



CASE STUDY

# Seamless by Design: Zeeman's Distribution Transformation

Textile discounter improves delivery quality and reduces supply chain costs with Manhattan Active® Warehouse Management



# ZEEMAN

## The Company

Zeeman is one of Europe's largest textile discounters, with over 1,400 stores across eight countries, all supplied from its distribution centre in Alphen aan den Rijn, the Netherlands. The company's mission is best captured by the Dutch word "zuinig", which means both cost-conscious and caring. That ethos also extends to the supply chain, which is designed to deliver products from factory to store at the lowest possible cost, with consideration for people and the planet.

The implementation of Manhattan Active Warehouse Management was carried out successfully in July 2023. The subsequent commissioning of all systems the following year, spanning both software and hardware, was a significant and highly complex project. While it brought a range of operational and technical challenges, overcoming these has equipped Zeeman with a more resilient and future-ready supply chain foundation. Now, one year into their transformation journey, Zeeman's distribution operations have seen a significant performance uplift. The results include improved delivery accuracy, enhanced inventory precision, and greater overall operational efficiency. Equally important, the new warehouse management system has provided Zeeman with deeper insight into, and increased control over, its logistics processes.





# The Challenge: Modernising the Distribution Process

Zeeman's distribution centre was in urgent need of modernisation. Its equipment was nearing end-of-life, and the outdated custom software could no longer meet the rapidly evolving demands of the market. Zeeman sought an integrated solution that would enable fast and efficient distribution of new products to stores, while ensuring timely and accurate replenishment of never-out-of-stock items. The solution also needed to support a more granular distribution process.

The company was looking for a scalable, future-proof warehouse management system (WMS) capable of supporting both manual and automated processes. A key implementation challenge was maintaining uninterrupted distribution operations throughout the transition.







“Around 80% of our goods arrive by sea freight. Once containers are unloaded, most of the uniform boxes of clothing are shipped directly to stores with minimal handling. With the new setup, we can operate a more granular distribution model, optimising store-level stock and better serving our customers.”

– Bas Hoekstra, Supply Chain Director at Zeeman





# The Solution: Manhattan Active Warehouse Management

As Zeeman invests heavily in automation, the new WMS had to integrate seamlessly with a wide range of hardware and software systems. Given the company's unconventional logistics model, the WMS also had to allow for tailored logic to match operational practices. Other key selection criteria included functional depth, real-time visibility, platform stability, and open architecture.

With Manhattan, Zeeman not only implemented a new WMS but also gained a strategic partner. Throughout the project, Manhattan contributed deep supply chain and high-volume retail expertise, along with the technical knowledge required to address Zeeman's unique operational challenges.







“Manhattan Active WM is now one of our core systems. We aim to align our entire IT landscape around these core applications, making full use of their capabilities now and into the future. Being a cloud-native solution, we benefit from continuous updates without downtime. Its microservices architecture lets us deploy new features immediately.”

– Barry van der Groep, IT Director at Zeeman





# From Theory to Practice: Teamwork in Action

The distribution centre was almost entirely redesigned. At its heart is a shuttle system that stores goods destined for stores. Orders are picked using pick-to-light, with shipping boxes temporarily stored in the shuttle system. When lorries are ready to depart, boxes are moved to workstations and stacked on roll cages using carefully designed patterns. Manhattan Active WM orchestrates the entire process from start to finish, ensuring timely store deliveries.

“Due to the project’s complexity, we took a phased approach, running the legacy system alongside the new WMS for a time. With Manhattan’s support, we assessed the right moments to progress to each new phase. Every time, the Manhattan team was there to take the next step with us. A real demonstration of teamwork.”

– Jonatan van der Geest  
Product Owner Supply Chain at Zeeman





## The Result: Greater Insight and Control

The new process has significantly improved store replenishment quality, leading to better product availability and higher in-store sales. The distribution centre can now handle more volume, inventory accuracy has increased and efficiency has risen. With greater process predictability, Zeeman now has much more control over its operations.

“The solution gave us exactly what we needed: scalability, control, and integration power. The entire process is now measurable. Thanks to real-time dashboards, we have a much clearer view of operational performance and can better manage productivity.”

– Alexander Sinigaglia, Senior Project Manager at Zeeman





# The Future: Continued Growth and Optimisation

Modernising the distribution centre is part of a broader digital transformation, involving a complete refresh of the IT landscape and full digitisation and automation of all processes. The aim is to lower costs and support future growth, with complete supply chain alignment, from suppliers in Asia to stores across Europe. Manhattan remains a key partner, with regular strategy sessions between both teams to plan for the future.

“In our pursuit of supply chain excellence, we’re expanding from inside the distribution centre outward. Manhattan’s labour management solution can help us maximise workforce productivity. And with our growth plans and limited space, we’re also looking closely at yard management.”

– Bas Hoekstra



“Choosing Manhattan meant choosing a strategic partner with a promising future. We see a huge potential for Zeeman in leveraging Manhattan’s innovation in Agentic AI moving forward.”

– Barry van der Groep





## About Zeeman

Zeeman opened its first store in 1967 and has since become the go-to shop for high-quality, responsibly produced basics and textiles for the whole family. Its range includes baby and children's clothing, home textiles, socks, underwear and nightwear — always at the lowest possible price. Today, Zeeman serves 70 million customers annually across nearly 1,400 stores in eight countries.

Zeeman keeps prices low through a remarkably simple business model and by being '*zuinig*' — not just for those on a budget, but also for conscious shoppers. For over a decade, the company has published an annual report detailing its progress and challenges in sustainable and responsible business. Zeeman is the top-ranked retailer in the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate's Transparency Benchmark.

[Zeeman.com](https://www.zeeman.com)