



Zara

Distribution centre
Zaragoza, Spain

Handover: 2008

ZARA

The customer

Zara is part of the Spanish Inditex group, one of the world's largest fashion retailers with over 4,350 stores in 73 countries. The key objectives of Zara's marketing strategy are product variety and speed-to-market. The brand places some 10,000 different items in-store each year, taking a new style from concept to shelf in just a few weeks, compared to the industry norm of about nine months.

The challenge

The focus on product variety and speed to store means that logistics forms a key part of Zara's success. Inditex invested 87.4 million Euros in a second distribution centre – located in the Platform for Logistics in Zaragoza (PLAZA) – in 2003. The 123,000m² facility was designed to supplement the work of the group's existing distribution centre in Arteixo, A Coruña. For Zara, distribution takes place twice a week and each delivery always includes new lines, so that the stores are constantly refreshing their offer. The time between receiving an order at the distribution centre to store delivery is on average 24 hours for European stores and a maximum of 48 hours for American or Asian stores. Within a few years of operation at the Zaragoza site, the phenomenal growth of Inditex required a major expansion of the distribution centre (DC).

The solution

Inditex decided to upgrade the existing DC to raise its throughput from 1000 to 2300 units per hour, while also building a second handling system to raise overall capacity from 2300 to 4000 units per hour. These demanding throughput requirements had to be implemented while maintaining infeed, sorting and dispatch functions at all times. The solution included a 5km-long tote conveyor system, an automated storage and retrieval system (ASRS) and a sorter. The £2.4 million contract for the control systems was awarded to Autotech. Working according to Spanish regulations, Autotech installed a total of 20 independent PLC systems over a 12-month period.





Scope of supply

The scope of supply included the design of hardware and software, manufacture, installation, commissioning, optimisation and performance acceptance.

Mechanical equipment

Tote conveyor system with 1300 motors totalling 5km in length
Unloading docks with goods ID
ASRS
Sequence buffer
Sorter
Loading docks

Computer systems and communications

16-off Siemens S7-400 PLC systems
4-off Siemens S7-300 PLC systems
These PLC systems were installed across 30 main control panel suites, local Siemens and distributed Wago terminal I/O
Profibus I/O network
Wired Ethernet for WCS and SCADA
Wireless Ethernet for PLC programming

Diagnostics

FactoryLink SCADA system
Siemens 'OP' panels

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