

A Körber Industry Best Practice

# A fast track to growth for NEXT

A fully automated distribution center streamlines supply and routing processes for global clothing and home products retailer NEXT.



## Snapshot:

Company:	<b>NEXT</b>
Industry:	<b>Clothing and home products retailer.</b>
Number of stores:	<b>700</b>
Warehouse capacity:	<b>77,000 pallets</b>
Körber competency:	<b>RGV system, automated storage and retrieval system (ASRS), pallet building systems, picking stations, WCS software and monitoring system.</b>
Solution:	<b>Fully automated distribution center.</b>

## Complexity

Integrate transport between two warehouses, reduce overall costs, reduce damage of products, and ensure efficiency and competitiveness.

## Best Practice

A transportation system integrating two warehouses and linking them by a track spanning approximately 1.5 kilometers. The system incorporates 81 RGVs for seamless transportation of products.

## Keeps the pallets moving

Goods need to move fast at the two warehouses of NEXT in Doncaster, UK, to meet the demand of clothing and furniture from the large retailer.

Furniture and other goods are stored on 77,000 pallets locations in two adjacent warehouses with a total of 23 stacker cranes. To facilitate future growth, NEXT opted for a turnkey solution from Körber Supply Chain featuring the integration of Rail Guided Vehicles (RGVs) within its warehouse infrastructure.

The transportation system integrates the two warehouses by a track spanning approximately 1.5 kilometers. With a total of 81 RGVs, the automation system in the warehouse now handles up to 1,350 pallets per hour.

## Reduce costs and ensure efficiency

The partnership between NEXT and Körber Supply Chain took off in 2011 with an innovative storage solution for sofas and space for 27,000 pallets for the warehouse, Doncaster 1.



The fully automated warehouse Doncaster 2 was completed in 2017 and has a storage capacity of additional 50,000 pallets, and now NEXT was looking to modernize supply chain operations even more.

“The main challenges were with migration from a manual picking warehouse to a fully automated one. Our objectives were to reduce the overall cost, reduce damage of products, and ensure efficiency and competitiveness in the industry,” said Ryan Loska, Engineering Manager, NEXT.

#### **Streamline supply**

Doncaster 1 with nine aisles and five stacker cranes mainly does the intake of stocks. The new automated logistics system is designed to streamline supply and routing processes while meeting the capacity to manage large home furniture and carry it at substantial distances to designated storage and outbound locations.

Doncaster 2 has 19 aisles and 18 stacker cranes, and the 81 RGVs are spread across two floors and serve 10 picking stations.

**“The RGVs offer an ideal transport method throughout the warehouse, and they are easy to remove for maintenance and work on when required.”**

**Ryan Loska**  
Engineering Manager, NEXT

#### **Easy maintenance**

The easy maintenance also goes for the stacker cranes, as an aisle switching function provides the ability to service and repair individual cranes offline by moving them to the maintenance area. This allows a neighboring crane to pick from the lane and ensures the constant availability of unique stock.

The RGV system is paired with a modern monitoring system, and Körber provided NEXT with a full SCADA overview. With the information available, NEXT can quickly send the right engineer to the right location to resolve an issue and avoid downtime.

“This is a maintenance-friendly system with quality design. It’s the ideal solution for our needs for making our pallet warehouses reliable and effective,” explains Ryan Loska, Engineering Manager.

Should help be needed, with minor issues as well as larger retrofitting, NEXT knows that they can rely on Körber.

**“The after-sales support is also a major benefit for NEXT. This keeps the production loss down to a bare minimum and maintains customer orders.”**

**Ryan Loska**  
Engineering Manager, NEXT

#### **Good relations mean good business**

The growth experienced by NEXT over the years has been achieved from a prompt, fast delivery service, supported by the fact that the storage system from Körber knows what is in stock at all times.

Also, the objectives of reducing cost and ensuring competitiveness by reducing overhead costs from transport, handling, logistics, and labor have been fulfilled thanks to the effective performance of the fully automated pallet handling solution.

**“We must be ahead of the competition and have a reliable, profitable business model. Körber provides good attention to detail, confidence in their own deliverables and were also competitive on price. With this solution from Körber, our business strategy is more robust and resilient.”**

**Ryan Loska**  
Engineering Manager, NEXT



**Watch the video:**  
Experience the NEXT  
distributioncenters in action.

