

New distribution center underlines Vos Logistics' continued growth

An interview with Toine van Gils, director of contract logistics at Vos Logistics in Oss, The Netherlands.



Vos Logistics will be opening another brand new distribution center in Oss, The Netherlands, on 1 October this year. The logistics service provider has signed a 7-

year lease on the sustainably designed facility, from where it will be handling the logistics activities for a number of its customers. Groenewout drew up a requirements specification for the new distribution center on behalf of Vos Logistics and supervised the selection of the project developer. "Collaborating with an external expert has been very beneficial," says Toine van Gils from Vos Logistics.



Toine van Gils

Over the past five years, the contract logistics activities of Vos Logistics have grown substantially. The company's distribution centers in Helmond (NL), Goch (D) and Oevel (B) have all been extended, and a completely new distribution center has been set up in Roosendaal (NL). This year, the logistics service provider's network is expanding once more with a brand new distribution center on the De Geer industrial park in Oss.

With the addition of this 24,300-square-meter facility, the company's total storage capacity will increase to 170,000 square meters. "From 1 October 2014 onwards, our new distribution center will be handling the logistics operations for customers. This additional facility will enable Vos Logistics to support the growth strategy of those customers who want to centralize their European distribution activities in Oss," explains Toine van Gils, director of contract logistics at Vos Logistics.

Vos Logistics decided to increase its storage capacity in September 2013. The logistics service provider first conducted its own research into suitable sites, explored land options and made contact with suppliers of logistics property. In October 2013, Van Gils asked Groenewout to coordinate the rest of the project. "Collaborating with an external expert has been very beneficial. Groenewout is a professional consulting firm with good references and lots of experience. We've amassed quite a bit of property experience of our own, but Groenewout is of course a specialist in that area and can contribute valuable extra expertise."

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Requirements specification

To avoid any ambiguity, Groenewout drew up a requirements specification which outlined all of Vos Logistics' requirements for the new distribution center in terms of the logistics, construction, safety and technical aspects. "Thanks to our previous experience on the new-build project in Roosendaal in 2012, we already had a fairly clear idea of what we wanted. Unlike the one in Roosendaal, the distribution center in Oss does not need to be made suitable for use with hazardous materials. However, it will be twice as big and a sprinkler system will be installed, which is why Groenewout also included a fire load calculation," says Van Gils.

One important aspect of Vos Logistics' requirements is BREEAM certification. In practice, this means that the company has once again decided on a sustainable building with reduced energy consumption thanks to extra insulation and motion-activated LED lighting, among other things. In addition, a rainwater harvesting system will provide water for flushing the toilets. "In the Vos Logistics sustainability strategy, we've set ourselves the aim of reducing our carbon emissions. Our fleet of 1,200 trucks is of course the biggest source of carbon dioxide, but we're not forgetting the impact of our distribution centers," states Van Gils.

Another requirement is extra space in front of the building so that the distribution center can be used for loading and unloading Longer Heavier Vehicles (LHVs). "We're already using LHVs for plenty of routes within The Netherlands, and as soon as the restrictions on them are lifted in other European countries we'll start using them on international routes too," continues Van Gils.



New distribution center Vos Logistics in Oss

According to plan

Various suppliers of logistics property were invited to submit a proposal based on the requirements specification. Groenewout led sessions with the suppliers of the four most interesting offers to examine them more closely. Each proposal was evaluated from both a technical and a quality perspective, and the terms and conditions of the lease agreement were discussed, including the potential room for negotiation. The company then entered into negotiations with the best two potential suppliers, which ultimately led to Vos Logistics signing a contract that fulfilled all its requirements. Thanks not least to Groenewout's coordinating role, the entire process went according to plan with no risk of delay to the intended handover date of 1 October.

Vos Logistics' chosen supplier was Montea, a Belgian property investor with activities in The Netherlands. Montea has contracted construction firm Van der Maazen to build the distribution center which Vos Logistics will be leasing for seven years. "We were looking for a site in the southeast of The Netherlands. We considered opportunities in and around Venlo, Venray, Oss and Helmond, and ultimately decided on Oss. We already have an infrastructure in place there and an organization that we can tap into directly. Plus it offers excellent accessibility being so close to the A50/A59 motorways and the trimodal container terminal in Oss. Montea offered the best price/quality ratio for a distribution center in Oss, and it intends to keep the premises in its property portfolio for the building's entire life cycle, which for us is an extra guarantee of quality," explains Van Gils.

Teamwork

The construction company is due to make a start on the foundations in March 2014. In order for the distribution center to be operational on 1 October, building work must be far enough advanced by August that Vos Logistics can start fitting out the facility. Approximately half of the 24,300 square meters of floor space will be taken up by pallet racking. In addition, a 2,800-square-meter mezzanine floor will be installed. "We will use the remaining space for block stacking because of the large volumes of fast-moving consumer goods we will be handling," comments Van Gils, who expects the distribution center to employ around 80 people. "Ten of them will be working in the offices, which will comprise 680 square meters. The Contract Logistics division will also be based there."

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Even though the lease agreement has now been signed and construction work is about to start, Groenewout is still involved in the new-build project. The consulting firm checks whether the detailed building plans are in line with the requirements specification and whether the suppliers are working in accordance with the terms and conditions of the contract and other agreements. "Groenewout has not only worked very accurately and professionally, but the company has also proved to be extremely customer-focused. The specialists are very proactive and make excellent suggestions," explains Van Gils, describing the collaboration with Groenewout as "teamwork". "We collaborated very intensively as equal partners. Moreover we had very pleasant contact with the consultants, who took an informal and pragmatic approach."

By Marcel te Lindert

Marcel te Lindert is a journalist with over ten years of experience in logistics. He was editor-in-chief of the Dutch magazines Transport+Opslag and Logistiek. Today he works freelance for magazines like Supply Chain Magazine and Logistiek Totaal.

More information

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