

Zeelandia Elevates Global Baking Supply Efficiency with Zebra Scanners for Swift and Reliable Deliveries, and reduces maintenance costs

Zebra worked with Dutch bakery supply company Zeelandia to build a scanning solution that could expedite the shipping of products to offset challenging macroeconomic conditions.

Headquartered in Zierikzee, Netherlands, Koninklijke Zeelandia Groep B.V., commonly known as Zeelandia, is a leading bakery solutions provider. Renowned as a comprehensive provider, Zeelandia caters to industrial bakeries and small-to mid-sized bakery businesses throughout the Netherlands. Beyond domestic operations, the company has a global footprint, with a presence in over 50 countries worldwide.

Zeelandia's goal is to help its customers optimise their baking processes to maintain high output without compromising quality. Zeelandia achieves this goal through a diverse product offering ranging from flour to bread transport crates. In Zierikzee alone, Zeelandia has approximately 430 employees at the end of 2023, with 200 dedicated to technical development, testing, product performance and customer satisfaction.

Zeelandia puts its customers first and as one of the largest companies of its kind, operating at this level consistently requires advanced technology solutions. This is especially true considering many of Zeelandia's clients are suppliers to Dutch supermarket chains like Albert Heijn and Jumbo. Ultimately, Zeelandia's mission is to be the leading preferred supplier by distance and to continue offering the best quality, price and service to sustain a competitive edge.

"We may have started in 1900 but today we're a business that's as reliant on technology as our customers are on us," says Toon Meirink, Maintenance Engineer E/I at Zeelandia. "As we've grown, technology has featured increasingly in how we operate our business. And in times like these, where prices are high and disruption is growing, the competitive edge that technology offers us is hard to overstate."

SUMMARY



Customer

Zeelandia
Zierikzee, Netherland



Partner

Bout Solutions
Kruiningen, Netherlands

Industry

Warehouse and Distribution

Challenge

Zeelandia was in search of a solution to improve its scanning capabilities. It needed ways to accurately package and ship their baking supplies to their global suppliers, while reducing maintenance costs, and scanning was their first step to achieving the goal.

Solution

- Zebra FS40 scanner affixed to reach trucks, powered by Aurora software

Results

- Vastly reduced maintenance costs and increased reach truck operations
- Reduced stress and workload for employees
- Increased customer loyalty
- Improved warehouse operations and packing operations
- Increased shipment quantity and quality

Zeelandia has long prioritised automation in both planning and production. As the output has increased, so too has the need for technology capable of seamlessly supporting the automation efforts that are streamlining its vast operations

