

Fressnapf installs EPG Workforce Management Software

Develop potential with transparent workforce management

Efficient workforce management is essential in logistics to handle requirements that have become more and more complex over the years in the face of constantly increasing downward pressure on costs. Demand-driven workforce management is increasingly important in this context. Especially in areas such as warehouse logistics, which are often still very labor-intensive, the demand for software-supported solutions for the demand-driven planning, control and optimization of workforce deployment is increasing. And the Fressnapf Group is no exception. To deploy the workforce from 15 departments in three logistics centers as efficiently as possible, the European market leader for pet food and accessories is testing EPG's LFS.wfm workforce management software.

Workforce management, particularly in the era of Logistics 4.0, is becoming more and more demanding. Logistics companies have to meet increasingly complex delivery specifications and be able to react quickly to changes in general conditions with the workforce available. This means deploying the right employees with the required qualifications to the right place at the right time. To react effectively and get a high degree of planning certainty, deployment of the workforce has to be planned in advance with great precision. It must also be possible to react to developments in day-to-day operations as they unfold, which requires a long-term forecast of quantities and orders to be processed in a warehouse and the ability to identify short-term fluctuations in demand. To process demand to meet targets and results, workforce planners also have to know what employees with what skills and qualifications are available and when. These factors can then be coordinated as efficiently as possible within capacity planning. This also makes deviations between the two factors transparent, so that workforce planners can make changes for long-term planning, but also in particular for operational planning.

Goodbye intransparent workforce planning

Manual, department-based workforce planning, using Excel for example, cannot give you perfect results in an acceptable amount of time. Although you can certainly identify and determine fluctuations in demand at an early stage, changes arising from operations have to be integrated manually. Using Excel, it is also not possible to make statements about the best possible allocation of the workforce, as there is only partial transparency about the cross-team or cross-departmental workload of all logistics employees. This requires a workforce management (WFM) solution that is linked to the operational systems at the company and is constantly supplied with up-to-date information. Logistics companies that already use such a WFM solution already can identify discrepancies between forecast and actual status in real time and can therefore make workforce adjustments to planning, but also for operations. WFM software solutions, which are linked to operational software systems such as a warehouse management system, provide additional support for workforce planners by automatically identifying the process steps required for each order. This produces constantly up-to-date transparency for the workforce that needs to be allocated for operations from the crucial standpoint of deploying the right employees with the right qualifications at the right time in the right place.

Involving employees in the planning process, for example via apps, is also an important aspect. Given the increasing competition for qualified specialists, WFM should offer benefits to employees, such as the ability to communicate preferences for work scheduling. This can contribute to higher employee satisfaction and a stronger connection to the company. In addition to these options for employee involvement, WFM software in the future will also be about gradually increasing the accuracy of forecasts and making the basis of planning increasingly more reliable. Artificial intelligence (AI) will be used sooner or later to analyze historical data in the individual orders to forecast future requirements more accurately for medium and long-term planning.

Integrated solutions in the warehouse management system offer advantages

For a company to be able to use WFM software most effectively, the software must have good integration capabilities, so that the process information from the warehouse management system can be accessed. It therefore is good idea to rely on the expertise

of a WMS specialist, such as the Ehrhardt + Partner Group, in this field. You then get core expertise in warehouse logistics, plus the knowledge and experience of the specific challenging requirements in this field, flowing into the implementation of your workforce management in logistics. This is precisely what suppliers of simple, standalone WFM solutions often lack. The consequence is that there is a loss of time for the necessary transfer of know-how between customer and supplier and complex interfaces have to be developed for the specific project between the relevant software systems with the associated project risks. This end result is an increase in project costs.

Logistics companies that want to optimize their workforce management quickly and easily should deploy WFM software that is integrated into a WMS. Solutions from the WMS provider itself are most suitable, as its software suite provides the required transparency directly with it. Integrated WFM solutions have key advantages, as they deliver long-term workforce management as well as operational human resource management based on the actual order situation.

Software-supported workforce management in practice

As a long-standing LFS customer, the Fressnapf Group, the market leader for pet supplies in Europe, is also interested in the advantages of an integrated WFM solution. Fressnapf has so far used a department-based planning system for workforce management at three German logistics centers. It is therefore only possible to determine whether the employees are optimally deployed in relation to actual requirements with extra effort. In order to make deployment of the workforce more efficient and to eliminate the need to manually add demand, Fressnapf wanted to integrate workforce management software into its logistics operations. In the future, all relevant process-related data is to be available across departments and in real time. The aim was to deliver long- and short-term, demand-based workforce management using forecasts of planned picking quantities and actual quantities available in the warehouse management system. To involve the workforce more closely in the planning process and to make a rapid distribution of tasks possible, an employee app is to be launched together with the workforce management solution.

Careful selection

To find the right technology partner, Fressnapf screened the market for workforce management solutions in summer 2018. EPG with its LFS.wfm software won the contract for a pilot project to be run in parallel. One of the reasons for the decision was that the EPG can map particularly high degrees of complexity with many different influencing factors. Reference projects with LFS.wfm in the aviation sector, where the requirements are as complex as in logistics, also convinced Fressnapf. Particularly at airports, a large number of events can occur that cannot be planned, such as delays and flight cancellations. A workforce management solution at airports therefore has to be able to react with maximum flexibility and allow for short-term changes. Working with Fressnapf, EPG is adapting the solution it has already established in the aviation industry to meet the requirements of workforce management in logistics.

