

**trans-o-flex**

# magazine

## How data drives logistics

*The digital products trans-o-flex develops • Data analysis creates added value • Manager for Artificial Intelligence appointed*

### **Veterinary Customer Forum**

New ideas thanks to intensive exchange with industry experts

### **Special Pharmaceuticals Service**

Same-day delivery throughout Austria

### **Case study Warehouse Logistics**

100% quality for nail varnishes from alessandro

## ++ VETERINARY CUSTOMER FORUM ++

## Intensive exchange gives rise to numerous suggestions

This summer, for the first time, trans-o-flex organised a customer forum specifically for the veterinary medicine sector. Seven representatives of companies that ship veterinary medicine accepted the invitation. They met for one day with six trans-o-flex representatives to discuss the situation and development of trans-o-flex and the industry in general. In two workshops, specific questions were discussed such as: Why are passive shipping solutions still being used for temperature-sensitive veterinary medicines? What are the pros and cons? What is trans-o-flex already doing well today and what is it doing less well? What products or services can help senders of veterinary medicines better manage their business? How can the shipping of high-grade veterinary medicine become safer during transit? Will the veterinary medicine market be subject to drastic legislative changes over the next three to five years? Will this affect distribution?

“The intensive and direct exchange with industry experts is tremendously important for a specialised express service provider like trans-o-flex,” said Lutz Blankenfeldt after the event. He is responsible for Strategy, Commercial and Mar-

keting at trans-o-flex and added: “Once again many suggestions came together and customers can be sure that we will use their suggestions to further improve our service for them.” The proposals and results of the discussion were summarised and have since been incorporated into trans-o-flex’s product development.

The first Veterinary Customer Forum was attended by representatives of Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica, Dechra Veterinary Products Deutschland, Intervet Deutschland, Veyx-Pharma and Virbac Tierarzneimittel.

The first Veterinary Customer Forum continued the series of customer forums in which trans-o-flex has specifically sought intensive discussions with representatives of core industries since 2015. To date, there have been four customer forums with representatives from the pharmaceutical industry (human medicine). Customer forums for the cosmetics industry and for CE (consumer goods and household appliance electronics) are also planned.

*At the first Veterinary Customer Forum, a total of 13 participants discussed the needs and development of the industry.*



### Legal notice

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## Dear Readers,

*The global village predicted more than 50 years ago is a reality today. We are living in it and there is no alternative. The image of the global village that the Canadian philosopher Marshall McLuhan developed in 1962 describes a situation that impacts enormously on our entire lives and not least on the tasks logistics service providers perform today and the significance of logistics in general for industry and trade. Our world has shrunk through electronic networking on the one hand, and through global trade on the other, into a village in which Berlin and Beijing are virtually neighbours. The world has grown together. Everything's connected. This increases the complexity of our lives in general and logistics in particular.*

*In our world based on the division of labour, many manufacturing companies and traders no longer generate logistical added value themselves. Rather, they delegate tasks ranging from shipping and warehousing to quality control, invoicing and returns processing to specialists such as trans-o-flex. At the same time, the demands on the quality of these services are increasing in several respects. Goods have to be delivered ever faster, have to arrive safe and undamaged, as if the goods from Beijing had come from the real neighbour just around the corner and had been delivered personally (and just as cheap...). Above all, however, the need for information and control across the entire supply chain is constantly increasing. It is precisely because shipping in a global village not only bridges the short distance between actual neighbours that shippers – and increasingly also consignees – want to know reliably and as far as possible in real time: When will the order arrive? Does the delivery include all the parts of the order? What was the temperature of the goods during transit? Who received the goods when and where?*

*At trans-o-flex, we have found answers to these questions. More are in the pipeline. In view of the increasing complexity of the tasks and challenges, a seemingly trivial but extremely important insight has helped us to do this. No one can develop a solution that is needed today alone; we can only do this in a team and through dialogue.*

*We are therefore in the process of establishing a culture of dialogue and team development across the board. Dialogue with customers, with employees and a cross-hierarchical dialogue between supervisors and teams. With the help of 270-degree feedback and individual coaching, we systematically assess the self-image and external image of our managers. How do I rate myself? How does my team rate me? Like my supervisor? As a result, our managers are supported in their efforts to live the culture of dialogue and increase the cooperation, productivity and innovative capacity of their teams.*