Consistency and Clarity for Smoother Forklift Operations

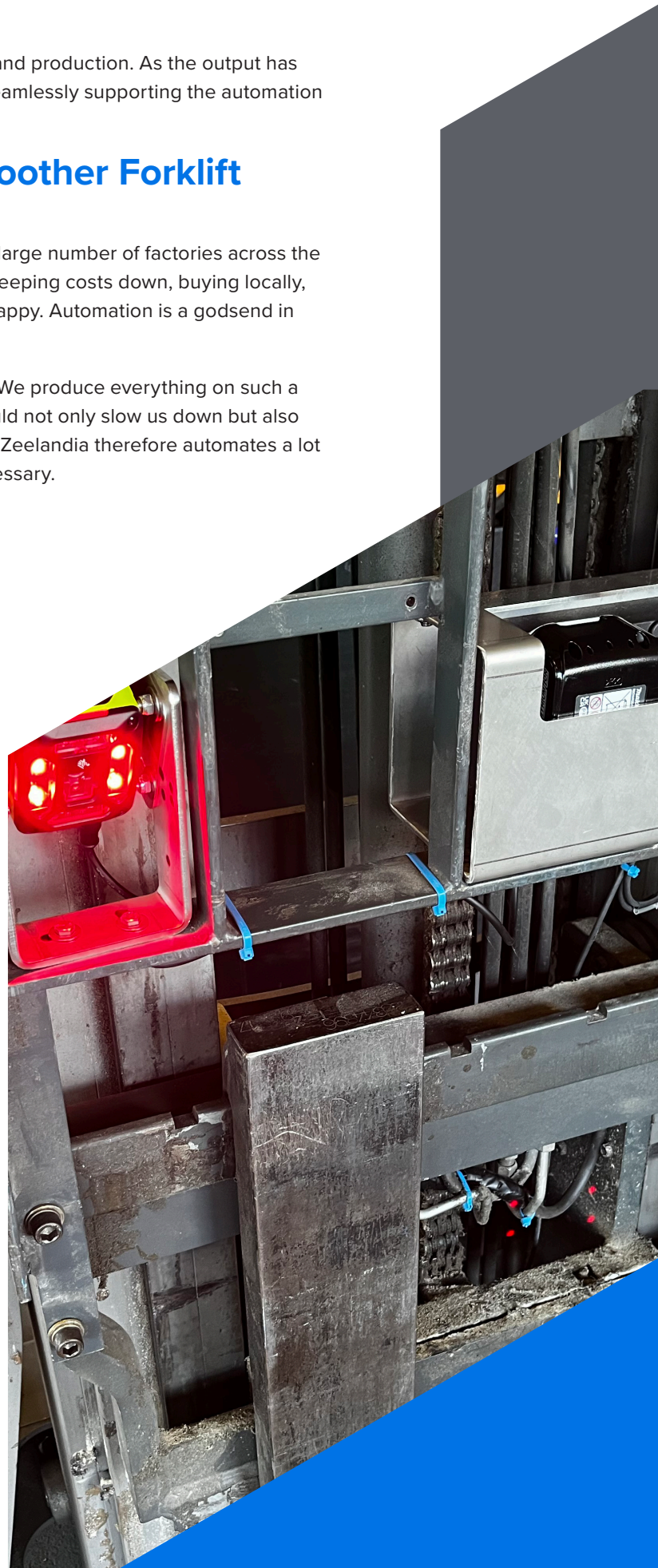
“We operate all over Europe,” explains Meirink. “We have a large number of factories across the continent, so we need to strike a careful balance between keeping costs down, buying locally, supporting local communities and keeping our customers happy. Automation is a godsend in that regard.”

“Automation lends itself well to what we do,” says Meirink. “We produce everything on such a massive scale that relying too heavily on manual labour would not only slow us down but also be deeply unrewarding for the people stuck with the work.” Zeelandia therefore automates a lot of its production lines, but human involvement remains necessary.

Forklifts especially feature heavily in Zeelandia’s operations – but how can you automate what they do? Zeelandia achieves this using Zebra’s FS40 Fixed Industrial Scanners. But it wasn’t always that way.

“Products are made at the production site and then shipped to the distribution center,” Meirink explains. “It’s in that center where we distribute everything globally and where we repackage goods. When the products arrive at the distribution center on pallet carts, scanners affixed to forklifts scan them. The reach truck driver is then informed by the logistics system where to place the pallet in the warehouse.” Zeelandia’s previous scanner solution for this, while innovative, wasn’t the right fit.

“The scanners affixed to our forklifts before Zebra were wired and were therefore prone to breakage,” Meirink adds. “When a reach truck’s scanner could no longer be used, the reach truck driver had to scan manually again as a result.. While replacing a cable could cost upwards of €1,800, replacing an old scanner - about €3,500 - was a bigger expense. The cost of manual scanning is difficult to determine but mainly results in time loss..”





And to make matters worse, each forklift fitted with the previous solution required repair three to four times a year. With a total cost of about €20,000 a year. “What we had before wasn’t sustainable,” explains Meirink. “So we set out to find a new solution.”

Meirink goes into the new solution in more detail. “We have a scanning portal which scans everything on the pallet and weighs it to ensure weight is consistent with what is being scanned. Subsequently, a barcode sticker is attached to the pallet, which is later read by a Zebra FS40. Afterward, all the pallet data is linked to the scanned barcode.

Through this barcode the reach truck driver knows where the pallet needs to be stored in the warehouse, with their terminal indicating the correct location. For outbound operations, it works the other way around: the terminal specifies where the pallet needs to be retrieved. There, the reach truck driver scans the barcode, automatically verifying whether it is the correct pallet. Subsequently, it is prepared for further transportation.

