

## Groenewout manages the creation of new European Distribution Centre for Hollister

An interview with Mr Hugh Berry, European Logistics Manager, Hollister by Tjaart Theron.



**Early in 2007, Hollister - an independently-owned global company that develops, manufactures and markets healthcare products and services in more than 90 countries - took a decision to develop a new European Distribution Centre in the southern part of the Netherlands. This meant that Hollister needed local assistance from a consulting and engineering company to manage the creation of a distribution centre in Etten-Leur, which is situated in the vicinity of Breda.**



Hollister selected Groenewout to manage the entire process - from the selection of a site, developers for the project and the construction of the centre to the moment when the site became operational. Groenewout also took care of a logistical study and the design of the storage method. They monitored the development process and provided guidance with regard to the logistical concept and its implementation.



'Around March last year, we began looking for a consulting and engineering company that would deliver what we required,' says Hugh Berry, project manager at Hollister. 'We received advice about a number of companies. Groenewout made the best presentation. And they were locally based. I sensed I could do business with Groenewout and knew it would be a good relationship - and this proved to be the correct assessment.'

Working closely together with Hollister, Groenewout helped with the selection of a location for the proposed European Distribution Centre. According to Mr. Berry, Etten-Leur, which is near Breda, was selected because of its proximity to the ports for inbound freight and its closeness to Germany and the UK, which are two of the largest countries serviced by Hollister. Hugh Berry adds: 'At a later stage Hollister also plans to consolidate other activities into the facility - which means the centre will become even more crucial to our activities in the future. This was therefore an exercise with important consequences for the future of our company.'

P.O. BOX 3290  
4800 DG BREDA  
THE NETHERLANDS  
  
NIJVERHEIDSSINGEL 313  
4811 ZW BREDA  
  
T +31 (0)76 - 533 04 40  
MAIL@GROENEWOUT.COM  
WWW.GROENEWOUT.COM

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### **Groenewout's approach**

In close cooperation with Hollister's European and American logistics organization, Groenewout started by defining the logistics concept and the sizing of the key elements that provided a basis for planning the lay-out of the distribution centre. 'Our approach to this phase was that Groenewout would perform all the necessary preparations. My team then took the final decisions on the project plan and detailed logistics lay-out after a series of visits and workshops arranged by Groenewout during which their proposals were discussed and assessed.

A detailed lay-out study was then conducted by Groenewout. This included a risk assessment, the drawing up of a detailed project plan and the definition of the lay-out.



According to Mr Berry, the implementation phase involved the working out of the details for the Storage and Material Handling equipment (with a monthly check on progress and quality), training and migration. The latter included the monitoring of the integration of SAP/WM with the logistics equipment and the implementation of IT hardware and the testing of the logistics system and SAP/WM. The final or start-up phase was aimed at ensuring that the distribution system became fully operational.

'Groenewout provided assistance throughout the entire project', says Hugh Berry – 'starting with the selection of the correct site and the development of the contract for the site with the municipality. Their knowledge of Dutch law was a real bonus in this regard. In addition, Groenewout selected a developer for the site. They also took responsibility for the contract for the development of the facilities and for the leasing of the site for 10 years.'

'We are also very happy that the logistics operation of our new European Distribution centre is operated through our SAP/WM module.' Hugh Berry proudly adds: 'In fact, the EDC is the first SAP/WM-operated distribution centre in Europe for Hollister.

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Groenewout also monitored the integration of IT with the logistics hardware and arranged for all necessary IT hardware – always in consultation with our SAP/WM team.'

'We appreciated Groenewout's attention to even the smallest details – they paid as much attention to the location of dock doors, the location of offices and entrances and the location of daylight openings in façade as they did to sizing and the overall logistics concept. This meant we could draw up very realistic and detailed tendering documents. They obviously know exactly what they are doing and have an enormous amount of experience in this field. All we needed to do at Hollister', says Hugh Berry, 'was to focus our attention on the hardware, the IT and the personnel.'

#### **Excellent relationship with Groenewout**

'The relationship we had with Groenewout was excellent', Hugh Berry concludes. 'The staff members at Groenewout were very friendly. I used their offices for about one year and they treated me very well. They really know how to take care of customers and provided advice at all times – even going beyond the stipulations of the contract. All in all, I found it to be a really friendly organisation.'

'And although much change was involved, they took everything on board as we progressed. I was really very happy with Groenewout.'

#### **By Tjaart Theron**

*Tjaart Theron was born in South Africa and has lived in the Netherlands since 1985. He completed a Masters in Economics at the Institute of Social Sciences in The Hague and his experience includes filmmaking and consultancy work in the NGO sector. He has worked as English native speaker copywriter for large international companies such as Shell, Canon and Philips and provides media and PR training to higher-level executives of multinational companies*

#### **More information**

*If you have questions or if you would like to offer your feedback to this article, you can contact Isabel Schouten-van Dilst, [schouten@groenewout.com](mailto:schouten@groenewout.com)/ +3176 533 04 40.*