



Microlise and Vanboxtel Systems help streamline Distrifresh's fresh food logistics operations in Holland.

Distrifresh is a food packaging & logistics service provider to the fresh food market segment in Holland. They specialise in the production and distribution of fresh ready-to-cook meals – incorporating a wide range of food groups including meat, fish, poultry, vegetables and dairy.

Distrifresh's operation involves the receiving of fresh produce into one of its two warehouses in Boxtel and IJsselmuideren, whereupon its staff unpack, combine and re-pack & label fresh produce, and then distribute these fresh meals for a wide range of customers at over 900 locations, including several supermarkets, on a daily basis (and sometimes even twice a day).

The lead-time between goods received, and delivery to customer is 12 hours. The entire supply chain is temperature controlled, its 2 warehouses operate at an assured temperature of 2 degrees centigrade.

The Distrifresh operation runs each day across 3 shifts and involves around 150 staff across 12 lines processing, (picking, weighing, packing & labelling), fresh food received over night for delivery the next day. Orders are picked for around 10,000 shipments per day, which are merged into about 1,000 actual deliveries. Distrifresh label 1.2 million packages of various products and clean 350,000 crates every week.

With such a complex supply chain Distrifresh wanted to get as much detailed information about every stage of their supply chain from the back office order system right through to the delivery point to ensure their operations are running as efficiently as possible so they can provide their customers with a premium

service. The manager of the Distrifresh branches in Boxtel and IJsselmuideren, John van Eijden, stated: **"Products sometimes don't get to the warehouse on time, orders can be transmitted too late, traffic holds-up deliveries, or trucks get delayed on the road for other reasons; Our customers cannot run a store with empty shelves. Long delays are simply not an option with fresh produce. It goes bad quickly, leaving the consumer dissatisfied."**

Working with Microlise and Vanboxtel Systems, Distrifresh chose to implement various Transport Management Solutions to ensure they had both visibility and control to allow them to not only give the customers a better service but to streamline their operating costs and eliminate unnecessary overheads.



In their Warehouse Distrifresh implemented Van Boxtels Warehouse Management system which handles some 150 concurrent users throughout the picking and packing processes. Information from these processes is directed into the Vanboxtel-LBS (logistics management system). Data which relates to the productivity

Of the various logistics processes is made accessible to the management via the Vanboxtel-MIS (management information system).

The 12 weighing and labelling machines are also controlled by the Vanboxtel system, and the trucks are equipped with mobile data terminals from Microlise providing Distrifresh with a Proof of Delivery and Collection system which has a wireless connection to Vanboxtel's Transport Management System.



Microlise's Proof of Delivery technology ensures that Distrifresh can get the right products to the right customer, reducing any risk of errors occurring. The system includes a revolutionary barcode system which seamlessly links into Vanboxtel's Warehouse Management System managing each product right up to the end of the delivery process.

John van Eijden commented **"We scan the products from the moment they arrive, up to the loading of the truck. We have split up the trans-shipment process into steps, in which the products are submitted to different operations with different people. The frequent scans significantly reduce the chance for errors. We now know, at every stage in the process, where we can find which products, and what still needs to be done."**

In addition, the mobile data terminals have the latest in GPS tracking technology which allows Distrifresh planners to have detailed information regarding the position of every

driver; this helps with proactive planning of the next delivery. Not to mention the obvious cost saving and environmental benefit by replacing the reams of paper previously used for every load delivered.

"Our customers want to be able to access up-to-date information about their current stocks, and the location of the products. This is why we acquired mobile data terminals – not to check on our drivers, but rather to know exactly where the trucks are and when they will get to the delivery address." stated John (van Eijden), he went on to say: **"We do not work with our own trucks but use charters. This system is flexible and allows us to keep control of our transport no matter who we are using. As a result it aids our total logistics operation."**

The Proof of Delivery System that Microlise Provides also communicates the itinerary; the order data is transferred from the central system to 75 on-board terminals every day, including the itinerary instructions which fully conform to the delivery agreements with retailers. With the scanning functionality of the device the drivers will scan the shipment once again, on delivery, so Distrifresh know exactly what has been delivered, and where. It also enables Distrifresh to check the temperature and therefore, the quality, preventing any debate afterwards.

"The integral key to success in any supply chain is control" states John (van Eijden), **"Everything must be done as fast as possible since freshness lasts, for a limited time only. Moreover, an important part of the available time is taken up by truck-based transport on frequently congested road networks. Distrifresh's people know they are supported by several, fundamental, Transport Management Systems in their daily race against time, and as such our operations are more efficient every day."**