

Interview: Floris Van Haselen – Business Development Director Europe, O&M Movianto, The Netherlands



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Floris Van Haselen, Business Development Director Europe for O&M Movianto,

one of the rare logistics companies to be fully specialized and to only operate in the healthcare sector, explains how the company wants to help its customers bring their products closer to the –Point of Care– thanks to its flexibility and expertise.

With a medical background in pharmaceuticals and after eight years as pharmaceuticals manager in the Netherlands, you decided to join Movianto. What potential did you identify in the healthcare logistics sector that motivated you to join this industry?

I indeed worked for eight years at Mediq, which was at that time the market leader in the pharmacy retail sector. I really enjoyed this experience, as it truly provided me with a deep understanding of how the healthcare system functions, by dealing with patients of course, but also hospitals and doctors, healthcare insurers and the manufacturers. Obviously, as pharmacy manager, having an efficient supply chain is obviously crucial. Doing some strategic projects for Mediq in Poland and Belgium, I then started to be increasingly more interested by the business side of healthcare, while I realized how important logistics were to treat patients and to ensure they receive the requested care. Finally, by joining the logistic industry, I understood that I could have an impact on a larger number of Dutch consumers and patients than as pharmacy manager, but also in the 150 countries we are able to deliver drugs from our Dutch distribution center.

By reputation, I knew Celesio, the former owner of Movianto, which was a company that really attracted me. Joining Movianto in 2010, I was then particularly enthusiastic about the opportunity to start the Dutch affiliate from scratch and to put it on the right tracks. We have been quite successful so far in this regard, as on the Dutch market, we are now among the top 3 players both at the distribution and warehouse sides of the business!

At European level, Movianto deals with more than 600 healthcare industry clients. Which companies are your main partners in the Netherlands?

Firstly, Movianto is one of the rare logistics companies to be fully specialized and to only operate in the healthcare sector. We also deal with the entire healthcare chain as our partners are pharmaceutical, biotech and medical device companies. Given the ongoing consolidation of the healthcare sector, many of our clients are present in at least two of these sub-sectors, so it is really important to have the flexibility to operate with different types of products. In the Netherlands, six of the top ten pharmaceutical companies are already partnering with us, and at a European level we have business partnerships with probably at least 60 percent of the top 50 healthcare companies.

As it is one of the two European Distribution Centers of Movianto, we probably deal in the Netherlands with more high-value products, because companies usually centralize their supply chain management for the more expensive products, while lower-price products are more often stored closer to the market to save on transportation costs. Finally, when a company decides to settle its European Distribution hub in our facility, it obviously reveals a strategic importance both for us and for our client, as all the deliveries of this company throughout the whole continent will rely on our expertise!

We decided to settle our distribution center in the Netherlands for very natural reasons: first, the country stands as a historical gateway to Europe, both in terms of imports and exports. Furthermore, the favorable tax system, and the polyglot working force, and the extremely good quality of infrastructure available in the country all counted significantly toward the decision to settle the European hub in the Netherlands.

Finally, as capacity is never an issue, we have built our Dutch Distribution Center in a very flexible way that will allow us to welcome new customers' merchandise with a great serenity in the upcoming years, and we will continue to target biotech, pharma, and medical device companies that want to turn their supply chain into a competitive advantage with the same interest.

Since 2012, Movianto has been part of US-based Owens & Minor Inc., a leading distributor of name-brand medical supplies and a healthcare supply chain management company. How has this acquisition helped move Movianto forward and how will it help in the future?

Celesio, the former parent company of Movianto, indeed took the strategic decision in 2012 to focus on retail and wholesale. Joining the Owens & Minor group has so far been a true win-win relationship. For Owens & Minor, the acquisition gave them the opportunity to deepen their presence on the European continent and thus become a more global company. For Movianto, being part of Owens & Minor clearly provided us with a deeper understanding of the medical devices business, which also represents an important part of the products we handle. We also learned from the US perspective to offer our distribution model to come closer to the "Point of Care". Finally, thanks to Owens & Minor's expertise, we are also currently broadening our service offering and expertise, with for instance our Clinical & Procedural Solutions for hospitals. We foresee the outsourcing trend of non-core services gaining in importance in the upcoming years.

Outsourcing healthcare remains a quite recent trend, but Movianto already offers a broad range of products and solutions (warehousing, transportation, cold chain logistics as well as (re-)packaging and (re-)labeling) to all healthcare subcategories). Do you perceive an increasing demand from your costumers for more comprehensive partnerships?

The healthcare industry is risk-adverse and, considering the enormous amount of regulations that healthcare products have to comply with, this trend will probably gain in importance in the upcoming years. We see that the volume transiting through our facilities is increasing month after month and

year after year, driven by the ageing population and the new and more complex healthcare solutions. We believe this will only accelerate in the in future. Furthermore, the frequent cost-efficiency measures coming in force in Western European countries forcing healthcare in general and the healthcare companies in particular to find new ways to preserve their benefits and margins, and outsourcing their supply chain – a partnership that goes far beyond a simple distribution agreement- is probably among the most obvious solutions to realize important savings.

We are a specialized healthcare logistics company, and we gather more expertise and experience in this field than pharmaceutical or medical device companies, which are by nature more focused on product discovery and selling. Secondly, our international presence provides us with more potential to identify and implement best practices that can arise anywhere in Europe, and help our clients benefit from innovative and state-of-the-art supply chain techniques. We take care to respect all specificities of every client and of their products and we are always very cautious in the way we implement our solutions, but stepping in as an independent service provider also helps us to identify weaknesses and room for improvement within the supply chain of our clients.

Logistics is also an innovative industry, and we notice that our clients often neglect to renew their supply chain management. Being a specialist entirely focused on this part of the value chain ensures that our partners benefit from modern and efficient logistic processes, and significantly increase savings that can be reinvested in their core competencies.

Besides saving in buildings, work-force and cash flow, an optimized supply chain management is also a strategic approach for a healthcare company to strengthen its business model and to increase its market share by avoiding shortage, bringing products to the right place faster, and bringing them closer to the point of care. In the meantime, our clients would like to decrease the number of their suppliers, as many of our partners often deal with more than 20 different logistics companies – only for Europe! To remain competitive we will have to broaden our service offering to propose more comprehensive partnerships to our partners while geographically extending our distribution network.

Global multi-disciplinary players like DHL, UPS and DB Schenker are massively investing in healthcare. What are the key assets you are currently focusing on to differentiate Movianto from your competitors in the healthcare market?

First of all, we are a logistics company specialized in healthcare, with experts with decades of healthcare logistics experience at every management position. We perfectly know the European market, with all its different regulations that could apply to the thousands of different products that already transit through our network. Furthermore, we are extremely flexible in the way we cope with our clients’ requirements, and we thus have the ability to more quickly meet their needs at any level of the value chain.

Movianto is a very ambitious and fast-growing company within a booming industry. Where will we find the company in five years?

In five years, we will continue to deepen our network while coming always closer, faster, and more efficiently to the –point of care.– We want to become the preferred partner of the healthcare industry in the Netherlands, but also throughout Europe, in order to help our business partners thrive within the healthcare market and its ever-changing regulations.

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