



French Connection

Consolidating operations in the dynamic world of fashion with French Connection UK

The Client

Since it was founded in 1972, French Connection UK has been at the forefront of the retail fashion industry. As well as the French Connection brand, the company also owns Nicole Fahri, Toast and Great Plains. French connection UK has a strong presence on the High Street and boast sales in excess of £240million per year.

The Challenge

- ◆ Following a period of rapid growth which began in the early 90s, French Connection UK had evolved into a complex business from a logistics perspective.
- ◆ Responding to change quickly can often result in separate solutions being put in place which solve short term issues, but which together do not necessarily form the most effective total operational mix for the longer term.
- ◆ In 2005, French Connection UK wanted to consolidate the existing UK warehousing operations in three separate locations into one purpose built building. The company issued a third party logistics invitation tender.
- ◆ Having demonstrated competitive pricing, excellent service standards, an understanding of the French Connection UK logistics requirements and an ability to add value: TDG successfully won the tender and began working with French Connection UK to create an effective solution.

The Solution/Benefits

- ◆ TDG and French Connection UK jointly sourced a suitable site at Thurrock, just inside the perimeter of the M25 with easy access into London and with good motorway connections to the rest of the UK.
- ◆ The 150,000 square feet of warehousing provides ample accommodation for the French Connection UK retail, wholesale and returns warehouses relocated from Hayes in Middlesex and two other locations in the East End of London.
- ◆ The majority of staff working in the old sites were transferred (via TUPE regulations) to TDG at the new location.
- ◆ The team now comprises 73 permanent staff, plus agency workers who are brought in by TDG to assist during peak periods.
- ◆ By involving staff in that process of change, it has proved possible to create new working practices which deliver efficiency and productivity benefits for French Connection UK.
- ◆ The three available floors are divided into retail, wholesale and hanging space as well as a separate office space to house the administration and management team.
- ◆ Warehouse staff use hand held scanners for fast and efficient picking of stock to top up stores and customer stock around the UK.
- ◆ Any stock sold on a particular day is replenished in store within two to three days – the in store French Connection UK epos system automatically transmits requirements overnight into the TDG warehouse, prompting an order.
- ◆ TDG maintains three vehicles on the Thurrock site to undertake daily deliveries to the 20 stores within the M25 area.



"We have been very pleased with the consolidation of our operations carried out in a very short time frame by TDG. Undertaking operational change on the scale we have done is bound to create some issues, however TDG have succeeded in finding and adopting workable solutions without any adverse effect on our in store activity."

Steve Prangnell, Head of Logistics, French Connection UK