

Case study: Masgrau Alimentació
Scalable WMS feeds food company's expansion

Country: Spain



Masgrau Alimentació, a dry food distributor for restaurants, hotels and other local groups and entities, has super charged its supply chain competitiveness thanks to Easy WMS, Mecalux's warehouse management system. The company has rolled out the WMS in its distribution center in Girona (Spain) to organize its catalog with over 3,000 different SKUs and enhance preparation of a large volume of orders: up to 250 a day.



Alex Masgrau
Logistics Department
Manager at
Masgrau Alimentació

“Thanks to Easy WMS, we have gained better control over our warehouse processes: inventory statuses, expiration dates, lots, staff preparing orders, etc. With all this data, we can make strategic decisions to improve operations.”

About Masgrau Alimentació

Masgrau Alimentació is a dry goods distributor (soft drinks, cookies, cereals, juices, sugar, salt, etc.) that supplies hotels, restaurants, airlines, hospitals and nursing homes, among others.

All staff work hard to exceed customer expectations and search for innovative solutions to anticipate their demands.

To have a wide and varied catalog of products and so guarantee that its clientele does not go without, the company collaborates with some of the most well-known food brands in the Spanish market. Plus, since 2001, it also carries its own brand name goods called Serhos.

Challenges of food distribution

Masgrau Alimentació has over 50 years of expertise in the distribution sector, so it is well aware of the market situation. Companies like this run highly complex logistics and must meet a multitude of demands:

Manage multiple SKUs. The portfolio of Masgrau Alimentació includes over 3,000 items of various sizes, weights and demand levels.

Flexible operations. The company must adapt to the specific wishes and demands of each individual customer.

Handling products. As these are food-stuffs, it is absolutely essential that they are kept in proper condition to prevent them from spoiling or being distributed in poor condition.

Expiration date. The products have a limited expiration date, which requires a tight grip on stock control.

Agile distribution. Customers expect short delivery times for their orders.

To solve all these issues and make its Riudarenes (Girona) warehouse as productive as possible, Masgrau Alimentació has deployed Mecalux’s Easy WMS warehouse management system.

One priority when installing the software was being able to manage the stock efficiently because, according to Alex Masgrau, head of the company’s logistics department, *“it was very important if we wanted to broaden our SKU base.”*

The company was also interested in an intuitive, hands-on system that would help operators get the job done. *“We needed the new team to learn how to use the system quickly,”* Masgrau explained. The company hit the nail on the head with Easy WMS, because this system plays an integral part in the operators’ work: it tells them what to do with each product, where

Easy WMS guarantees that the products are kept in storage for as long as necessary and, by interfacing with Masgrau Alimentació’s ERP, prevents stockouts

to slot the goods and where to locate the SKUs they need. With this supervision, workers concentrate on their job and avoid making mistakes.

A sectored warehouse

The Masgrau Alimentació warehouse has been divided into three sections. Each of them groups products with similar characteristics:

Smaller-sized products (boxes of cookies, cereal, etc.). This area contains Mecalux pallet racks with shelving for picking on the bottom levels. The reserve pallets are housed in the upper levels, so picking shelves can be replenished quickly.

Large products (pallets with packaged sugar, salt, macaroni, etc.). In this area, Mecalux has installed pallet racks, and picking is done directly off the pallets on

the lower tiers. Spare pallet loads (i.e. reserves) are also found in the upper levels.

Heavy and bulky products (juices, water jugs, soft drinks, etc.). A floor buffer area has been set aside for ground level storage.

The receipt area becomes one of the most essential areas of the warehouse to get products organized. Every day, operators are in charge of sorting and organizing the incoming pallets before placing them where they belong.

For error-free completion of this task, workers follow the Easy WMS's instructions throughout. The system assigns a storage location to the merchandise based on the product type, its dimensions, and the level of demand. It then points out to the operators the area where each particular article is to be stored.

The shipping area is also known for its high volume of product movements. Pal-

lets are grouped there according to their corresponding order or transport route. This way, they can be loaded into the distribution vehicle faster. Orders are sent to Masgrau Alimentació customers in Catalonia and Andorra.

Maximum pick performance

Order picking is the core operation of the distribution center. Each day, it fulfills 250 orders with an average of 17 lines each. For this reason, one of the primary functions of Easy WMS is to maximize operator output by locating the SKUs that make up each order in the warehouse. *"We are really impressed with the WMS because it is very flexible and has completely adjusted to our work pace,"* Masgrau said.

Easy WMS has enhanced picking in several ways. First, thanks to successful product organization, all goods are identified from the moment they arrive at the warehouse and arranged according to their dimensions and demand level. As a result, work-

ers know exactly where to head when picking. Second, operators use RF devices to receive orders from the WMS in real time and confirm they have been fulfilled. Easy WMS's supervision ensures that operators concentrate on their work and also wipes out errors.

Third, Easy WMS has designed a picking route that streamlines operators' routes. These routes are sensitive to product measurements. For this reason, operators must collect bulky products first, then large ones, and, finally, smaller ones.

Fourth, contact between Mecalux's WMS and Masgrau Alimentació's ERP acts as a bridge so that the warehouse has all the required products when assembling orders.

Easy WMS keeps tabs on stock status in real time. With this information, it arranges restocking when locations become empty and tells the ERP to purchase more product from suppliers.

