

## **YKK running new module in warehouse**

### **EPG adds AutoStore solution as an extension to its LFS Warehouse Management System**

**High volume utilisation, faster picking speed, reliability and system availability combined with real-time data processing. The Ehrhardt Partner Group (EPG) has added an industry-neutral solution for automated small parts storage as an extension to its LFS Warehouse Management System. The new AutoStore solution communicates with the data from the small parts warehouse and makes it available to the LFS in real time, ensuring the best possible exchange of information between warehouse management, AutoStore, customers and suppliers. The solution is highly effective at reducing costs. The module has been running at YKK DEUTSCHLAND GmbH since the beginning of the year. The world's largest manufacturer of zips has been using EPG's Warehouse Management System since 2014 and is now running the LFS extension for the newly installed AutoStore at its site in Wenkbach, Hessen.**

Whether jackets, bags or trousers, the zips from market leader YKK, which was founded in 1934, are woven into lots of clothing from major fashion brands and, the special sizes, on tents. The Japanese company relies on EPG's LFS Warehouse Management System for its warehouse logistics in Germany and the Netherlands. In Germany, YKK runs three large logistics centres, where the company manufactures, stores and picks zips and many other fastening products. Around 13,000 customers – from small craft shops to large fashion labels – are supplied daily throughout Europe from Germany. In Wenkbach, EPG's Warehouse Management System manages production, storage and the supply of spare parts for the company's own machines. The LFS guarantees maximum inventory accuracy within the zip manufacturer's varied range of articles and variants.

#### **YKK opts for a complete solution from EPG**

YKK decided to introduce an automatic small parts warehouse last year to meet growing market demand. The AutoStore solution replaced the classic storage rack system with modular containers. The modular containers are stacked on top of each other within an aluminium structure and are moved by robots. "We hit the limits of our old, manual

system, because the ordering behaviour of our customers has changed. We are receiving more and more late orders with request for fast delivery", says Alexander Sann, Deputy Factory Manager at YKK. The AutoStore now also makes a same day delivery service possible. For the processes in the warehouse to continue to interact smoothly, the zip manufacturer needed a connection to the LFS. "Creating another interface between the ERP system, the LFS and a third-party provider was just out of the question. As we have had a great experience with the LFS Warehouse Management System so far, our preference was definitely for the EPG solution this time as well", explains Sann.

### **LFS AutoStore module communicates with the LFS in real time**

The supply chain software specialists at EPG developed the new AutoStore module as a custom-fit solution for YKK. Previously, the workstations for order pickers in the automated small parts warehouse could only be operated using the AutoStore software. If YKK wanted to transfer stock data, such as available articles, from AutoStore to the LFS, EPG would have had to program an interface to make sure data could be shared without problems. "To avoid programming the interfaces and the time-consuming process of getting them to work together in the future, we integrated the new AutoStore module into the LFS. That means the AutoStore workstations can be run using the LFS, so YKK does not have to work with two different systems", explains Moritz Schmitt, Head of Customer Projects at EPG. Running the new module, YKK can control incoming and outgoing goods, organise inventory and process orders more quickly. "The LFS knows the stock levels and handles the customer orders. This involves communicating directly with the AutoStore and activating the applicable container with the requested goods", says Schmitt. Order updates, such as changes in processing priority and any stock corrections, can be done up to the very last step via the LFS, ensuring at all times that the right goods are ready for picking in the right quantity and at the right moment. YKK can significantly reduce its process costs as a result.

### **AutoStore module provides control over specific task groups**

As the two systems communicate in real time, YKK does not lose any time. On the contrary, the AutoStore means the fastening specialist can use its storage capacities highly effectively and increase the productivity of its employees. "Long walks are no longer necessary. The goods are automatically transported to our employees. And it's not just that. The AutoStore workstations are much more ergonomic and require a lot

less energy than a pallet truck, for example", explains Sann. In the new AutoStore, the containers are further subdivided because of the very small size of the YKK articles – in some cases into up to 16 compartments. Products that see lower demand than others are located further down in the automatic small parts warehouse. "Running the LFS AutoStore solution, YKK also has control over the task groups that are processed by the AutoStore. This allows YKK to manage order processing very effectively", says Schmitt.

### **Intuitive touch interface makes picking easier**

For the company's employees, getting the AutoStore up and running was not a big change. Sann notes how easy the solution is to use with its intuitive touch interface. The AutoStore has four multi-stations with carousel ports, which are a special type of conveyor that holds the next container ready immediately and increases the shipping speed even further. When goods leave the AutoStore for picking, LFS prints a polybag label with the exact length of the zips, minimising errors. Alexander Sann points out the low error rate since the LFS AutoStore solution went live: "The key thing for us was to continue delivering to our customers the quality they are used to during the implementation phase. Quality was guaranteed throughout".

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### **EPG – Smarter Connected Logistics**

EPG is a leading international provider of a comprehensive Supply Chain Execution Suite (EPG ONE™) and employs 800 people at 21 locations worldwide. The Group supplies its more than 1,500 customers with WMS, WCS, WFM, TMS and voice solutions to optimise logistics processes – from manual to fully automated logistics environments. EPG solutions cover the entire supply chain, from warehouse and road to ground and cargo handling solutions at airports. EPG's comprehensive portfolio of solutions is complemented by logistics consulting, cloud services, managed services, and logistics training courses at the company's own academy.

## **YKK DEUTSCHLAND GmbH**

The Japanese YKK Group is the world's largest zip manufacturer and produces various industrial fastening products. It was founded in 1934 by Tadao Yoshida. YKK DEUTSCHLAND GmbH with three sites was founded in 1967. It produces and distributes a range of zips for fashion labels and camping accessory manufacturers. The market leader has a whole range of other fastening products too.

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