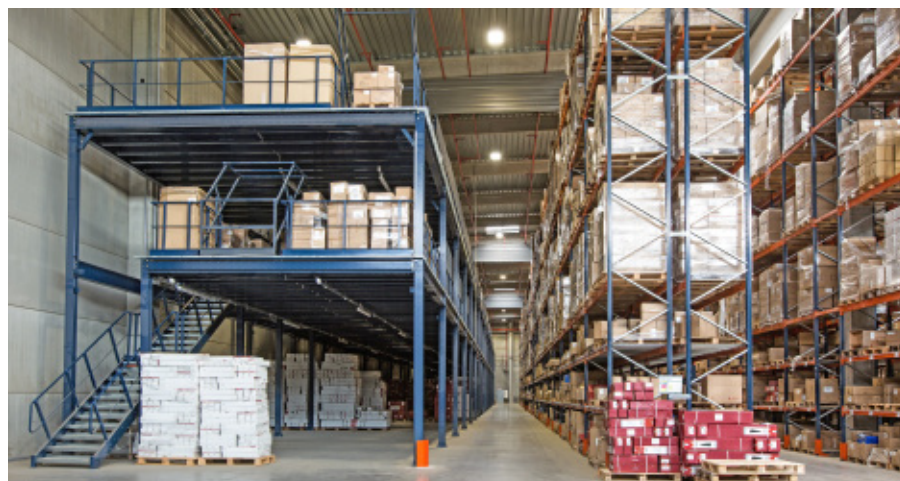
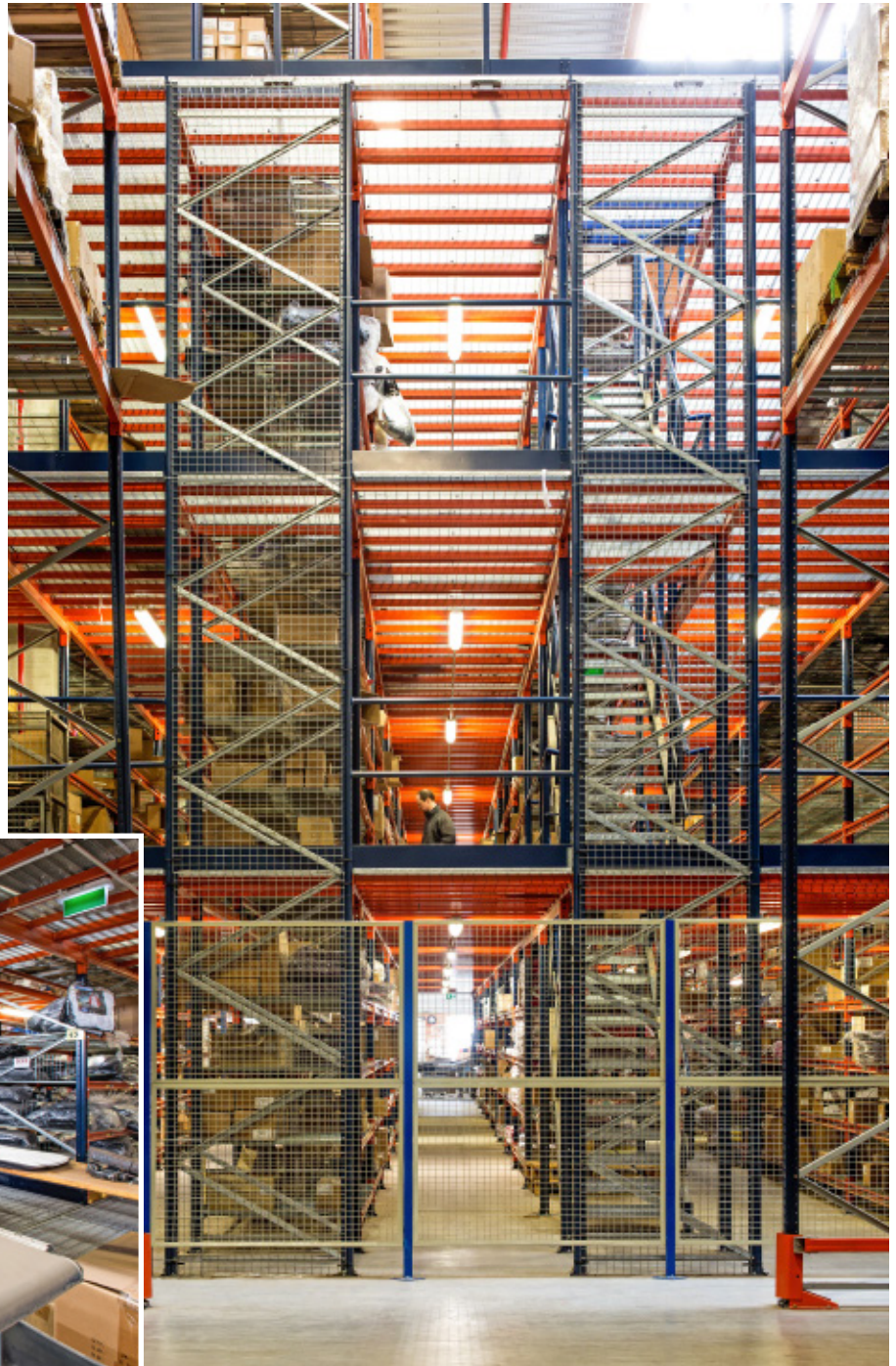
Picking is done directly from the pallets. The operators, with the help of order picking machines, retrieve the boxes from the pallets and group them onto another pallet that, later on, is sent to the corresponding customer. The order pickers are equipped with a platform that lifts the operator up to the third level of the racking, thus facilitating access to these locations.