The radio frequency handset helps to identify the goods, to complete tasks in an error-free way and flawlessly prepare 250 daily orders

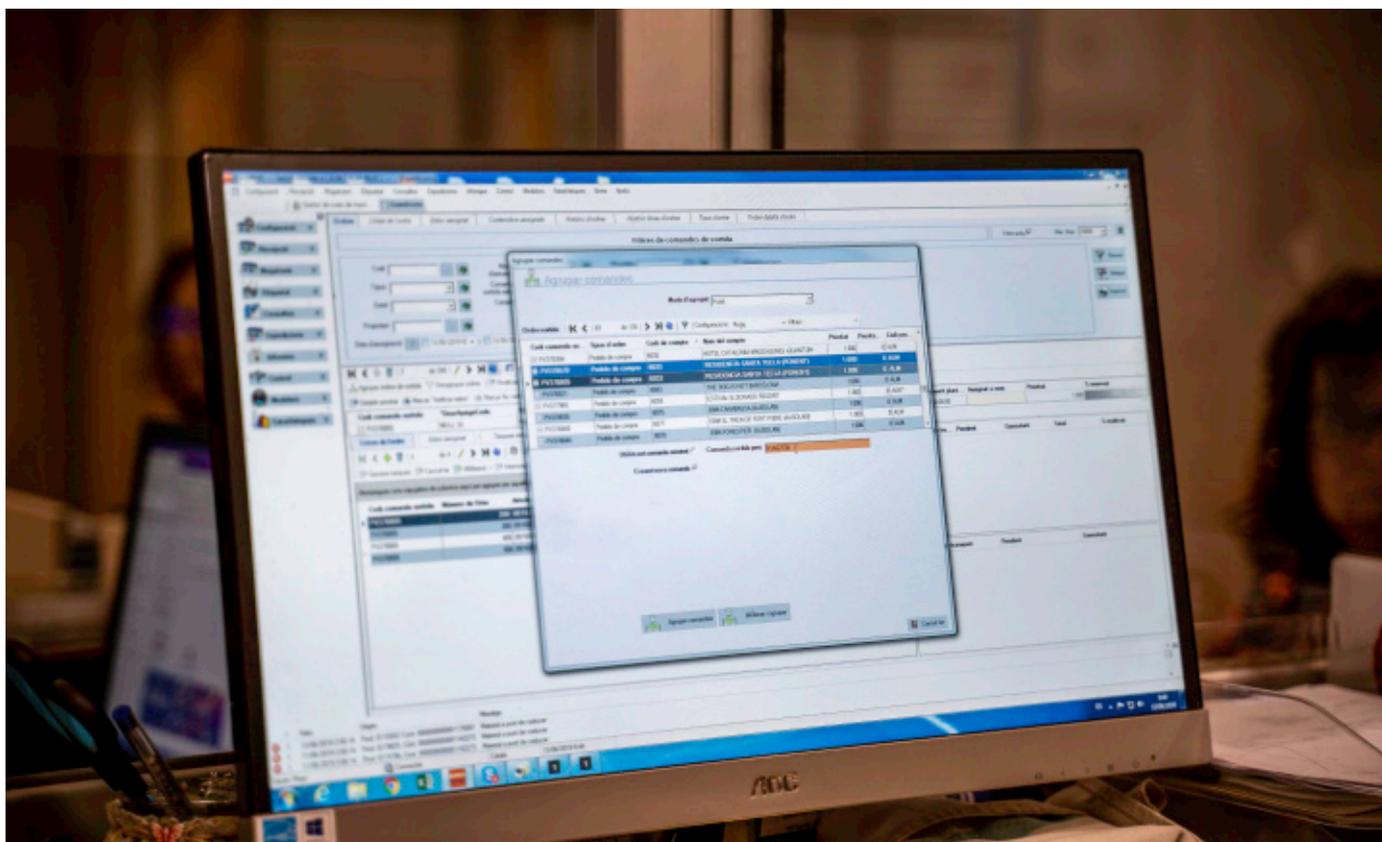


Constant growth

Indeed, warehouse management software is a strategic ally for any company. Not only is it a work tool that efficiently manages warehouse operations and resources, but it is also a system set up to deliver maximum supply chain competitiveness. Choosing and purchasing the right WMS is a big responsibility. The people in

charge of Masgrau Alimentació wanted to be absolutely sure before making any such decision. In the words of Masgrau, *"we visited another company's warehouse where they held many more SKUs than we did; there, we saw that Easy WMS was working smoothly, which sold us on the idea. This was the WMS we needed."* Easy WMS is a system that will grow alongside

Masgrau Alimentació in its plans for the future. *"We want to become the largest supplier of dried, refrigerated and frozen food in Catalonia,"* the head of the logistics department emphasized. To achieve this, the WMS raises the warehouse's productivity so that the company can tackle any project, always putting customer satisfaction first.



Advantages for Masgrau Alimentació

- **Quick picking:** Easy WMS helps Masgrau Alimentació operators achieve their goal of preparing 250 orders per day.
- **Error-free operations:** overseeing all operations through the Mecalux warehouse management system removes any potential error making.
- **High productivity:** the WMS has designed a picking route for operators. This optimizes and minimizes the number of trips taken by the team.



Technical data

No. of stored SKUs	3,000
No. orders prepared/day	250
No. of pallets distributed per day	100

