

SmartPocket pocket sorter wins the German Innovation Award

- **Distinction in gold for outstanding innovative performance in the category "Logistics & Infrastructure."**
- **SmartPocket relies on intelligent mobile robots instead of a drag chain.**
- **The disruptive technology has the potential to bring lasting change to warehouse automation.**

(Berlin/Marchtrenk, May 13, 2026) The German Innovation Award 2026 ceremony took place on May 12 in Berlin. Intralogistics specialist TGW Logistics was thrilled to receive the renowned distinction in gold in the B2B category "Logistics & Infrastructure" for its SmartPocket pocket sorter – as well as being crowned the winner as a "Transformative Solution." The pocket sorter, which relies on mobile robots instead of a drag chain, persuaded the interdisciplinary expert jury with its disruptive concept, as well as with its consistent focus on overcoming customers' challenges.

The German Innovation Award celebrates innovations that accomplish real progress: through new ideas, sustainable effects and consistent user-centeredness. The distinction highlights future-oriented developments that are socially relevant and economically effective. The prize was initiated by the German Design Council, established by the German Bundestag in 1953.

SmartPocket is a game changer

"The German Innovation Award is a great validation of the work done by our development teams. Innovations have been an integral part of our DNA since TGW Logistics was founded over 56 years ago. They are also and above all a part of our success, offering answers to the challenges that many companies face," affirms Christoph Wolkerstorfer, Chief Technology Officer at TGW Logistics. "SmartPocket has the potential to fundamentally change the pocket sorter market. And so we are all the more delighted to be implementing the world's first SmartPocket system for the mail-order retailer Personalshop in Tyrol, Austria."

Autonomous mobile robots

The TGW innovation relies on intelligent, self-propelled robots rather than a drag chain. These Smart Carriers constitute the powerful heart of the system and transport pockets with an item weight of up to three kilograms. They move quickly and without human intervention along a network of rails to their destinations. If a carrier fails, it can be replaced within seconds. The replacement robot is ready for operation as soon as it is registered in the system, eliminating expensive blockages of the entire plant. Load carriers that are fixed in place and therefore have to run through the entire overhead conveyor system are now a thing of the past.

There are no moving parts installed in the travel rails or in the intersections. This minimizes potential sources of error and also reduces the amount of maintenance required. Another advantage: SmartPocket is particularly quiet compared to chain-based designs.

Rapidly scalable and highly flexible in day-to-day operation

Conventional pocket sorter solutions are designed to handle peak loads. Outside these peak times, they leave a lot of untapped potential. Users are therefore paying for performance that they only actually need during a short window of time.

With its simple scalability, SmartPocket represents a clever alternative that grows alongside the individual business's development – in keeping with the motto "Stop paying for potential." The innovation is designed to be scalable in small increments and thus can be tailored to the customer's actual requirements – generating significant advantages in terms of both the initial investment and live operation.

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About the German Innovation Award

The assessment criteria of the German Innovation Award encompass such aspects as specific benefit for the user, functionality, usability, profitability and future viability. The innovation strategy should take concerns like social, environmental and economic sustainability and the use of energy and resources into account. The interdisciplinary jury brings together experts in industry, research, healthcare, technology and branding.

About TGW Logistics:

TGW Logistics is one of the leading international suppliers of material handling solutions. For over 50 years, the Austrian specialist has implemented highly automated systems for customers, including brands from A as in Adidas to Z as in Zalando. As systems integrator, TGW Logistics plans, produces, implements and services complex logistics centers – from mechatronic products and robots to control systems and software.

TGW Logistics has subsidiaries in Europe, Asia and the U.S. and employs roughly 4,600 people worldwide. In the 2024/25 business year, the company generated a total revenue of 1.07 billion euros.

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