



## Walkers Snack Foods, UK A Case Study

# Lifetime partnership with leading snack manufacturer

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"Swisslog has delivered the tools that enable the Walkers logistics team to deliver the highest levels of service that our customers demand. 2004, we achieved an average volume fill of 99% versus levels approaching 97% the previous year."

*Mark Harrison  
Supply Chain Director  
UK & Ireland*

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### The Customer and his Requirements

Walkers Snack Foods is the largest producer and supplier of snack foods in the UK. The company was initially established in 1918. In 1989 Walkers and Smiths were bought by Frito-Lay (PepsiCo) and amalgamated. Today about 12 million packets of Walkers Snacks are eaten per day.

The first project with Swisslog was a multi million pound investment in warehouse technology to handle over 1.5 billion bags of crisps and snacks per year. The Finished Goods Warehouse went live in 1992.

In 1998 Swisslog delivered a new picking & despatch facility (SRDC).

The introduction of the Sensations line and the acquisition of Wotsits in 2002, resulted in double digit growth in 2003. This created a need for more storage space. In 2003 Swisslog delivered a new Highbay warehouse next to the existing one.



**The Solution**

The first automated warehouse was the 22 m high Finished Goods Warehouse (FGW), which receives products from five production lines producing crisps. The warehouse is a clad rack construction, i.e. the pallet racking is also the building structure, with steel cladding fixed to the outside. The system consists of six fully automated stacker cranes capable of storing and retrieving pairs of pallets. The crane aisles have pick and deposit stations at both ends of the racking, aiding performance and reliability. Conveyors and lifts transport palletized cartons from the factory or from the external goods-in infeed to the high bay and from the high bay to 200+ picking locations. The gravity fed lanes have a capacity of six pallets and can be automatically replenished by a pallet pair from the high bay when the number of pallets drops to three.

The Southern Region Distribution Center (SRDC) was built in 1998. This was connected to FGW by a monorail system with 22 carriers, each capable of carrying two pallets.

By 2001, more storage spaces were needed again. A new highbay warehouse was built on the only remaining land at the site, a crescent shaped area. Walkers & Swisslog designed a clad rack warehouse with staggered corners, which could hold over 4,000 more pallets than a standard box-type structure. In the new warehouse, pallets are stored by 5 automated stacker cranes and a pallet conveyor system transfers the pallets from the cranes to the monorail system. The monorail system was extended to link the new warehouse with the SRDC and three additional carriers were added. The new warehouse went live in 2003.

**Logistics Data**



**High-bay store**

No of locations	24,070
Automatic stacker cranes	15
Picking locations	200+
three separate despatch areas	

Operation	24/7
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**Monorail system**

Carriers	25
Speed	300 pallets /h

**Conveyor system**

Length	>2 km
Including lifts, shuttles, profile gauges	

**Information Technology**

- SMS - Store Management System
- PLC software
- IMI-W from Ross/IMI



Food



## Interview



**Mark Harrison**  
Supply Chain Director  
UK & Ireland

How would you describe the relationship between Swisslog and Walkers?

*"The relationship between Walkers and Swisslog is not only project related but focuses on long term support partnership as well."*

Swisslog has been awarded a number of projects over the years. Why have you picked Swisslog as your supplier?

*"The Swisslog team understands Walkers' business and how it works. They have an in-depth understanding of the technology and the consistency of approach allows Walkers to deliver projects on time. Walkers could not afford to engage a new team who wouldn't understand the way we work at this critical time."*

Over the past years, you have undergone a dramatic improvement in supply chain efficiency, how have the Swisslog solutions helped you with that?

*"Swisslog has helped Walkers by providing solutions capable of delivering the high levels of throughput & speed required in a world-class FMCG. Swisslog has delivered the tools that enable the Walkers logistics team to deliver the highest levels of service that our customers demand."*

Would you be able to quantify that?

*"Walkers achieved an average volume fill for 2004 of 99% versus levels approaching 97% the previous year."*

How has Swisslog met the deliverables on the various projects?

*"Because Swisslog has adopted a parallel implementation approach as opposed to sequential, they have been able to deliver the projects on time, which met aggressive timelines, and within budget."*

What do you rate as the most important part in the Storage & Retrieval system?

*"The monorail linking the new warehouse to the existing logistics facility and back into the factory."*

Swisslog have provided the Mechanical Handling System, how does it work in practice?

*"The system works very efficiently and the integration to the already existing WMS from Ross/IMI has been successful."*



## Customer Data



Walkers Snack Foods, UK  
[www.walkers.co.uk](http://www.walkers.co.uk)

### Location

Walkers Snack Foods' headquarters are in Theale, Reading. Walkers is the UK market leader for snack foods. Walkers is the UK operating division of the Frito-Lay Group, which is owned by PepsiCo International. Walkers built a new crisp production facility in Beaumont Leys in 1981. The Beaumont Leys site in Leicester now features the largest potato crisp factory in the world.

### Brands

Walkers produces the leading UK snack brands, including Sensations Crisps, Doritos, Quavers, Monster Munch,

Wotsits and a variety of Walkers crisps. Their range of products covers approximately 250 different types of snack foods.

### People

Walkers employs over 4,000 staff in the UK. More than 2,000 of those work on the Beaumont Leys site.

### Sales

In the UK, 12 million packets of Walkers snacks are eaten every day.

### The benefits

- Improved inventory control ensured by the warehouse control system
- Low handling damage
- Extensive storage capacity
- Labor saving through 24 hours operations and a high throughput of 200 pallets / hour in and out of the store
- Enable future growth

### Swisslog Scope of Supply

- Highbay Finished Goods Warehouse for 9,100 pallets in 1992
- Picking & Despatch facility (SRDC) in 1998
- Warehouse extension in 2003
- Racking structure
- Overall project management
- Monorail system, stacker cranes, conveyors & all materials handling equipment for the facility, including controls software
- SMS Store Management System
- Interface between SMS and IMI-W (WMS from Ross/IMI)
- Engineering and system planning
- Simulation of new project
- Warehouse design
- Continuous customer support
- Lifetime partnership