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News Release

Global pharma players trust in Swisslog to strengthen intralogistics

Buchs/Dortmund, 5 January 2017 – Swisslog, a leading automation expert for robot-based and data driven intralogistic solutions, has completed the latest expansion of the high-bay warehouse for healthcare manufacturers B. Braun Melsungen. In addition to this, pharmaceutical company and long-term Swisslog customer, F.Hoffman-La Roche, is benefitting from the System Operations service.

The centerpiece of the logistics expansion in the Pfieffewiesen industrial area, midway between Hanover and Frankfurt in Germany, B. Braun Melsungen's global hub has had its capacity expanded from 10 000 pallets to a total of 73 000 and will enable the company to respond flexibly to increasing market demands. A total of 28 pallet stacker cranes are used to store and retrieve items in the [fully automated logistics facility](#).

Earlier expansion stages employed [automated guided vehicles \(AGV\)](#) to handle transfers between production and storage, as well as supplying the automatic picking workplaces with stock from the automatic small-parts warehouse. Modern conveyor systems handle pallet logistics, whilst the Swisslog Warehouse Manager system displays real-time data on all ongoing processes.

“Since the warehouse's establishment in 1991, B. Braun Melsungen has entrusted us with more than one expansion, and we're proud of that,” says Daniel Hauser, Managing Director of Central Europe for Swisslog Warehouse & Distribution Solutions. “Every logistics expansion stage thus far followed the Swisslog blueprint to boost capacities and reduce product throughput times.”

It is known to be difficult to predict [market demands in the pharmaceutical industry](#), which can put pressure on supply chain teams at busy times.

For pharmaceutical companies, complying with regulations is a top priority in the development and production stages as well as the storage and movement of medical products. Many pharma companies are choosing to partner with intralogistics experts on a long-term basis, enabling them to adapt to changing market demands.

"We are experiencing a growing demand," adds Daniel, "with logistics systems for leading pharma giants around the world. Automated warehousing systems helps to efficiently distribute products, perform continuous quality control and adhere to stringent regulatory requirements. We are regularly congratulated on achieving excellent results."

State-of-the-art cold storage for Roche

[F. Hoffman-La Roche](#), based in Switzerland, is another pharmaceutical company taking advantage of long-term automated intralogistics solutions. A customer of Swisslog's for almost a quarter of a century, Roche develops drugs, some of which are biotechnology-based and temperature-sensitive. For storage and picking of these medications, Swisslog implemented a state-of-the-art cold storage logistics facility at Roche's Kaiseraugst location, reducing throughput times for getting customer orders ready for shipping from 120 to 48 hours.

The high bay cold storage warehouse has four aisles, moves 1,000 to 1,500 pallets per day and operates in a temperature range between 2°C and 8°C. Four Swisslog Vectura cranes are used for single-deep storage. In contrast, the deep-freeze warehouse operates at a constant temperature of minus 10°C. Swisslog's Warehouse Management System is one of the systems controlling the Roche logistics facility, including conveyor and picking technologies.

Track and Trace

Another essential task performed by the Warehouse Management Software is the seamless tracking and tracing of warehouse and shipping processes that affect quality and safety. The implementation was done in accordance with the GAMP5, which thoroughly verified, risk-tested and documented preconfigured and new software functions. As a result, Roche has a validated system that meets the strict international requirements for drug safety in accordance with the GMP Guideline.

The cold storage facility is integrated into Roche's overall logistics system in Kaiseraugst, which Swisslog helped set up in the 1990s. "We connected the new logistics facility to the existing warehouse sections," says Hans Reimann, Project Lead at F. Hoffman-La Roche. "This had to be done without major disruptions to the material flow to ensure smooth, on-time deliveries of medications to our customers. Sophisticated planning and systematic implementation made it all possible."

"The facility is 22 years old and still looks like new," says Thomas Seiler, Swisslog Head of System Operations teams at Roche's Swiss location Kaiseraugst. "As well as developing a complex logistics system in 1994, Swisslog has been running operation maintenance and expansion of all technical aspects involved. One thing that was and still is particularly important to us is that we as a [System Operations team](#) are competent partners for Roche and always ensure the Kaiseraugst location will continue to grow."

Alive and kicking

As a result of a long-term relationship with Swisslog, both B. Braun and Roche have seen their logistics significantly optimized in their pharma facilities, while efficiently complying with stringent quality and regulatory requirements.

Pharma companies choosing to partner with intralogistics experts will benefit from customized concepts designed by industry experts. Translating customer needs into proven solutions is a particular area of expertise in the automated intralogistics business, but Swisslog's modern software and technologies with specific pharmaceutical functionality has a proven track record of maximizing supply chain efficiency.

Michiel Veenman, Global Market Leader Pharmaceutical at Swisslog Warehouse & Distribution Solutions, said: "I'm extremely proud that B. Braun and Roche were happy enough with the previous projects to come back to us when the market demand increased, triggering a need for optimum throughput and material flow. With the health technology sector leading the way, I'm pleased our pharma customers are finding comfort in partnering with us."

"These long-term partnerships with leading pharmaceutical companies are an important part of Swisslog's history, and it is relationships like these that further cement our reputation as an expert in our field."

More information:

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