*This issue of our trans-o-flex magazine provides numerous examples of the innovative solutions we have developed and the culture of dialogue we have introduced. I hope you find the information in this magazine interesting and that you enjoy a pleasant read. And, be sure to enjoy the advantages of life in a global village and continue to reduce your own workload and that of your company by entrusting trans-o-flex with your shipment and logistics tasks.*

*Wolfgang P. Albeck  
Chief Executive Officer*



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***En route to becoming  
a data-driven logistics  
service provider***

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## ++ CERTIFICATES ONLINE ++

**Successful confirmation of all GDP and QM processes**

Without any critical complaints, trans-o-flex Express, trans-o-flex ThermoMed and trans-o-flex Logistik-Service have this year passed the audits according to DIN EN ISO 9001:2015 (Quality Management) and Good Distribution Practice (GDP 2013 / C343 / 01) for pharmaceuticals. trans-o-flex Express has also successfully completed recertification according to DIN EN ISO 14001:2015 (Environmental Management). The network locations in Munich and Weinheim were also audited with regard to the SQAS standard, which is important for the pharmaceutical and chemical industries. This certification was also successful. The current certificates are available online.



## ++ TRAINING &amp; SERVICE ++

**Own company founded for training and further professional qualification**

trans-o-flex Training & Service GmbH was founded to facilitate and intensify the training and further professional development of both our own employees and drivers working for our transport partners. The managing directors are Wolfgang P. Albeck and Michael Löckener. The company is a wholly-owned subsidiary of trans-o-flex Express GmbH and is based in Weinheim.

“With trans-o-flex Training & Service GmbH, it will be easier for us to prepare not only our own employees, but also employees of system partners or employees of transport partners for their tasks in the trans-o-flex network and to ensure the necessary qualifications and further training,” says Michael Löckener. Employees and drivers should receive comprehensive training and development, from on-boarding (when they join trans-o-flex) to targeted further professional qualification and talent management. “We are looking to achieve greater consistency in delivery quality in particular, to ensure and increase the quality of our operations in general and, last

but not least, to increase employee satisfaction through further training opportunities.”

The new company is expected to employ up to 25 people in the medium term. The majority of employees will be responsible for driver qualification and their regular further training. The first four driver trainers already started back in April. A further four driver trainers started in August.



## ++ CSR ASSESSMENT ++

### **trans-o-flex among the top eleven percent of forwarders**

How important is corporate social responsibility (CSR), i.e. sustainability and social responsibility, in the trans-o-flex Group? This question is being asked more and more frequently by customers and employees.

One of the most recognised responses is the CSR assessment by the global company Ecovadis. trans-o-flex was assessed by



Ecovadis for the third time in July and has increased its score by three points compared to the previous assessment. According to the study, trans-o-flex ranks among the top eleven percent of companies rated by Ecovadis in the "freight transport by road" sector. In the environmental category, trans-o-flex even ranks among the top four percent of the industry.

A total of 55,000 companies in 155 countries use Ecovadis' services. Consignors such as BASF, Bayer, DuPont, Johnson & Johnson, L'Oréal, Nestlé, Nokia or Sanofi log on to the Ecovadis platform and can view the CSR assessment of service providers. This saves them and their partners individual independent audits.

## ++ IDEAS MANAGEMENT ++

### **Customers also encouraged to make suggestions**

trans-o-flex has started to introduce a systematic ideas management system so that employees can use their creativity and know-how specifically for optimisation purposes. trans-o-flex has many long-standing employees who, thanks to their experience and expertise, can quickly see when a process is not running smoothly and how it can be improved. And since the introduction in the first companies in February of this year, the suggestions for improvement have literally been bubbling over. In the first five months, 76 practical suggestions for improvement have already been submitted. The ideas management team is also happy to consider external suggestions. If you have an idea about how something can be improved, accelerated, saved or optimised at trans-o-flex, please don't hesitate to e-mail the ideas management team. The address is: [guteidee@tof.de](mailto:guteidee@tof.de)



## ++ SOCIAL MEDIA ++

### **Business networks provide information about trans-o-flex**

Important innovations from trans-o-flex can also be accessed via the two social media channels Xing and LinkedIn, which specialise in business contacts. A large number of users are already using this service. The easiest way to do this is via the smartphone apps of LinkedIn or Xing. Simply enter trans-o-flex into the search field. If you then click on "Follow", you will automatically receive the latest news from the trans-o-flex family in the respective app. As you might expect, it is possible to do all this from a computer as well. Just open the respective social media page in your browser, search for trans-o-flex and follow.

