

Huppertz Group

# Lean packaging for spare parts

The Huppertz Group, an international logistics, packing and transport organisation headquartered in Cologne, has adopted the philosophy of lean logistics, which takes its fundamental principle from the Toyota system of lean production. In the packaging field, one of the results is that the service provider has achieved large savings with a new quick fastening technique.

Logistics managers are constantly seeking ways of saving costs that do not have an adverse effect on quality and delivery times. Is there any potential for savings still left? All possibilities already seem to have been exhausted. «We are still a long way from there, for potential still exists in every part of the supply chain,» said Dr Anja Huppertz, managing director and chief creative officer of Huppertz Log Lab.

## Improving container volume utilisation

«In order to compete with global players in the marketplace one must constantly think and act in an innovative and cost-conscious manner. The important thing is to constantly work towards optimising all three key factors, namely quality, delivery times and costs». The current results of the optimisation projects of the Huppertz Group, a logistics provider, are quite impressive.

In the automotive parts sector, for instance, the optimisation of package sizes enabled utilisation of container volume to be increased from 55% to 87%, while an improved pallet size reduced transport costs by EUR 737,000. At the same time



The Huppertz Group is always on time with its logistics service

the group was able to cut throughput times by 50% and reduce the error rate from 0.5% in 2007 to 0.035% today. How has this been achieved?

## Four centres of excellence

Anja Huppertz attributes the Huppertz Group's success to a lean logistics strategy, which the organisation developed itself and introduced roughly four years ago.

The international logistics company is headquartered in Cologne (Germany) and employs roughly 750 people in various locations. It has a number of cen-

tres of excellence, which serve primarily the automobile and chemical industries. The group's four centres of logistical excellence include the one that addresses material synchronisation and packaging (MSP), the automotive synchronisation centre (ASC), a logistics services unit (LS) and the Huppertz process improvements facility (the group's Log Lab).

## Spare parts logistics and packaging

The material synchronisation and packaging unit is the centre for spare parts logistics and packaging, and one of the group's

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Photo: Huppertz Group

s for the international automobile industry.



three operational centres of excellence. Here, complete goods throughput is managed for customers, supported by packaging development and design. In the centre for spare parts logistics, Huppertz packs everything there is to pack. For instance, the whole diverse range of parts for one of the world's biggest car makers – a total of 300,000 different components covering a spectrum that extends from engines to screws. Huppertz MSP receives spare parts from 2,000 European suppliers and dispatches them to more than 40 final destinations – with throughput times of 8–24 hours.

### Savings thanks to lean logistics

The MSP business unit is responsible for pan-European consolidation and synchronisation of goods and goods flow management for large customers. In the field of packaging optimisation, the MSP and Log Lab experts have achieved notable savings, which they have been able to pass on to the customers. A new quick fastening technique, for instance, enables the goods to be packaged 10% faster. A change in the thickness of the material in the case of film packaging, and a reduction in the variety of types, also brought substantial savings in material costs, storage area and waste disposal charges.

### Process analysis and continuous improvement

The training and communication centre of the Huppertz Group, also known as the Log Lab, is uncompromisingly forward-looking and geared to sustainability. As the enterprise's logistics laboratory it develops innovative logistics solutions in line with Huppertz' lean logistics strategy. Within a short time, Log Lab has succeeded in adapting the tried and tested lean concept, originally developed by Toyota, to the specific conditions and culture of the Huppertz Group's logistics organisation. Log Lab trains, instructs, coaches and supports all managers and staff members in lean management and concrete projects for improvement. In this connection it not only strives to improve the processes of its own company, but also endeavours to achieve strategic new and further developments in the customers' supply chain.

«All employees take part in practical workshops at their own workplace,» Anja Huppertz explained. «This results in innovative improvements.» The close collaboration between excellence

centres and the Log Lab results in the continuous improvement of processes.

Another of the three operational excellence centres is Huppertz ASC, where international automotive logistics activities are managed. Car parts arrive from suppliers all over the world. All the necessary administrative procedures are carried out there, such as customs clearance, quality inspection and the generation and correction of the data flows.

The goods are consolidated and dispatched just in time to 35 destinations all over the globe, according to a strictly cadenced schedule. All parts are shipped for assembly by road, water, air or rail with transit times of 6–24 hours. For one customer the engineers specially adapted the pallet dimensions for larger car parts, thus maximising the number of units per container and saving hundreds of thousands of euros in transport costs.

### High quality, low costs and short delivery times

«In order constantly to improve, we must not see problems as problems but consider them a challenge,» the Huppertz managing director summed up. «If you stop improving, you stop being good.» By pursuing this policy the Huppertz group has scored points with its customers for more than four years. Anja Huppertz explained that «the sustained implementation of lean logistics leads to ever better quality, shorter delivery times and lower costs – always to the advantage of the customer.»

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