Access all your data in real time at all times

Using LFS.wfm, Fressnapf dynamically visualizes all resource availabilities. The current order volume, the entered shift schedules and the qualifications of the employees who are ready to be deployed are taken into account. By connecting to the LFS.wms warehouse management system, LFS.wfm knows what quantities have to be processed in what time period in which areas of the warehouse. Even short-term operational changes, such as order peaks, are covered. The workforce management system compares this information against workforce-specific factors, such as the employee schedule, attendance, qualifications, performance indicators and contractual provisions. All this information is stored in LFS.wfm, which delivers great transparency. This provides demand-based planning of workforce deployment for day-to-day operations, including the ability to switch employees between the separate logistics departments. Potential, critical situations can be identified early and avoided in advance.

Involving employees

A fast flow of information is important for efficient employee management when there is a risk of bottlenecks or overcapacity. Fressnapf is therefore introducing an employee app that is supplied with information from LFS.wfm and contains, for example, working times

and shift schedules for the departments. This further simplifies communication between employees and the planning team.

Conclusion: How to increase efficiency and employee satisfaction in equal measure

The interaction of LFS.wfm with LFS.wms and other tools, such as an employee app, delivers maximum transparency of information. Employees are deployed where they can work most efficiently, taking into account their skills and the amount of work involved. It is no longer necessary to enter additional data manually, so the daily effort to plan human resources is significantly reduced. LFS.wfm also offers new ways to involve individual employees in planning, so that they can better adapt working hours to private lives, bringing all requirements together more effectively.

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Photo captions

Photo 1 & 2: Short- and long-term workforce planning with LFS.wfm: Deploy all your employees with the right qualifications in the right place at the right time.

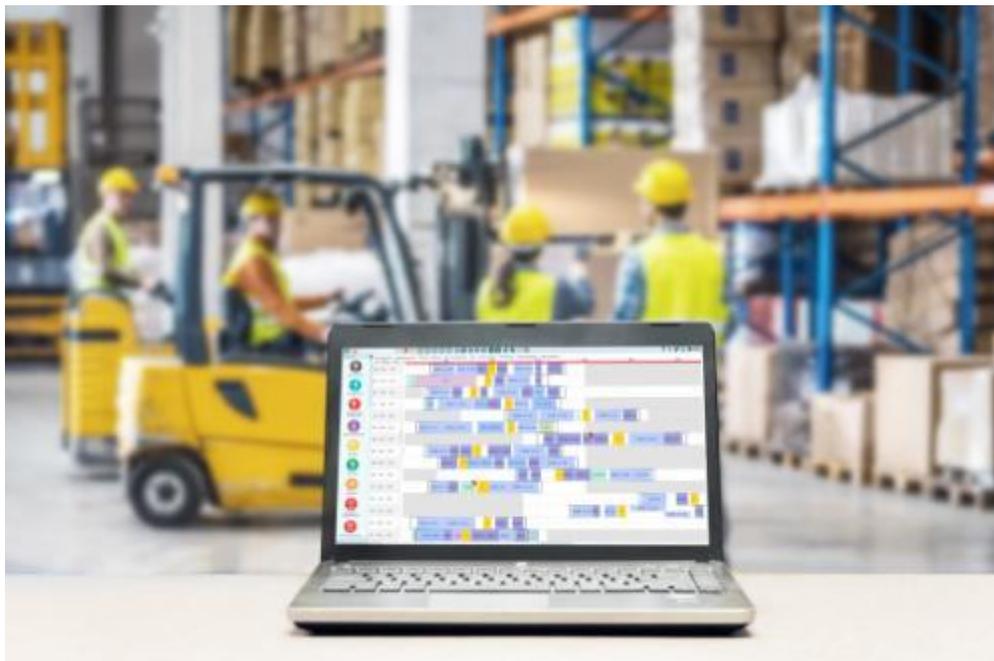


Photo 3 + 4: Get an overview of everything at all times and plan your workforce in real time – all you need is WFM software that is designed for use on different devices.



Photo 5: Since the introduction of LFS.wfm, Fressnapf has also enjoyed complete transparency over demand and employee capacities.



About Fressnapf

The Fressnapf Group is the market leader for pet supplies in Europe. The company was founded in 1990 by owner Torsten Toeller in the town of Erkelenz in North-Rhine Westphalia. Today, the group includes more than 1,600 specialist stores in eleven European countries (most of them under the name Maxi Zoo) and has more than 12,000 employees. Modern stores, expert advice, attractive prices, a wide range of services and an online shop are increasingly turning the Fressnapf group into a cross-channel retailer. Today the group has annual sales of more than two billion euros. The Fressnapf Group is a sponsor of various non-profit animal protection projects and is constantly expanding its social commitment to the relationship between humans and animals. The company's mission is: We do everything we can for people and animals to live together more easily, more happily and more successfully.

EPG – the Ehrhardt + Partner Group

EPG (the Ehrhardt + Partner Group) is a leading logistics expert and employs more than 15 people at 600 locations around the world. The company was founded in 1987. The LFS.wms warehouse management system, deployed by more than 100,000 users for logistics management, is at the heart of the company's success. Over the years, the software has developed into a comprehensive supply chain execution suite and gives users networked control of all manual and automated logistics processes (WMS and WCS) – in the warehouse and on the road – including resource and employee scheduling. In addition to LFS, EPG provides Lydia® Voice, an efficient and ergonomic solution for voice-controlled processes in logistics, industry and maintenance. Lydia® Voice is a leading solution using the very latest technology, running on neural networks and AI components. Alongside these core products, the Group's complete solution for

logistics is complemented by private cloud solutions, logistics planning and consulting, and all services and support related to warehouse hardware and infrastructure. EPG also has its own training centers, its Logistics Solution Centers (LSC), at its headquarters in Germany and in Dubai, delivering hands-on training and CPD for employees and logistics experts. More than 1,500 customers across all industries rely on EPG's expertise, cross-functional product range and know-how.

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