++ AUDITED AND TRANSPARENT ++

# Core processes validated



trans-o-flex IT-Service GmbH has successfully completed the validation of three trans-o-flex core processes. "This makes it even easier than before for consignors to prove to their customers that their consignments sent with trans-o-flex arrive at the right consignee and are carried within the prescribed temperature range," says Stefan Thömmes, Managing Director of trans-o-flex's own IT subsidiary. Specifically, the processes traceability of a consignment, tracing information for a package and temperature curve were validated.

The traceability of a consignment is about how the signature obtained from the driver is assigned to a particular delivery. The validation confirms that the correct consignee of a consignment is always displayed, thereby ensuring that the consignment is delivered to the authorised consignee. The validation of the tracing information process for a package proves that and how trans-o-flex always assigns delivery information to the correct package. The validation of the temperature curve process shows and documents how trans-o-flex uniquely assigns specific temperature data to a specific consignment.

"Unlike certification, validation not only shows how a certain process works, but also proves that it works and achieves the desired goal," explains Thömmes. "The particular challenge of validation is that once a process has been validated, it cannot simply be changed without being revalidated."

Therefore, according to Thömmes – in contrast to certification – it does not make sense to validate the entire IT system, but only individual processes. "Otherwise, every optimisation, every further development of services would result in a revalidation of the entire system. And the resulting validation cycle would completely paralyse system development." For the same reason, trans-o-flex has waited with the validation until the planned, fundamental interventions in the IT system have been implemented. "We successfully relocated the trans-o-flex data centre and migrated the operating systems of our handhelds from Windows CE to Android. So nothing stood in the way of validation."

**++ NEW HOMEPAGE ++**

## ***Surf faster and more securely – more information***

It has never been faster, more flexible or more secure to get first-hand information about trans-o-flex online. The new Internet presence of the entire trans-o-flex logistics group has been online since August. "With our completely new offering, we are making a big leap forward and it will be much easier for customers and interested parties to quickly find information about us," says Lutz Blankenfeldt, Head of Strategy, Commercial and Marketing at trans-o-flex.

"Whether smartphone, tablet or PC – no matter which device is being used to search for trans-o-flex, the information is always optimised to ensure readability," explains Blankenfeldt. In addition to this responsive design, which automatically adapts to the device used, the new pages also use a new security certificate with SSL encryption. "This means that users also see the page in their browser as secure, and yet the page is still loaded faster than before," says Blankenfeldt.

The content of the offers of trans-o-flex-Express and trans-o-flex ThermoMed, previously distributed on separate homepages, has been merged and supplemented by new information offers, such as the temperature alarm (see box) or user examples.

### ***Please note: Are your goods being transported at the right temperature?***

With the trans-o-flex temperature alarm, a completely new service has been installed on the express service's new homepage. Every day it shows the maximum and minimum temperatures predicted and the probability that the goods will be delivered in a trans-o-flex vehicle without temperature control at more than 25 degrees or less than 15 degrees.

trans-o-flex uses this to provide continuous online information based on real temperature data. The service is powered by an algorithm of more than 32,000 measurements from the vehicles. This enables interested parties to see at any time how high the risk is that goods are being transported at too high or too low a temperature. As an alternative, reference is made to the products Ambient Express (15 to 25 degrees Celsius) or Thermo Express (2 to 8 degrees Celsius), where any such risk is ruled out.



COVER STORY

# *En route to becoming a data-driven logistics service provider*

*How trans-o-flex systematically collects and analyses data to create added value and why it has appointed its own AI Manager*

The physical shipment of consignments in parcels or on pallets is still the core business of the trans-o-flex logistics group. "But even today, shipment is no longer conceivable without data that predicts consignments, controls, documents, corrects or finally invoices the service," says Stefan Thömmes. The managing director of trans-o-flex IT-Service GmbH even goes one better. "We have long ceased being a product-driven company and are now well on the way to becoming a data-driven service provider. With trans-o-flex Ident, the first digital product has already been developed, and many more will follow in the future."

