

News Release

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## **Homebase Uses MaxLoad Pro from AutoLogic for Festive Stock Load Planning**

Homebase, part of Home Retail Group plc, has been using MaxLoad Pro software from AutoLogic Systems for their load planning of festive stock.

Homebase has over 300 large out of town stores selling over 30,000 products.

The software has been used as part of an initiative to deliver festive stock, such as trees and decorations, direct to all stores in time for a universal launch and in a consistent shelf display sequence for ease of store handling.

The process bypasses the Homebase distribution centres, with delivery direct to the stores from a consolidation centre in Southern China.

Philip Mann, direct import operations manager at Homebase explains why they chose MaxLoad Pro:

“This initiative has grown to be both a complex but effective means of getting goods to stores for launch and bypassing our distribution centres at the very busiest time of the year for them. MaxLoad Pro has been fundamental in helping us to manage large amounts of product data for load planning and keeping to tight timescales.”

Homebase has over 300 Christmas articles in preordered quantities that have to be planned according to 13 particular range groupings keeping like items together such as trees, lights, floristry etc. This has to be completed in 3 different combinations for small, medium and large stores. The different ranges have to be placed in the order that they will be located in the store and display shelving.

Christina Kelly from the Homebase direct import team describes the process in more detail: “For bulky items we use pallets and for the smaller products, pallet boxes. MaxLoad Pro enables us to choose the most suitable option. The goal is to keep like articles together and to use the minimum number of pallets and pallet boxes, but still maintaining the correct order.

“There was a large number of SKU’s to be uploaded as all articles are recreated each year. However, AutoLogic wrote an adapter to allow us to download the lists to the software directly from our own spreadsheets. This adapter also enabled the build of pallets according to a selected range of products, with a ‘cut list’ of unplanned items which could be added to the next grouping.

“The MaxLoad Pro step-by-step loading plans guide the consolidation centre on how to pick and pack a large number of SKU’s and how to plan the operation accordingly. It gives us an accurate estimate of how many pallet boxes to purchase and an indication of the number of pallets and boxes each store requires.

“From this we can plan the best container fill and how the outbound volumes need to be staggered. It also allowed us to plan how store deliveries could be paired up and thereby produce a more cost effective delivery schedule.”

Philip concludes: “All of these operations need to take place. If we had to wait for the actual physical builds to commence in the consolidation centre, we would encounter high risk to the shipping process and timelines may have been broken. This would affect space and equipment forecasts at origin.

“MaxLoad Pro allows us to review our options and plan our deliveries in good time to assist the consolidation building. The results we achieved in terms of pallet box utilisation could not be bettered, even by an experienced consolidation team.”

For more information on AutoLogic Systems visit [www.autologic-systems.co.uk](http://www.autologic-systems.co.uk) or call 01844 281380.

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#### About Homebase

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Homebase is the UK's second largest home improvement retailer and is recognised for choice, style and customer service across the wider home enhancement market. It has more than 300 large, out-of-town stores throughout the UK and Republic of Ireland. In the last financial year, Homebase sales were £1.5 billion and it employed some 20,000 people across the business.

Homebase sells over 30,000 products across its home enhancement ranges, and has a growing Internet offering. Homebase serves 60 million customers per year through its stores and offers customers the convenience of home delivery for bulky, high-value items.

Homebase was the first UK DIY retailer to achieve Forest Stewardship Council Chain of Custody certification and the first national DIY retailer to be recognised with a Government TrustMark Award, achieved for its kitchen installation service.

Homebase is part of Home Retail Group, the UK's leading home and general merchandise retailer.

#### About AutoLogic Systems Ltd

Founded in 1993, AutoLogic Systems Ltd provides specialist software for all stages of the supply chain including: optimisation of pallet, case and package design; container & vehicle load planning; manufacturing and warehouse simulation; optimisation of process variables; and vehicle scheduling and tracking.

Our software helps: manufacturers; warehouse management; fleet and transport managers; large retailers; freight and cargo handling companies; systems integrators; materials handling equipment providers and airport baggage systems reduce waste, minimise risk and improve the efficiency of their supply chain.