

Exploiting synergies more effectively

Stadtwerke München introduces EPG | LFS as its central warehouse system

Stadtwerke München (SWM), Munich's municipal utilities company, delivers the basic supply of energy and water to the people in the capital city of Bavaria. It is also responsible for smooth running of the subway, bus and tram network, as well as for the city's indoor and outdoor swimming pools. To do their job, the utilities company has to stock a wide variety of spare parts – from small specialist screws and water pipes to subway trucks. Accurate warehouse management is vitally important to be able to provide the required parts quickly in case of problems during operations. The recently introduced EPG | LFS Warehouse Management System from the Ehrhardt + Partner Group (EPG) provides just that. It manages all the logistics processes at SWM's central logistics sites and in the future it will provide a group-wide overview of all SWM warehouse sites. That means free space can be identified quickly and synergies can be exploited more effectively.

Stadtwerke München stores more than 30,000 different items over a total of 45,000 square meters of storage space. SWM's central warehouse sites are home, among other things, to parts for combined heat and power plants, power supply, and telecommunications, through subway trucks to specialist screws for transportation. There are also other small sites within the city area. SWM previously only used a warehouse management system at a few sites. However, in-house programming was less and less able to meet the challenges. For example, warehouse management was only available for the one location - you could not see the capacities of other warehouses. Connecting additional sites to the system required a great deal of programming effort, which is why the company usually did not add sites and continued to manage inventories via SAP. If processes had to be changed, changes were also time-consuming and expensive. Picking was also still paper-based. When support for the old system expired, Stadtwerke München finally decided to make a change. The objective was to introduce professional and flexible standard software that would allow processes to be managed across departments.

Flexible and functionally mature

"After a tendering process, we chose EPG | LFS because the system best met our functional and technical requirements," reports Tobias Winkelmeier, specialist project manager for logistics at Stadtwerke München. "What convinced us most was the flexible licensing model. We can connect multiple sites with just one license." The large range of functions and the fact that the EPG with its EPG | MFC Material Flow Controller could simultaneously provide a modern control system for the materials handling technology, which was needed for an automatic high-bay warehouse and a small parts warehouse, also spoke in favor of the solution.

The utilities company switched to the new warehouse management system during ongoing operations. This involved migrating large amounts of data and making various adjustments to the customer-specific SAP system. Nevertheless, it took just five months from completion of programming to go-live. The customer is also impressed: "We replaced an old system at two sites, implemented the warehouse management system for the first time at one site and also converted the control system for the materials handling technology – all in a very short time," says Winkelmeier.

Since introducing EPG | LFS, warehouse processes have improved significantly. Winkelmeier has found that the greatest benefits have come from the added transparency: "We can now view all 66,000 bin locations at the various sites via one system and manage warehouse utilization more effectively," he says. Even order throughput times can now be analyzed at the touch of a button, quickly uncovering potential for optimization. Insights into the stock history and turnover rate for an item are also helpful. The new item photos make work easier, especially for order pickers. "The benefits of a modern and standardized warehouse management system are obvious. In the long term, we therefore want to use the system throughout the group to increase our efficiency.

Issued: Monday, November 30, 2020

Length: 4,265 characters including spaces

Photos: 3

Photo captions

Photo 1: Stadtwerke München (SWM), Munich's municipal utilities company, ensures that the subway, bus and tram network run smoothly in the capital city of Bavaria. Accurate inventory management is essential to provide required parts quickly in case of problems during operations.

Photo 2: The EPG | LFS Warehouse Management System from EPG is used to manage all the logistics processes at SWM's central logistics sites. This means that free spaces can be identified quickly and synergies can be utilized more effectively.

Photo 3: Since introducing EPG | LFS, the processes in the warehouse have improved significantly. Thanks to the added transparency, all 66,000 bin locations at the various sites can be viewed via one system.

EPG – Smarter Connected Logistics

EPG is a leading international provider for a comprehensive Supply Chain Execution System (SES) and employs 700 people at 17 locations around the world. The company provides its more than 1,500 customers with WMS/WCS/WFM/TMS, voice and aviation solutions to optimize logistics processes – from manual to fully automated logistics environments – as well as airport workflows. EPG solutions cover the entire supply chain, from warehouse and road to ground and cargo handling solutions. Logistics consulting, cloud services, managed services and logistics training courses at the company's own academy round out the comprehensive list of solutions from EPG.

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