According to Thömmes, the path to becoming a data-driven company does not consist exclusively of data-supported products, of which there are a number in the development pipeline at trans-o-flex. He is convinced: "Today, every company must systematically and fundamentally clarify which data is available in which form, how it safeguards this data, how added value can be created from it and which additional data may be needed." All this belongs to the tasks of Tatjana Schröder, who has been working in Thömmes' team since May 2019 – in the newly created function as AI Manager and Data Scientist. AI is the abbreviation for artificial intelligence.

And data scientist defines the object that Schröder is to process scientifically – data.

### ***trans-o-flex insight consignee app unlocks data treasure***

"I review and analyse our existing data and look in particular at whether patterns are discernible within the data that enable us, for example, to identify imminent disturbances in the network before they occur," says Schröder. She has been with trans-o-flex since 2014 and has worked on the development of the trans-o-flex insight consignee app, among other things, before moving into the field of AI. "The app is one of the first approaches to making trans-o-flex's huge wealth of data transparent for customers and consignees alike, thereby providing added value." The app not only tells the consignee that one or more consignments are on their way to them, but also what the consignment consists of in detail, which consignor it comes from and whether it contains temperature-sensitive goods or dangerous goods. "This wealth of information is not available from any other service provider and allows larger consignees in particular to optimise their incoming goods."

Internally, the analysis and use of data is firmly established at trans-o-flex. "On the one hand, we use it as a decision-making aid for the management," recalls Thömmes, giving a few examples. "How many sites do we need if our volume grows by 20%? How many and which vehicles do we need if the number of express or ambient consignments increases by 30%? What is the best vehicle for a delivery route in Munich?" On the other hand, data is used daily to increase the efficiency of sorting and the utilisation of trucks or to rule out sources of error.

One example is the indoor TV in the trans-o-flex sorting centres. The warehouse employees can see on screens or via projectors what they have achieved so far in their shift and what is still to come. They can see, for example, how many packages were sorted in the last hour or in the previous shift. How many packages and how many pallets are announced? How warm is it in the warehouse? At which gates the next departures are due, and how many formed relation units are there in the warehouse that can be loaded onto the respective lines?

These dashboards developed by trans-o-flex in 2016 as part of its digitisation drive receive their information auto-



matically from trans-o-flex's core operative system. The data is prepared site-specifically and displayed on the screens for all to see in the warehouse. While shift managers used to have to retrieve information from the office and then assign tasks to employees based on volume and urgency, a glance at the dashboard is now enough to see what the next tasks are and what their priority is. This prevents delayed departures and optimises the deployment of employees.

## ***Digitally controlled services for consignees***

But Thömmes does not want to stop at these internal applications. "The recipient of a consignment increasingly wants to determine when and how he receives goods. That's why we're working on services for consignees and can imagine making them paying customers too." Thömmes sees a need, for example, for consignees who are urgently waiting for certain goods. In future, they could be supplied by trans-o-flex within a certain time window or order and pay for a particularly early delivery – even if the sender only offers a standard ship-

ment service. "We can make all this possible with the help of data in our shipment control system."

Much more would be possible if, for example, consignors were to make greater use of the possibility of providing their consignments with more information to accompany them during shipment. "This can make it possible, for example, to ship pharmaceuticals with individual temperature windows," explains Thömmes. Background: In order to ensure GDP conformity for as many products as possible, trans-o-flex has had to set the temperature ranges for actively temperature-controlled shipments to relatively narrowly defined standards, i.e. 15 to 25 degrees Celsius and 2 to 8 degrees Celsius respectively. "The manufacturer, who is the only one who knows the stability data of his products, could, however, define individual temperature windows for his consignments on the basis of the stability data." These would then be stored in the QR code of the consignment and individually checked in the standard target/actual comparison. "In this way, the shipper ensures that these consignments can be delivered without difficulty, even if the consignment would have to be stopped according to the standard specifications and requested before delivery."

