

Albert.nl (www.albert.nl) are the suppliers of Albert Heijn, Etos, and Gall & Gall. They deliver goods ordered via the Internet to the front door of more than 1,000 private and business customers each day.

Very detailed planning is required in order to deliver these orders at the right time to the right customer. This is done in no time using the route planning system SHORTREC without this requiring the specific knowledge of experienced planners and with a considerable saving on the number of vehicles required.

Albert.nl: “Such a step is of course **very exciting** and appears to be **no problem.**”

Planning is critical

Whoever enters the Albert.nl premises will understand straightaway why planning is one of the most important aspects of the business process. Tens of vans are ready to deliver their goods in the Randstad and further a field. Behind these are the enormous warehouses full of purchases neatly sorted onto shelves. The order pickers go in between these filling up their folding boxes while each product packed is registered by scanning. Ilse ter Burg, Supply Manager says, “The vehicles cannot be dispatched until all boxes have been loaded in the correct order. However, the order pickers cannot start until they know which customers are to be supplied via which route.” The planning must therefore be established well in advance.

Albert.nl is a young company and has grown enormously in its short existence. More and more householders and business customers under pressure are discovering the ease of ordering their shopping at home and having it delivered to their doorsteps. The result was that planning started to take up more and more time with more focus from Team Leaders being placed on planning according

albert.

- 65 vehicles
- 2 planning operations per day
- Orders via Internet
- Deliveries to private persons and businesses
- Fully automated (black-box) planning
- Between 11 and 14 stops per route



to Operational Manager Alex Grootveld. The knowledge was locked in the heads of the Team Leaders making it difficult to attract and train new Team Leaders. Grootveld says, “Planning was transformed from an additional task to a main task. With the arrival of SHORTREC, Team Leaders can again focus on the tasks requesting their specific consideration.”

Albert.nl has two distribution centers in the Netherlands and four transshipment facilities. The vans make their way to the customers and the larger trucks head for the transshipment facilities. Following transshipment in these hubs, vans are also dispatched from here towards the customers. The old planning situation used postcode cards. The Team Leaders allocated various customers to different vehicles based on these cards and their knowledge and experience and decided which vehicles leave from which location. The routes are then “fine tuned”.

Savings

The Management of Albert.nl decided this was no longer possible. Project Manager Antoine Doppenberg says, "There is too great a risk of delay in the planning process because you are dependent on human actions. We cannot allow situations whereby the delivery drivers are ready to leave without the planning being ready." As well as arranging reliable planning, Albert.nl had the idea that big savings were to be made with good planning. "We have always planned for 11 stops per route since the business was founded in 2001. With the growth in the number of customers, we believe it must be possible to supply more customers with one vehicle."



Albert.nl meanwhile delivers to more than 14 customers per route using the new planning. Ter Burg says, "We have also started working with variable delivery costs in order to achieve this. It is however, beyond dispute that SHORTREC has contributed a great deal to this improvement." Grootveld adds it is now possible to meet the customers' wishes with the SHORTREC flexible planning method. "We can now arrange the time frames for deliveries completely according to our own insight without having to worry about this being too complicated for the planners."

Black box planning

Because production starts at 06.00 and depends on the planning, the planning has to be ready before then.

Customers, however, can place their orders for the next day up to midnight. This means the planners have to be at work for at least 05.00. Bearing in mind this time is extremely short and starting earlier is no attractive option, Albert.nl set yet another step in the planning process: the so-called black-box planning. The planning is now carried out fully automatically, in the middle of the night if required. The orders, vehicles, delivery drivers, and depots are analyzed via the back-office system, SHORTREC arranges the planning, and these details are returned to the back-office system without a planner being required. Doppenberg says, "Such a step is of course very exciting but presents no problem."

Pleasant cooperation

It was a requirement of Albert Heijn when acquiring a planning system that integration of a self-designed planning system must be possible. Albert Heijn therefore concluded a framework agreement for all its businesses with ORTEC in 2004. Albert.nl was quick to make its choice. Doppenberg says, "It is of course, financially attractive to continue with Albert Heijn but it is also important that we already had good experiences with ORTEC. We know each other and that works well."

Alex Grootveld summarizes the process once more: "All in all, the implementation process went extremely quickly and I can say that this has been one of the most successful improvement projects of Albert.nl. We were able to make dramatic improvements in productivity and also deploy our workers more effectively". Ilse ter Burg refers in particular to stability. "The system did not just materialize from thin air, which is very special for such a big project."

More information

Would you like to know what SHORTREC can do for your organization? Please contact one of our professionals for a non-binding appointment. They will be pleased to introduce you to our advanced planning software and related services.

www.ortec.com

United States
+1 (678) 392 3100

Deutschland
+49 (0) 4431 7377 0

Nederland
+31 (0)182 540 500

België/Belgique
+32 (0)16 244 220

France
+33 (0)1 44 25 05 25

International
+31 (0)182 540 500