### Picking shelves with walkways

Mecalux has installed 12-metre-tall picking shelves. Fitted to them are elevated aisles forming four floors in total. As opposed to the pallet racking, these racks house boxes and small B- and C-items. Optimal organisation of the goods helps to streamline picking.

With the warehouse in order, operators know exactly where to find the SKUs they need, which notably reduces times and potential mistakes. The centre has been divided into different areas, and each floor corresponds to a section where products of similar characteristics and demand levels are stored. The operators walk the storage aisles assigned to them, collecting the SKUs that constitute each order.

To streamline order prep and dispatch, Mecalux has set up a conveyor system that connects the four floors and ends at the consolidation area. There, orders from the various warehouse areas are sorted and packed.



### Mezzanine floor

This steel structure creates an additional surface in the warehouse. In fact, this solution has enabled U10 Strasbourg to triple its storage space.

According to Elveren Hudayi, *"The lower floors house B and C items, while the upper floors serve to store displays of products used in shops and retail outlets."*

The advantage of this system is that each level can be allocated to a specific type of product. Moreover, the distribution of the goods can be modified at a later date based on the company's needs.

## An orderly warehouse is more effective

A house in order is synonymous with well-being and quality of life. As for a warehouse in order, this translates into efficiency and improved service. Through its brand

Homea, U10 develops decorative products that help many customers to create a cosier ambience in their homes. To ensure that its stock is always available at sales outlets, the company's supply chain cannot slow down even for a minute. U10 Strasbourg's

warehouse is optimally organised, with its 16,000 SKUs efficiently distributed. There is no time to lose on storage and order prep tasks, so depositing and locating the required products at the right time marks the difference.



### Advantages for U10

- **Everything in order:** between the pallet racks, picking shelves with walkways and the mezzanine floor, the company stores 16,000 SKUs of a variety of sizes, attributes and demand levels.
- **Prepared for picking:** the pallet racks and picking shelves offer direct access, facilitating storage tasks and the preparation of 100 orders a day.
- **Leveraged warehouse:** the racks measure 12 m tall, increasing the storage capacity. Meanwhile, the mezzanine floor triples the warehouse surface area and accommodates more products.



### Technical data

#### Pallet racks

Storage capacity	14,422 pallets
Pallet sizes	800 x 1,200 mm
Max. pallet weight	775 kg
Racking height	12 m

#### Racking with raised walkways

Racking height	12 m
No. of levels	4

