



## Expanded scope in order picking at Schwan-Stabilo

### Pick by light to complement facilities in automated small parts warehouse

#### Over 1 million picks per year

After having seen its picking volume double within a few years, the stationery manufacturer Schwan-Stabilo realised that it had to expand the existing order picking concept for its automated small parts warehouse.

After a phase of comparing various technologies, the pick by light (PbL) solution was selected in 2010 as the most simple, reliable and flexible method.

Today, the PbL system complements the automated small parts warehouse operation and covers in particular the order picking for the approx. 350 high-turnover items.

#### Further growth possible

The newly created picking section has four so-called stations. These are set up at two levels next to the also newly set up fifth and sixth aisles of the warehouse and are supplied from there.

At each station, an operator picks the items from the continuous flow racks into cardboard boxes, which are linked to the warehouse picking locations via a conveyor system.

For further growth, the number of the stations can be increased to eight taking in two possible further levels of the warehouse.

#### High energy savings

By expanding the warehouse to the current six aisles, the number of

storage locations increased to 45,000 and the surface area of the distribution centre expanded to a total of 5,000 m<sup>2</sup>.

Due to the separate picking of the high-turnover items with the PbL system, the total annual distance travelled at the warehouse has gone down by 75 % from 40,000 km to just 10,000 km – with corresponding enormous energy savings.

#### Reduction in HR costs

Since the expansion, 2/3 of all order items are processed manually via PbL, which initially required more personnel.

But in spite of this, HR costs have gone down, because the higher productivity at the distribution centre meant that the picking could be performed in a single shift instead of the three shifts previously. This eliminated the need to pay supplements for late and night shifts.

In addition, the flexibility of the system allows two operators to work at each station so that productivity can also be maintained when faced with order volume peaks.

#### Overnight deliveries possible

Overnight deliveries used to be unthinkable. Thanks to the pick by light system, items for which orders are received by midday can be readied for dispatch the same day.



“We liked the solution from KBS best – solid, practical, good! The displays are very functional and without any bells and whistles that we don’t need.”  
Andreas Kerl,  
Distribution Manager

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