



Descartes connects people and technology in logistics

The Canadian company Descartes presents itself as the worldwide leader in software systems and network services for the logistics sector. The Dutch market is served from the office in Amersfoort. Fred van der Heide, Vice President of Product Strategy within the company, talks about the binding force of Descartes.

Text
Descartes

Photography
Michel ter Wolbeek

Global and Local

“We call our strategy ‘Global and Local’. Our customers work in global supply chains where we connect with our services and products. But we do so in a way that does justice to regional characteristics”, says Fred. “The situation is in fact different everywhere. With local presence of our company and our partners, we have in recent years achieved tremendous growth.”

Growth through acquisitions

Fred explains how Descartes has

grown. “Through acquisitions. You can not grow so fast in a few years time and at the same time serve your customers well without acquisitions. Each acquisition adds a bit of expertise with the aim to provide clients the total ICT picture. Logistics is an ‘empirical art’, the art of looking and renewing. We mainly buy experience, people who use their experience to create solutions for the customer.” Descartes has significantly expanded its product and service portfolio through the acquisitions. There are companies added with expertise in the field of customs clearance

at ports, route planning and fleet management, transportation management and B2B messaging.

No logistics without a network

In the logistics sector a network is more important than in any other sector. The more companies can connect to each other the better. That is the core of the ‘cloud based’ ICT platform Global Logistics Network (GLN). “Within logistics, many people need to communicate with each other and that is not always based on structured data. It is our goal to bring parties together through the network,

so companies and employees can exchange information in a standardized way. It does not matter whether it's about carriers from Eastern Europe or suppliers in Asia. To achieve this, we offer our customers solutions in various service areas", says Fred.

Service areas

Descartes distinguishes multiple service areas. The first is *Routing, Mobile & Telematics* with the aim to optimize the fleet of companies. The solutions in this area support the entire process of route planning, implementation of routes, including e-fulfillment, and performance measurement of drivers and vehicles. Through a combination of optimized route planning, GPS tracking, mobile devices and applications, and performance analysis of vehicle and driver, companies gain complete control over these activities. The goal is to deploy vehicles and mobile resources more efficiently, to provide new or improved services and to comply with government regulations.

Customs & Regulatory Compliance is the second service area. Whether by air, road or sea transport, Descartes solutions for customs clearance and regulatory compliance ensures smooth transportation of goods across borders. This service area helps to bridge the information gap between trading partners and regulatory bodies in order to make safety checks, customs declarations and regulatory compliance more efficient. The solutions are based on more than 30 years of experience of Descartes, technological innovations and extensive cooperation with the logistics industry.

The basis for the exchange of electronic information falls under *Network Services*, the third service area. Global Logistics Network (GLN) provides multimodal exchange of electronic data



and documents between companies. In the development of the GLN, various logistics activities were taken into account. The management of data, the delivery of messages as the ability to work with wireless technologies are unique. The Descartes GLN offers companies the flexibility to work together with other parties in their own way. A continually growing community (over 173,000 organizations in more than 160 countries) increasingly make use of this Descartes platform.

The fourth and final service area *Transportation Management* is about effective management and admini-

nistration of the transport process. It does not matter whether the supply chain of a company is international or local, effectively managing and controlling the transport process is essential in reducing complexity and costs and in improving control.

The power of connecting

"ICT is at its base about zeros and ones' but the power of Descartes is in the practical application of the binary numbers to connect people", says Fred in conclusion.

Descartes in numbers:

Turnover approximately 150 million Euro of which 45% in Europe
 Number of Worldwide trade relations connected through the ICT platform: 173.000
 Number of exchanged messages in terms of order-to-pay, transport- and distribution data: 4,5 billion
 Number of exchanged fiscal and safety messages: 70 million
 Numbers of employees in Europe: over 250
 Number of take-overs since 2010: 7 in 5 countries

Descartes Systems Group
 Uraniumweg 44
 3812 RK Amersfoort (NL)
 +31 (0)33 460 6270
 Duwijkstraat 17
 2500 Lier (BE)
 info@descartes.com
 www.descartes.com