## ***The first digital product***

trans-o-flex has developed its Ident service to ensure that particularly sensitive and high-value consignments are delivered exclusively to a specific person or place. There are various versions of the service to meet different security requirements. However, the data accompanying the consignment always plays the main role. Because it determines whether the parcel or the pallet can be delivered or not. Data management forms the basis of this service. That is why trans-o-flex Ident is the company's first digital product.

This is how it works: trans-o-flex receives a package from the shipper whose accompanying data record contains an additional identification code. The consignee also receives this identification code so that they can identify themselves when accepting the consignment. trans-o-flex processes the electronic data and delivers the physical consignment to the consignee. As soon as the driver scans an Ident consignment so that he can hand it over to the consignee, he is automatically notified that the consignee must identify

themselves with an Ident code. If the recipient does not do this, the driver cannot deliver the consignment. The sender is automatically informed about this via the customer portal mytof.de and can decide on how to proceed. If the recipient can identify themselves with the Ident code, he receives the consignment and acknowledges receipt by signature. If you are interested in trans-o-flex Ident, please contact us by e-mail: Sonja.Schneider-Hipper@tof.de





Young teams develop digital products in the trans-o-flex IT department

## **Data only becomes valuable through its analysis**

For Thömmes, "data is the new value-added driver." This applies in particular to data whose value goes beyond its original purpose of shipment control and optimisation. "With the help of trans-o-flex, pharmaceutical companies could, for example, find out on which days pharmacies prefer to order in a certain postcode area." This could be analysed, for example, while fully preserving the protection of personal data from the shipping data – anonymised, but structured regionally. "And this is just one example of how we as a logistics service provider can use the data available to us to close the gap for our customers to their customers."

And the more consignments are delivered directly to pharmacies instead of via wholesalers, the more accurate the knowledge becomes that pharmaceutical companies gain about their pharmacy customers on the basis of order and delivery data. "And the better they can make tailor-made offers to pharmacies."

According to Thömmes, all these examples prove a fundamental insight: "Data is of no use in itself; it must be prepared for the purpose in question and made transparent." Know-how and effort are behind this. "This is why future information-supported products that manage without additional physical transport services or shorten shipment times will also have a price," says Thömmes. "Because in a data-driven company the data is part of the core competence, the products based on this core competence must of course be paid for accordingly." For him it is clear: "The added value we offer with data is not free." ■

### **++ CUSTOMER-ORIENTED IT ++**

#### **IT certification according to ISO 20000 achieved**

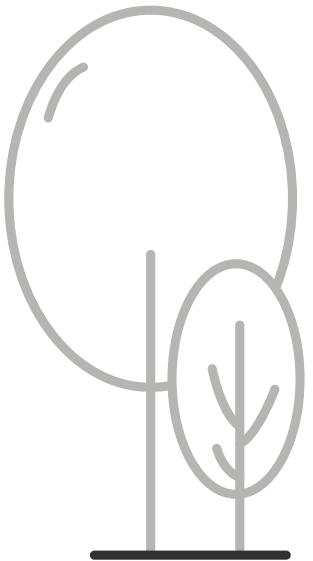
The trans-o-flex logistics group successfully completed certification according to the new ISO 20000 standard in the area of IT quality management. This sees trans-o-flex IT-Service GmbH extending its existing quality management into the IT sector. "Certification according to the new standard is proof that we have successfully established a process-oriented management approach, that the entire IT operation is geared to customer needs, that quality management and continuous improvement processes are just as firmly anchored in our organisation as deviation and incident management," says Stefan Thömmes, Managing Director of IT Service.



## ADDED VALUE THANKS TO TELEMATICS

## *Always on time, always at the right temperature, always informed in real time*

***Project Control Tower: Why trans-o-flex checks every three minutes whether scheduled vehicles are on their way, whether they are on the right route and whether all consignments are delivered on time***



“Imagine every consignment always arrives on time, at the right temperature, sending constant information about the whereabouts, and if anything unforeseen happens, immediately proactively notifying the customer. Can we pull this off at trans-o-flex?” This was the question that a team from trans-o-flex IT-Service GmbH was asked at the beginning of the year. The answer was provided by the Control Tower project. It reads: “We can do it, most features will be implemented by autumn, the rest by 2020,” says Stefan Thömmes, Managing Director of the trans-o-flex IT subsidiary. And he also reveals how his employees solved the task.

