



# Skechers

*Skechers combines three flows with conveyors supplied by Inther*

## PROJECT

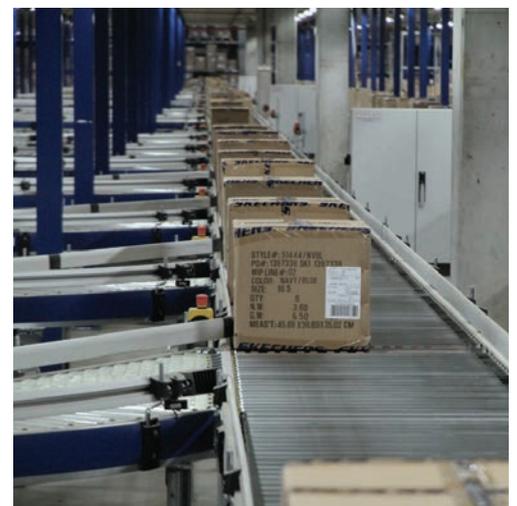
- 2.5 kilometers conveyor technology
- Input/output crossbelt sorter
- Expedition sorter with 20 exits
- Following project with 2 matrix sorters

### Sophie Houtmeyers, Vice President Distribution Operations at Skechers:

“We can now handle an order increase of 30 percent and we are already busy with the next automation.”

**Skechers was forced to automate the greater part of the processes in their distribution center because of the tremendous revenue growth. The result is a system with more than 2.5 kilometers of conveyor technology supplied by Inther. This will be followed by another two kilometers of conveyor and two matrix sorters in a following project. The system enables Skechers to facilitate three totally different flows of goods: the web shop, the stores and the wholesale. Sophie Houtmeyers of Skechers: “We can now handle an order increase of 30 percent.”**

The growth that Skechers is experiencing in Europe is unprecedented. In 2014 the turnover of the footwear brand grew by 43 percent, and even by 55 percent in 2015. This tremendous growth has consequences for the European distribution center in Liège, from where three channels are handled: the customers from their web shop, the retailers that carry the Skechers brand and, finally, their own stores, of which there will be 160 in Europe by the end of this year. “Since 2002 we doubled the warehouse. We’re now going to a distribution center with a total of 100.000 square meters,” says Houtmeyers, vice-president distribution operations of Skechers in Europa.



## Limits reached

In order to accommodate the growth Skechers has decided to not only extend the floor area, but also to mechanize and automate the processes based on a total new





concept. Instead of collecting all orders one by one using order picking trucks, the shoe manufacturer intelligently decided to combine the orders in to waves. The Warehouse Management System of Manhattan Associates calculates the required quantity of every article and creates order picking tasks based on these calculations.



A crucial role in this concept has been reserved for the conveyor technique of Inther. A 2.5 kilometer long conveyor starts in the pallet racking area, on which employees place the collected cartons containing shoes. The cartons with shoes are transported over a roller conveyor to a large cross belt sorter with five hundred destinations. Here they are automatically allocated towards the eleven input stations. Employees will be ready to put the shoes on the infeed conveyor of the sorter. The conveyor will transport the carton to a shelving area in case it's not completely empty. In this area the "residuals" are temporarily stored.

## Twenty exits

Shipping boxes are transported by a roller conveyor, again provided by Inther, from the crossbelt sorter past label applicators and semi-automatic taping machines to the dispatch floor. Here they are sorted over twenty exits. At seventeen exits, employees will palletize the boxes per order. Three exits lead towards telescope conveyors which will transport the shipping boxes directly into the truck.

The complete system is controlled by Pyramid, a Warehouse Control System which is integrated in the WMS of Manhattan. "The fact that Inther was chosen has to do with the theoretical capacity of the conveyor system and the level of the technique. Furthermore, Inther is the supplier with the best price/quality ratio," says Houtmeyers.

## All three flows

What makes the new system special is that it is suitable for all three flows which Skechers handles from Liège. One wave can contain orders from all three flows, from a one-line web order to an order from a wholesaler who has ordered a full truck. "We can now handle an order increase of 30 percent," says Houtmeyers.

"With this system we thought to handle the growth in the next few years, but the growth is faster than we expected. This is why we are already working on the next automation project," says Houtmeyers. Another two kilometers of conveyor and two matrix sorters will be provided by Inther. Houtmeyers: "The fact that we have chosen Inther again is proof of the confidence we have in their products and services."

### SUMMARY

- Warehouse of 100.000 m2 with 30.000 SKU's
- Growth of 43 percent in 2015 and 55 percent in 2015
- 3 flows via one system: web shop, stores and wholesale
- 2.5 kilometers of conveyor from order picking to sorting
- Distribute flows of goods over 11 input stations
- Transport from crossbelt sorter to dispatch floor
- Sorting shipping boxes over 20 exits
- Controlled by WCS Pyramid, integration with WMS Manhattan
- An order increase of 30 percent



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