**Perfect retrofit recipe for Almi**

* **TGW updated the seasoning specialist's  
  warehouse during ongoing operation**
* **Thanks to hardware and software updates,   
  energy savings of up to 20 percent are possible**
* **Project ensures long-term system availability**

**(Marchtrenk, Austria, September 27, 2022) To form resilient value chains to uphold delivery commitments to customers, you need high-performance intralogistics. Almi, the spice specialist based in the Upper Austria region, commissioned TGW Logistics Group to update its warehouse in Oftering. The TGW experts implemented the project in record time – during ongoing operation and despite the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Everyone's got to eat! For Almi, a manufacturer of spice blends, the truth reflected in this proverb is a curse and blessing at once. It's a blessing because the company, whose strategy is focused on diversification and internationalisation, has experienced constant growth since its founding in 1931. From dilettante to dedicated, gourmets at every level in 62 countries enjoy foods seasoned with high-quality Almi products – from asparagus soup to organic chicken. The Upper Austrian company earns approx. 132 million euros in sales per year, with almost 90 percent of the products being exported.

**Retrofit during live operation**

However, success in the food industry has its price. Customers get hungry even on holidays. This means that, unlike other industries in which production shuts down during vacation periods, Almi cannot afford lengthy breaks. This poses major time management challenges for larger-scale construction or modernisation projects.

This was also true of the retrofit of the automated tote warehouse with approximately 10,000 storage locations. To continue to uphold delivery commitments and lay the foundation for future growth, the family-owned enterprise ruled out the prospect of expanding its facilities. "Sustainability is of great importance to Almi. We do not want to pave over more green areas, so we decided from the beginning to optimise the existing facility so that we will be well equipped for the future," reports Stefan Lackinger, Almi's Production Manager.

In 2006, Almi built a warehouse on a parcel of approx. 28,000 m2, with the contract going to TGW. The heart of the system is the automatic mini-load warehouse with three aisles, tote buffer, and carton, tote and pallet conveyor systems on three levels. To boost the performance of the intralogistics, the system was equipped with energy-efficient conveyor technology. However, Almi did not rest on its laurels. In 2017, the seasoning specialist commissioned TGW to update the warehouse management system (WMS).

**Together into a green future**

Almi was very pleased with how the update went. As a result, Almi selected TGW as a partner of choice to join it on the path to a green future. The initial impulse came from the TGW retrofit experts, who presented a concept made up of multiple components: changing out a storage and retrieval machine, replacing the mechatronics of the Commissioner lifting beam system, updating three transfer carriages and one belt-driven lift, and implementing new control technology.

The retrofit specialists offered Almi proactive suggestions after seeing in the documentation that a few components were outdated. There was a danger that if they broke down, they would become more expensive or not available at all. TGW put together multiple variants, from which Almi selected one. "In the retrofit area, each project is customer-specific – therefore, experience is of tremendous importance," emphasises Josef Fritz, Sales Project Manager at TGW.

**Mustang E+ energy-efficient storage and retrieval machines**

A portion of the investment, which was in the mid-six figures, was designated to replacing the storage and retrieval machine. TGW provided a Mustang E+ storage and retrieval machine of the latest generation. Its advantages: it weighs less than older units and, unlike them, has a state-of-the-art control system and does not require anti-oscillation technology. This makes it possible to save energy. The world of retrofitting is, in theory, similar to good food: even the best recipe may not turn out so delicious if the cook is inexperienced. TGW looks back on more than half a century of experience, with the retrofit area in particular experiencing strong growth. The system integrator now handles five times as many retrofit projects annually as it did ten years ago – and proceeds systematically for each project. "A system downtime would be a disaster for any supply chain manager," emphasizes Markus Kammerhofer, Director of Sales Retrofit at TGW. Over the years, TGW has compiled a list of seven success factors:

* Consider the lead time and start early enough
* Choose experienced partners and project managers
* Develop a structured plan
* Integrate specially developed retrofit solutions
* Create a comprehensive functional specification
* Clearly define migration phases
* Intensive employee training

**Planning and preparation as success factors**

The first meeting was held in early 2021, while in the summer, the team drafted a project plan, with the functional specifications following. The experts then defined the migration steps and the tight schedule. The timeline set the bar high for all those involved. The objective: executing the entire project around the Christmas and New Year's holidays to reduce the standstill to a minimum.

The TGW specialists arrived on December 21 and stayed at Almi until January 7, 2022, working every day except New Year's Eve. However, the tight schedule was not the only challenge. "All steps up to the go-live on January 7 had to be planned in detail," says Fritz. Nevertheless, it was not possible to fully complete the project by January 6 as the plan had originally called for. However, this was not the fault of TGW. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and worldwide supply chain bottlenecks, the hardware was not replaced until April – at the weekends.

**Energy savings of up to 20 per cent**

Despite the difficulties encountered, the projects were successfully completed in late April 2022. Lackinger, the Almi Production Manager, is highly satisfied with the result. He reports that the retrofit boosted system availability, while also lowering the cost of spare parts for maintenance work. The company's green logistics strategy is also taking an important step forward – compliance with the ISO 50002 energy audit being just one example. "Energy savings of up to 20 percent are now possible in intralogistics. In the past, unneeded braking energy of the storage and retrieval machine was simply lost. Now we feed it directly back into the grid. Thanks to the modernisation done by our partner TGW, we look to a greener future with confidence."

**About Almi**

Almi GmbH is based in Oftering in Upper Austria. Over the last nine decades, it has developed from a small retail market to an international manufacturer of high-quality blended seasonings as well as additives for sausage, meat and fish production. With more than 300 employees at the Oftering location and some 592 employees globally, the family-owned company earns annual revenue of around 132 million euros. The company has a presence in over 62 countries with its own unit or retail partner.

**About TGW Logistics Group:**

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

TGW Logistics Group has subsidiaries in Europe, China and the US and more than 4,000 employees worldwide. In the 2020/2021 business year, the company generated a total turnover of 813 million euros.

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

**Pictures:**

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