

20TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

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**E-COMMERCE
LOGISTICS**
Key Questions Answered

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PLUS

**8 PAGES OF NEW FORKLIFTS • SUPPLY CHAIN THEFT • ASSET FINANCE
ENERGY-SAVING CONVEYORS • AUTOMATED PACKAGING SYSTEMS**

Pocket Sorter

A pocket sortation solution is delivering the goods for a leading German sports retailer.

Global logistics provider, Fiege, has 160 sites in 15 countries across Europe and the Far East. With 2.7 million square metres of warehousing and logistics space, the group is one of the ten most powerful 3PLs in Europe. At its distribution centre in Erfurt, Germany, the company provides fulfilment services for SportScheck, Germany's leading sports retailer by revenue.

Multi-channel distribution

SportScheck is a multi-channel business, achieving its net turnover of 319 million Euros in 2015-16 through a combination of catalogue mail order, 23 stores in Germany and internet sales to the German, Austrian and Swiss markets. Marketing more than 35,000 products of sports equipment, clothing and accessories from over 500 brands – including Adidas, Salomon, Nike, Puma, Asics, Bench, Garmin and Reebok – SportScheck has been in business for 70 years.

RFID technology

The Erfurt facility has 40,000m² of floor space and features three levels kitted out with the overhead sortation technology of Dürkopp Fördertechnik, a member of the KNAPP group. Dürkopp Fördertechnik pioneered pocket sortation technology and over 1.75 million pockets have been sold by the KNAPP group to date. The system

easily handles the performance peaks of SportScheck's seasonal business. The pockets are connected to a rail system via a 'rolladapter' that the pocket hangs from, which features an RFID transponder. The pockets are manually filled at seven loading stations, where warehouse staff push the goods over a scanning area and into the pocket. From this point on, the goods can be identified in the system at any time through RFID.

3-step matrix sortation

The heart of the Pocket Sorter solution is the sortation that sequences the individual pockets, sorting them into the precise order required by the packing stations. The solution uses a three-step matrix sortation process based on a mathematical algorithm. The solution is scalable, with up to 7000 units being sorted per hour, per module. Each pocket can carry up to 3kg and accommodates goods up to 500x380x150mm in size, making the solution suitable for a very wide range of products.

Returns given priority

As in any e-commerce operation, there are significant numbers of returned goods. After being checked, returns are given top priority to leave the warehouse again. New goods and returns are loaded into the Pocket Sorter system in separate areas, with



Warehouse operators push goods over a scanning area and into the pocket.

returns then stored in a dynamic buffer to minimise the picking time. New goods are only moved out of the stationary storage area to the Pocket Sorter system when requested.

Ergonomic packing stations

At Erfurt, the Pocket Sorter system feeds orders to 35 packing stations – 23 for the direct-to-customer business and 12 for store replenishment. Like the loading stations, the dispatch stations are ergonomically designed, taking into account the various processes that need to be performed by the warehouse staff. E-commerce and catalogue customers receive their orders in cartons, whereas goods for the stores are delivered in roll cages.

www.knapp.com



Each pocket is fitted with an RFID transponder so goods can be identified at any time.



Using a 3-step matrix sortation process, the pockets are sequenced for the packing stations.