**“It takes automation in order to succeed tomorrow and in the years to come.”**

* **An interview with Adrian Steiner, CEO of Thermoplan AG**
* **Swiss Thermoplan AG is one of the world market leaders in design and manufacturing of high-end fully automatic coffee machines for professional use**
* **A new highly automated shuttle warehouse made by TGW is how Thermoplan is preparing for the future**

**(Marchtrenk, 5. September 2019) On the shores of Lake Lucerne, TGW is building a highly automated shuttle warehouse for coffee machine specialist Thermoplan, which will go into operation as early as February 2020. Recently, the completion of the building's envelope was celebrated at the topping-out ceremony in the Swiss town of Weggis, while assembly of the shuttle system has already started. In an interview, Thermoplan CEO, Adrian Steiner, explained the reasons for going automatic, the role of ergonomics in designing the company’s picking workstations, and why Thermoplan is relying on a strong partnership with TGW.**

**Mr. Steiner, what challenges does B2B pose for Thermoplan – and what does this mean for the company’s intralogistics?**

**Adrian Steiner:** The most important thing for us is that we believe in Switzerland as a great production location. In order for us to be successful in our field of business tomorrow and in the years to come, we needed to invest in the automation of our material flow. At the same time, this investment will result in higher efficiency.

**What were the reasons for switching from a manual warehouse to a shuttle warehouse?**

**Adrian Steiner:** Among other things, the growing market volume played a big role in this decision because daily coffee consumption has been on the rise for years. Our customers benefit from this trend – and Thermoplan is growing along with them. Coffee machines have to function dependably and that is what our customers ultimately measure us against. In order to meet this global demand for quality management, our intralogistics must function perfectly, among other things to ensure the traceability of all components and products.

**From manual intralogistics in the past to fully-automated today: What does this changeover mean for Thermoplan?**

**Adrian Steiner:** Three and a half years ago we decided to automate our intralogistics and so we developed a master plan in cooperation with an external consultant. We proceeded step by step and began the changeover by introducing new software used for controlling our material flow. This has totally changed the way we work. The next step then was to up the training for our employees.

The third step now is final automation thanks to the shuttle warehouse made by TGW. As a small family business, this was a high-scale investment for Thermoplan – as well as a challenge. For a project like this you need professional know-how and a partner you can rely on. That was one of the reasons why we decided to go with TGW.

**What were the challenges in planning and connecting the shuttle warehouse to the existing facilities?**

**Adrian Steiner:** We actually wanted to design a building that would incorporate the shuttle warehouse. However, given the size of the system we needed, we quickly realized that it was impossible to do this on the existing premises. That's why we built the shuttle in a separate building and joined it to the existing facilities by means of a passerelle.

**What role did the local soil conditions play?**

**Adrian Steiner:** The plot where we are building our new facilities is called “Weiher” (German for pond) – and that says it all (laughs). From a geological point of view, the foothills of a mountain range extend into this area, but it still holds a lot of water. For best possible sturdiness, we had to drill 162 piles into the ground. If you were to string them together, they would have a total length of 2,185 meters. The foundations not only have to bear the weight of the building itself, but they also have to absorb the kinetic energy of the shuttles.

**Can you describe the highlights of the facility design?**

**Adrian Steiner:** The shuttle will have over 40,000 trays. The hall itself has a volume of 27,000 m³ – that alone is quite impressive. Seeing the 100 Stingray shuttles travel back and forth automatically next year will be great. I'm really looking forward to that.

This is a journey we are embarking on together with TGW. Having a partner who invests in new technologies and innovations and develops solutions in cooperation with us was very important to us. That's what made TGW perfect for us, right from the beginning.

**What role did ergonomics play in designing the picking workstations?**

**Adrian Steiner:** We have always made a great effort to keep our employees healthy and well. This is what we care most about. Accordingly, we have striven to create an ergonomic working environment – from acoustics, lighting conditions and desk height to the ergonomic design of TGW's height-adjustable picking workstations.

**Why did you choose TGW as your intralogistics specialist?**

**Adrian Steiner:** The values that TGW lives by and the way we interact with each other as businesses have convinced us to go with TGW, as did our need to invest in future technologies. TGW also reflects Thermoplan's corporate culture and values. It is all about jointly finding solutions for demanding tasks. Our partnership with TGW is very important to us so we can grow alongside each other. I am convinced that our joint automation journey will continue.

**Thank you for your time, Mr. Steiner!**

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**About TGW Logistics Group:**

TGW Logistics Group is a worldwide leading provider of intralogistics solutions. For almost 50 years this Austrian specialist has been providing automated systems for international customers from A as in Adidas to Z as in Zalando. As a systems integrator, TGW provides planning, production, and implementation of complex logistics centers – from mechatronics to robotics and from control systems to software solutions.

With more than 3,300 employees worldwide, TGW Logistics Group has offices in Europe, China, and in the USA. In the 2017/2018 business year the company achieved a total turnover of € 713 million.

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