Key to the new solution is that it’s wireless. “The scanners are fitted with a wireless receiver that transfers data to another receiver at the base of the forklift mast, eliminating the need for frail cables,” Meirink explains. “Bout Solutions provided the receivers and together with Zebra, built this solution for us.” Bout Solutions is a Zebra Registered Reseller Industrial Automation Partner. “The entire thing is powered by Aurora software,” explains Meirink. Aurora is a Zebra automation software particularly useful in use cases like this.

Helping Bakers Be Their Best

“Our previous scanners regularly broke down,” says Meirink. “Every time we wanted to make small changes to our reach trucks or when a new reach truck was added, we had to replace everything.. That was the biggest problem, that everything was wired. That’s why we chose the FS40 scanners from Zebra Technologies, because with the Bout retrofit they can be wireless and that’s a real advantage.”

We will save at least € 20,000 on an annual basis with this application.

What this means for the bottom line is less downtime and more consistent output for the bakeries that Zeelandia supplies to ensure operations don’t cease. Zeelandia’s engineers are benefiting from the new technology as they spend less time repairing forklifts and more time providing critical value in factories and warehouses.

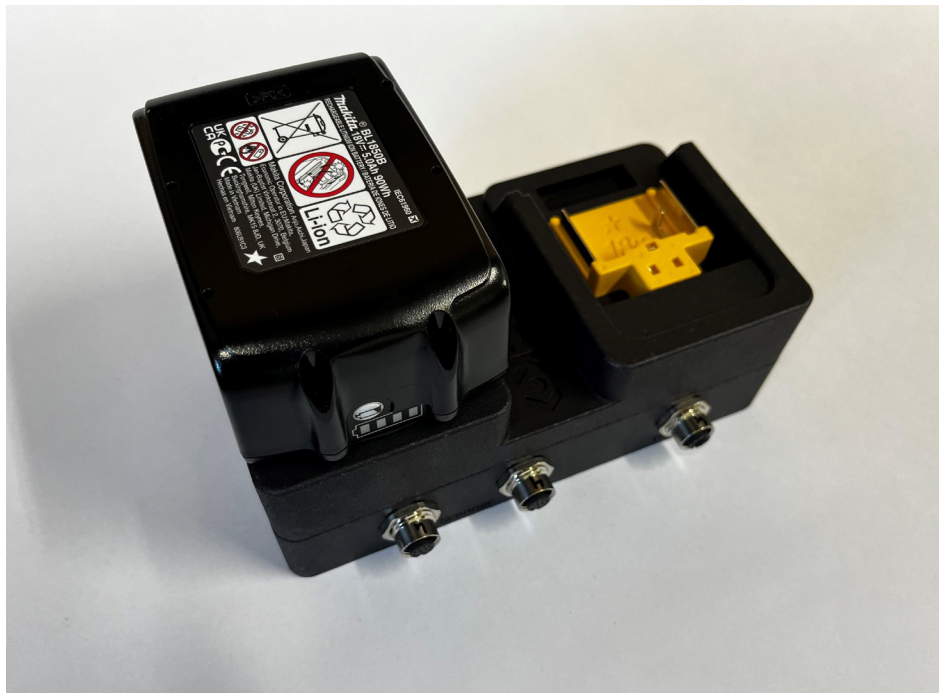
SUCCESS STORY
ZEELANDIA

In terms of mounting the scanners, considerable time is saved too – in the past, it took over eight hours to mount a scanner, but Zebra's scanners now only require two hours for set up.

The real gain is financial, though. "We will save at least € 20,000 on an annual basis with this application," says Meirink.

To Meirink, the new solution delivers numerous long-term benefits too. "We are committed to our mission of being the preferred supplier for our customers," he concludes. "Zebra's solutions provide cost savings to achieve our mission. If we can operate more cost-effectively, we can pass on the benefits to the customer by offering lower charges. Cost savings are obviously based on a lot of factors like labour and material costs, but across the whole operation, Zebra Technologies has definitely contributed to that goal."

To learn more about Zeelandia visit www.zeelandia.nl



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