

# case study



## **DB Schenker deploys Honeywell scanning solutions and WMS PHI data solution to enable seamless registration that is key for efficient food logistics.**

For DB Schenker, having access to accurate and real-time data is an absolute necessity. Inside the imposing distribution centre of almost 100,000 square metres and 90,000 pallet locations, two projects are under way, led by Willebroek's Branch Manager, Geert Vanderoy. "In addition to the SAP WM implementation, we are implementing six mobile solutions from PHI DATA and Honeywell. The complexity of the food chain is so large that we depend on good, reliable scanners."

**Honeywell**

The huge warehouse in Willebroek is fully equipped as a food warehouse from which DB Schenker provides distribution for multiple customers in the Benelux region. Due to the need for accountable traceability within the complex food logistics industry, accurate and efficient track and trace of goods is of utmost importance. In 2004, the General Food Law, introduced a new regulation that forced companies to indicate where items are located in the chain within a specific time. These days it is the clients who set the strict requirements.

### Strict traceability requirements

The traceability requirements are increasing, hand in hand with greater complexity. Vanderoy explains what this means for DB Schenker: “All items are provided with SSCC labels in accordance with our customers’ guidelines. The proper processing of these products has to be done very accurately. Even in the case of a standard supermarket product we have to pick the pallet with the correct product, the correct product date and the correct “best before date”. The system determines as to whether we take the products that are still good for 120 days or 90 days. This may vary by customer. We cannot do this without scanning.”

In referring to “the system,” Vanderoy means the combination of hand-held terminals, ring scanners and computer screens on the order picker trucks and the SAP warehouse management system. According to Vanderoy, the scanning solutions from Honeywell, supplied by PHI DATA, connect seamlessly with the WMS now being rolled out in Willebroek. Both the commissioning of the scanning equipment and the implementation of the new system with which DB Schenker operates the warehouse are being done in stages. Vanderoy expects both implementations to be completed in the first quarter of 2015.

### ‘Scanners determine delivery quality’

It is the logistics operations for major supermarket chains that set the most demands on the scanning solutions and the warehouse system. “Picking is indispensable when a large supermarket chain has a special promotion. Products may look the same on the outside, but it may be that a promotional product has been processed into the boxes. It is the information that the scanner passes to the order picker that determines our delivery quality.”



In the continuous pursuit of higher delivery quality and product availability, the combination of the scanning equipment from Honeywell and SAP is second to none. In the past warehouse managers alone had great confidence in the understanding of their warehouse staff, this knowledge has now been digitized and can be shared with anyone who requires it. “The work became too complex. Through carrying out the operations with a scanner, we have more information available that is also stored in our system.” Every employee in the DC in Willebroek can now comply with the specific requirements that a customer sets. “We establish these requirements and they appear on the scanners. For example, a pallet for customer X must be no more than 1 metre 20 cm high” says Vanderoy. “But the importance of scanning applies just as strongly for any product recalls at the request of the producer.”

### The choice for PHI DATA

The Willebroek Branch Manager acknowledges that the search for reliable scanning equipment did not take long. “The quality of the Honeywell products and the service that PHI DATA provides is excellent and we really appreciate this. Furthermore, they give knowledgeable support when making decisions about the best and most precise way of picking.” In addition to this, DB Schenker also took its employees’ opinions into account when selecting the scanning equipment. Keeping their hands free while order picking was indeed a requirement.

**Honeywell**

“PHI DATA advised us to use a ring scanner. This is connected via Bluetooth to a small carrier on the wrist, which is equipped with buttons in order to confirm picks. The question path for the order collectors originates from the WMS. Forklift operators also use a PDA to scan each individual pallet when loading trucks”.

### **‘Establishing customer focused operations’**

At DB Schenker in Willebroek there are now some 50 Honeywell scanners in use, including the screens that are attached to the order pickers. In combination with the WMS they have already created a more efficient situation. Nevertheless, Vanderoy wants to emphasize that DB Schenker is very focused on improving the quality of the logistics operation. “Obviously we made some time savings, but the improved delivery quality is more important. We have more insight into what we receive, what we store, what we collect and what we put out. That helps our order pickers, who for that matter have traditionally been very customer focused.” According to the Willebroek Branch Manager, being customer focused is reflected in the operations that the warehouse personnel perform of their own accord. If a box is equipped with a poor or illegible label, it will be replaced. “Thanks to the scanning solution we have switched to include the replacement of the labels in the registration. But more importantly we now have now clarified and simplified the understanding of all the steps in the chain along with accompanying data. With a smile he says that he doesn’t dare to think about the scanners not working. “But I don’t see this happening quickly. This digitization drive offers us real benefits and forgetting an order line is a thing of the past.” If a customer indicates not having received five boxes, then DB Schenker can show what steps have been taken and which scanning operations support this evidence.

According to Vanderoy, the use of the equipment installed by PHI DATA has proved to be very easy in practice. “Obviously we train our order pickers before they start using the scanners but understanding the WMS structure of SAP requires more attention than just working with the hand-held terminals, finger scanners or truck terminals. Most of the concentration is required for correcting an error and which steps you then need to take. Users may perform some actions themselves but we have deliberately blocked others as we want to completely minimise the risk of the WMS process approach.” He is conscious of the fact that the human factor can never be removed altogether. “But all in all, this investment has indeed led to us having a better process follow-up for each other. And in practice the ring scanners are extremely good and pleasant to use.”

### **Quality comes first**

DB Schenker is fully committed to the highest possible quality of data. The scanners offer the logistics service provider and its customer’s security and data. The intensive implementation process, wherein a WMS and the scanning solution from Honeywell are being rolled out simultaneously, has been divided into phases.

### **Honeywell equipment**

DB Schenker has deployed the following Honeywell solutions: Thor Vehicle-Mount Computer, Ring Scanner, Marathon mobile computer, Tecton mobile hand-held terminal, Dolphin PDAs.

