**Walter Meier automates with TGW:
HVAC expert counts on energy-efficient intralogistics**

**A national logistics hub for the HVAC and facilities expert Walter Meier Klima Schweiz AG in Nebikon. At the road interchange, the entire Swiss supply will be ensured – the consolidation of various distribution centres was implemented with a total investment of 48 million Swiss Franc and systems integrator TGW.**

In 2007, three companies, Oertli, Vescal and Axair Kobra, merged into one, the Walter Meier Klima Schweiz AG. Six manual warehouses in Bern, Kestenholz, Oberbüren, Romont, Schwerzenbach and Vevey were supposed to be consolidated including 30,000 SKUs with a total of two million items. A huge task that got even more exciting as 110,000 customer deliveries and 30,000 postal packages had to be reorganised. When the relocations and transports between the individual sites became more and more complex and lead to redundant warehousing, the decision was made: a consolidated distribution centre at a strategic traffic hub was necessary. These plans could be implemented in Nebikon, Switzerland, together with the intralogistics specialist TGW Logistics Group. The new logistics centre was inaugurated in November 2016.

**Strategic logistics for increasing customer requirements**

Beat Kohler, manager of the new distribution centre, explains: "We operated at full capacity, the increased customer requirements left no choice but to optimise our processes. We achieved that goal successfully!" Systems integrator TGW implemented an extensive material handling solution together with the customer. The solution optimises all processes and at the same time provides a pathway to the future.

An automatic pallet warehouse with a rack-supported structure and four aisles for more than 11,000 pallets was installed. With the double-deep storage and six tons of load bearing capacity for each shelf on eight levels, 39 double cycles per hour are possible with the TGW storage and retrieval machines. In addition, TGW installed an automatic mini-load warehouse for 33,000 totes with an elaborate picking concept including goods-receiving stations, a re-packing station at the pallet loop and an order consolidation area with a dispatch zone. A manual warehouse with 4,000 storage locations and a shelf rack warehouse with 1,500 storage locations complete the material handling system. "We used our Mustang single-mast storage and retrieval machines (SRM) in the four aisles of the mini-load warehouse. Thus, up to 600 totes for small parts can be stored and retrieved per hour. In the development of our SRMs, we use consistent lightweight construction and aircraft construction concepts which gives us an advantage when it comes to energy-efficiency," says Hanspeter Egli, Project Manager for the overall project. "This is how we could reduce the weight by 25 per cent." By using an anti-pendulum drive, the mast remains stable even at a height of 12 metres which was a substantial argument in the decision between shuttle and SRM,” as Matthias Ott, project manager of Walter Meier, states.

**Optimised processes with ergonomics and state-of-the-art technology**

There was another focus on complying with the requirements for the employees and for the entire system at the picking areas. With ergonomic measures, a higher performance can be achieved and the employees can work more comfortably. The TGW PickCenters are equipped with Pick-by-Light and PickTerm Tray, a laser identification, in an overhead position. Additionally, the employees operate the equipment at the workstations via touchscreen. "By using this technology, there should practically be no picking errors after the start-up phase," say the experts involved in the project.

All totes are transported through the logistics centre by TGW KingDrive® conveyor equipment. The system is characterised by its flexibility and scalability using totes and cartons with up to 50 kilograms. The communication system is programmed by means of a BUS network ensuring maximum movability regarding transportation speed and acceleration. In addition, this system stands out due to its energy-saving regenerative braking system and very quiet operation, reducing the decibel levels of the installation.

**Energy self-sufficient logistics centre**

On the roof of the logistics centre, a photovoltaic system with 4,200 panels and a peak performance of 1.1 megawatt was installed. Therefore, the site is energy self-sufficient and even exports energy to the grid. Matthias Ott explains: "Paying attention to the energy balance was an important point in the planning. Therefore, the building envelope was constructed according to the ‘Minergie’ standard and the building is equipped with the latest technologies."

The new logistics centre of Walter Meier in Nebikon is now sustainable to the core regarding energy efficiency. The course for the success of the HVAC and facilities expert in the future is set.

After the orders from Coop Schafisheim, Interdiscount and Pfister, Hanspeter Egli is happy about the successful completion of the project for the Walter Meier logistics centre: "The project succeeded thanks to the cooperation of both sides. We are happy that we could implement the very energy-efficient logistics concept for Walter Meier,” Hanspeter Egli of TGW is happy.

[www.tgw-group.com](http://www.tgw-group.com)

**About TGW Logistics Group:**

TGW Logistics Group is a global leading systems provider of highly dynamic, automated and turn-key logistics solutions. Since 1969 the company has been implementing different internal logistics solutions, from small material handling applications to complex logistics centres.

With about 2,600 employees worldwide by now, the Group implements logistics solutions for leading companies in various industries. In the business year 2015/16, the TGW Logistics Group generated sales revenues of 532 million Euros.

**Pictures:**

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**Contact:**

TGW Logistics Group GmbH

4600 Wels, Collmannstraße 2, Austria

T: +43.7242.486-0

F: +43.7242.486-31

e-mail: tgw@tgw-group.com

**Press contact:**

Martin Kirchmayr Daniela Nowak

Marketing & Communication Manager Marketing & Communication Specialist

T: +43.7242.486-1382 T: +43.7242.486-1059

M: +43.664.8187423

martin.kirchmayr@tgw-group.com daniela.nowak@tgw-group.com