



Smart automation reduces the complexity of logistics for the pharmaceutical industry

Sant'Antonino, December 15, 2017. The ability to efficiently and reliably distribute medicinal products could be the difference, in an extreme case, between life and death. This is just one of the reasons why, in the pharmaceutical sector, pre-wholesale is an important linking step on a medication's path from the manufacturer to the customer. Alloga is among the leading logistics companies for pharmaceutical pre-wholesale in Switzerland and has to overcome these challenges on a daily basis. In order to optimize its flow of goods, the company invested in a special material handling system from Flück Fördertechnik AG with modular conveyor technology from Interroll.

When it comes to pharmaceutical products, it is important that they reach the over 13,000 recipients that Alloga supplies—including doctors, pharmacies and hospitals—quickly and that sufficient quantities are available to meet the demand. The standards that Alloga must maintain in order to provide outstanding quality and perfect service are incredibly high: "Pharmaceutical manufacturers entrust us with their products. These are pharmaceutical products—not the kind of product that you can look at and tell whether they are in good condition or not", says Andreas Koch, Head of Alloga. "This is why we have to ensure this level of quality at all times. But we also have to be efficient, flexible and able to respond to individual requirements in a standardized way."

Alloga's high bay warehouse alone has more than 32,000 storage locations with various controlled temperature conditions. Here, pharmaceutical products from around 80 partners are stored. The rising number of orders and ever-increasing storage capacity, throughput and efficiency requirements made it necessary for Alloga to strategically renew its conveyor technology. To achieve this, Alloga chose the experienced systems integrator Flück Fördertechnik, from Kirchberg, near Bern. From initial idea to commissioning, Flück Fördertechnik draws on its extensive expertise and enduring enthusiasm to create bespoke material handling systems for each of its customers, devising highly individual solutions and innovative concepts. "We see ourselves as a provider of integrated solutions. We like providing solutions based on standard elements but we enjoy developing special systems even more," explains Peter Flück, Managing Director of Flück Fördertechnik AG.

System modernization during ongoing operations coupled with custom design

One of these special demands from Alloga was to manage a modernization project during ongoing operations—without interrupting the daily workflow and under significant time pressure. This is why Flück successfully worked together with Interroll, who provided an optimal, scalable solution with its modular conveyor platform. Flück is pleased with the outcome. "The implementation of this was only possible with pre-assembled modules which we were able to obtain from Interroll. This was the only way this project could be successfully carried out in our short time frame."

To optimize the throughput in the existing space, Flück created a custom design for Alloga: Special loading towers in the order picking area that allow workers to load complete, ready-to-ship orders into the conveying lines. The trays are raised to a height of four meters by a vertical conveyor, allowing the space required to be significantly minimized. Using a zero-pressure accumulation conveyor system with energy-saving 24-volt technology from Interroll, Flück was able to create a lot more buffer capacity along the way. With what are referred to as loading islands, they built up storage capacity, meaning that order pickers can unload all the

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goods at once and then continue with their designated tasks. This concept not only saves valuable time but also space and energy, the latter thanks to the zero-pressure accumulation conveyor system. With this design, Alloga's highly ambitious aims are achieved.

"Some of the improvements we managed to achieve were to create more loading stations, which meant more possibilities to make use of the conveyor technology. We now have more transport capacity into the shipping department—in fact, we managed to double it— and, as a pleasant side effect, I would also like to mention that the conveyor system is quieter now too.", says Andreas Koch.

A new lease of life: Thanks to the cleverly engineered upgrade, Alloga has optimized its complex flow of goods and increased its throughput, putting it on track for future growth!

Captions:

- (File: "Flueck_Loading towers"): "Throughput optimization in existing space: special loading towers
- („File ALLOGA2017_MCP Interroll“): „A scalable solution with Interroll's modular conveyor platform

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About Interroll

The Interroll Group is the leading global provider of material flow solutions. The company was founded in 1959 and has been listed on the SIX Swiss Exchange since 1997. Interroll supplies system integrators and plant manufacturers with a wide range of platform-based products and services in the following categories: "Rollers" (conveyor rollers), "drives" (motors and drives for conveyor systems), "conveyors & sorters" and "pallet & carton flow" (flow storage systems). Solutions from Interroll are used in express and postal services, in e-commerce, in airports, in the food and beverage, fashion and automotive sectors, and in many other industries. The company is used by leading brands such as Amazon, Bosch, Coca-Cola, DHL, Nestlé, Procter & Gamble, Siemens, Walmart and Zalando. With its headquarters in Switzerland, Interroll has a global network of 32 companies with a turnover of around CHF 401.5 million and 2000 employees (2016).

About Alloga

For over 60 years, pre-wholesaler Alloga has been an important player in supplying medicinal products to the whole of Switzerland, providing a rapid service and maintaining sufficient stocks to meet the demand. Alloga Ltd. is a company of the Galenica Group and is part of the Services segment. Galenica is the leading fully-integrated healthcare provider in Switzerland. The Galenica organisation is designed to maximise proximity to its customers..

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About Flück Fördertechnik

Flück Fördertechnik is an independent Swiss company that specializes in intralogistics and custom plant engineering. It designs, manufactures, supplies and installs conveyor systems and specialist machinery of superior quality. The company combines its own products with high-quality bought-in components (system partner KUKA Robotics) to produce first-class systems. Flück's work focuses on the overall benefits that its solutions can bring to its customers. The Flück team considers its job done once it has created the perfect solution—one that runs smoothly, with perfect timing and maximum availability. This is why providing highly responsive customer service and ensuring open communication are the key principles that underpin the company. Since its founding in 1984, the company has been steadily evolving on the basis of a long list of successful projects and a strong focus on innovation. Today, Flück employs a workforce of 40 people. Its site in Kirchberg (Switzerland) allows for the development, production, assembly and installation of complete solutions, from the initial idea right through to the productive system in its final location at the customer's premises.