

# PREDICTIVE WAREHOUSING: DISTRIBUTOR HTG ALWAYS READY FOR GROWTH

With its global purchase and distribution activities, there is never a dull moment at HTG in Delfzijl. As a distribution partner for liquor and beauty goods, retailers in the Netherlands and Europe – both shops and webshops – are supplied by HTG on a daily basis. HTG has been using the AutoStore system since 2013. In 2018, the phase three expansion to 57,000 bins with 50 robots was completed.



**“Everything entered in the system before 11 a.m. can be shipped out before 1.30 p.m.”**

**Ken Lageveen,  
Managing Director at HTG in Delfzijl**

## Distributor of FMCG

HTG is part of the B&S Group, which is based in Dordrecht. B&S's story began 140 years ago when it started supplying duty-free products for ships. The business expanded to include duty-free shops and the company is now a globally-operating wholesaler and distributor specialising in fast-moving consumer goods in various niche markets. “We offer our customers an all-round service throughout the supply chain. From storage to distribution, but also labelling, packing or creating product combinations,” explains Ken Lageveen, Managing Director at HTG in Delfzijl.

“At the start, we only supplied products to the traditional retail sector. But now we're focusing more on the online market. We saw that our customers need a broad range of products, with everything available in stock. So we went in search of a technology that could meet this need. That was AutoStore, and after paying a visit to Norway we knew we had found what we were looking for.” The distributor led the way, and in 2013 it was the first to distribute the AutoStore system in the Netherlands.

## All products, always available and supplied quickly

“Our customers are becoming more and more demanding. They want their own stock, they want all the product and stock information to be digitally available 24/7 and they want the products to be supplied quickly. What makes us unique is that we can seamlessly meet all these needs with our combination of storage, stock systems and logistical facilities. We handle a large part of the

chain and our customers really benefit from that,” continues Lageveen. From the company's warehouse in Delfzijl, thousands of products are supplied every day to shops all over the Netherlands and Europe.

It was soon decided to further expand the AutoStore system. “Our supplier at the time was unable to help us with a quick rollout of phase two. So through AutoStore in Norway, we came in contact with Lalesse Logistic Solutions (Lalesse). The system was expanded in 2015 and now that phase three has been realised we have a system with 57,000 bins, 20 ports and 50 robots. Our capacity is more than adequate but as part of our strategy we want to continue to expand so that we're always ready for growth,” says Lageveen.

## The customer HTG, part of B&S ([www.bs-htg.nl](http://www.bs-htg.nl))

Location: Delfzijl  
Activity: Distributor of health, beauty, liquor and luxury goods.



## The AutoStore warehouse

Surface area: approx. 1100 m<sup>2</sup>  
Height: 6.5 metres, 24 bins of 20cm on top of each other  
Number of bins: 57,000  
Number of robots: 50; speed 3.1 metres per second  
Completion: phase three in 2018



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**“It’s all about creating an innovative system with the right picking strategy.”**

**AutoStore just one of the components**

The other important components are the technology and the personnel. He continues: “Many of our employees have been working here for a long time. Their work has changed over the past few years. There are now more operators and we have a different approach to planning and order picking. The orders are also changing: for example, drop-shipping is now an essential part of our business. We always look critically at our process so that we can quickly respond to changes in market demand.”

Lageveen believes that the AutoStore system is just part of that process. “Ultimately it’s all about combining an innovative warehouse solution with the right picking strategy. Over the past year, we’ve invested a lot in new roller conveyors and packing stations. In late 2018, Lalesse supplied us with 320 metres of customised Reesink conveyor belts. The next step involves the use of automated guided vehicles (AGVs).”

**Figures & preventing peaks**

According to Lageveen, foresight and a strong numerical insight are also a must. “We configure our process, purchasing and stock in such a way that we’re always ready for the unexpected. For example, we’re constantly



calculating and, based on our years of experience, we’ve developed an algorithm that that we can use to make accurate predictions. Combine these things with the system and we can now handle the demand from the market. All orders entered in the system before 11 a.m. can be shipped out before 1.30 p.m.”

The AutoStore system at HTG runs an average of 6 days a week, 16 hours a day. “In peak periods, we can easily upscale this. During the Black Friday and Cyber Monday peaks at the end of November, the system was running 24 hours a day. At peak moments, we keep running through the night so that we

can start with an empty order list in the morning. So we actually prevent peaks by working non-stop,” says Lageveen.

**Product Manager AutoStore Daan Niels says:**

“At HTG, they’re always thinking three steps ahead. Thanks to our close working relationship, we always know where they stand and what they want to do next. We help them with their processes and can offer a total solution that is consistent with HTG’s strategy. The people at HTG are passionate about their work and have a no-nonsense mentality. That makes it possible for us to implement projects quickly and efficiently.”



**“We prevent peaks by working non-stop.”**



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