

2026 SupplyTech Breakthrough Award for the SmartPocket pocket sorter

- **Named "Sortation System Innovation of the Year."**
- **SmartPocket uses intelligent mobile robots instead of a drag chain.**
- **The disruptive technology has the potential to bring lasting change to intralogistics and be a game changer for the entire industry.**

(Grand Rapids / Marchtrenk, 2026-06-11) SmartPocket was awarded "Sortation System Innovation of the Year" at the 2026 SupplyTech Breakthrough Awards. The unique selling proposition of the TGW pocket sorter: it relies on mobile robots instead of a drag chain. These Smart Carriers, as they are called, move quickly and autonomously along a network of intersecting rails. The disruptive concept persuaded the prestigious expert jury, as did the consistent focus on overcoming customers' challenges.

The SupplyTech Breakthrough Awards shine a spotlight on pioneering solutions in the supply chain industry. The winners in the 24 categories are selected via a multi-step process. "Being awarded Sortation System Innovation of the Year is a great validation of the work we have done over the past months," affirms Patricio Miranda Febres, Chief Sales Officer TGW North America. "Innovations are not only a part of our corporate DNA, but also a central element of our success because they offer answers to the challenges that our customers are facing."

Robots as an alternative to drag chains

SmartPocket relies on intelligent, self-propelled robots. These Smart Carriers constitute the powerful heart of the system and transport pockets with an item weight of up to three kilograms. 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 of the overhead conveyor system. This minimizes potential sources of error and also reduces the amount of maintenance required. Compared to conventional pocket sorters that have to move long chains, mobile robots also have a lower energy requirement. Employees benefit from the low noise levels.

“SmartPocket is revolutionizing the pocket sorter market with its disruptive design. Traditional pocket sorter systems are designed and built to meet peak requirements. However, outside of these short periods, much of their potential remains unused, leaving businesses to pay more upfront for performance only needed during a very short window of time,” said Bryan Vaughn, Managing Director of SupplyTech Breakthrough Awards.

Rapidly scalable and highly flexible

Conventional pocket sorter solutions are designed to handle peak loads. Outside these peak times, however, 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. The system grows individually alongside the user's business development – in keeping with the motto "Stop paying for potential."

Thanks to its scalability, SmartPocket can be tailored in small steps to fit the customer's actual requirements, generating significant cost advantages in terms of both the initial investment and live operation. This is true whether the system is operating at full or only partial capacity. As business requirements change, modules can be added with only minimal effort and short implementation times.

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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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