“If you always know where a scheduled services truck is, whether it is on time or how many minutes late it is, you can do a lot with this information,” says Thömmes. “You can improve internal

processes, you can increase the security of shipments and you can give customers information very early if it is certain that specific consignments cannot be delivered the next day as planned. And we are the first major express service provider in Germany to offer these opportunities.” The linchpin of this project, which is part of the trans-o-flex digitisation drive, is the continuous collection of data that almost all trans-o-flex vehicles will supply in the future.

The hardware core that has already been implemented is a telematics unit that is permanently installed in all trailers regularly used by trans-o-flex for scheduled services. For spontaneously booked additional trailers there will be a mobile telematics solution. “We receive a GPS signal from our vehicles every three minutes that tells us where the trailer is at the moment,” explains

Christian Uhlig, who coordinated the project in IT Service. “This data forms the basis of the Internet-based application upon which we have developed it.” The Control Tower program, which is now used by more than 200 trans-o-flex Operations employees, compares the actual trailer data with the target data for the respective route. “The program automatically puts all trailers that are delayed or have a longer stop than expected on an observation list. In future, deviations from specified routes will also be detected.” According to Uhlig, this so-called geofencing means: “We specify the route for a truck driver, including exactly where he is not allowed to drive or stop. By continuously synchronising in real time and automatically alerting us of any deviations, we can respond immediately, making the shipment more transparent and predictable.”



The estimated time of arrival at the destination is also indicated for each vehicle. This value, which is internally referred to as ETA (estimated time of arrival), is continuously updated. Uhlig: "In the event of a delay, the delay is indicated to the minute in relation to the timetable." This enables those responsible at the destination to decide whether, for example, they are still waiting for a delayed service and sorting the consignments to the delivery vehicles or whether this jeopardises the punctual delivery of the remaining consignments.

Since August, Control Tower not only indicates the position of each scheduled service truck on a map and the calculated arrival time, but the program can also display the content of the trailers. "If a pallet is loaded into a long-distance trailer, then the pallet is scanned and linked to the trailer, and before that, each package is scanned and married to the pallet on which it is packed. This means that we know clearly which packages are on a particular trailer. If the trailer is delayed, e.g. due to a complete closure due to black ice, and the consignments cannot be delivered as planned, trans-o-flex can inform the consignors concerned in advance." Consignees will also be able to receive this information later.

"The data we collect here still offers many development opportunities with which we can further increase the information density, transparency and predictability of our shipments," says Thömmes. "With geofencing, for example, we can ensure that trailers with particularly valuable cargo do not drive to certain parking areas, or we can prevent fraudulent attempts at tampering." It would also be possible for trans-o-flex employees to be informed in real time of route changes, uncoupling attempts or unforeseen door openings. "Such information may indicate attempted pilferage or theft. We will then not only have the opportunity to contact the police, but also to prevent a lorry from continuing its journey." ■



*The address of the new TMA site in the Wien-Nord logistics centre is: trans-o-flex ThermoMed Austria GmbH, Hall E, Julius-Raab-Straße 26, 2203 Großbeersdorf, Austria.*

## New depot in Vienna

The physical centre of the new supply concept for special pharmaceuticals will be a new ThermoMed Austria (TMA) depot in Vienna. The warehouse and transshipment facility in the Wien-Nord logistics centre is responsible for the collection and delivery of goods to the regions of Vienna, Lower Austria and northern and central Burgenland. On the other hand, the site also serves as a central warehouse for those high-priced, patient-specific medicines for which ThermoMed Austria (TMA) organises a nationwide same-day delivery. From here, the other three TMA sites involved in the same-day concept are supplied with the required pharmaceuticals overnight when their stocks are running low.

For the past twelve years, TMA has been based in Wiener Neudorf in the Austrian capital. In the new depot, which

TMA, as the first tenant, will probably be moving into at the end of September, the Austrian trans-o-flex subsidiary has more than 3,000 square metres of storage and handling space in two temperature ranges: 2 to 8 and 15 to 25 degrees Celsius. In addition, there are almost 350 square metres of office, social and sanitary facilities for the 55 employees as well as an area of a good 1,300 square metres for the safe parking of the vehicles. The Wien-Nord logistics centre is directly connected to the Vienna's outer ring S1 motorway. "The move was an investment in a high-performance facility from which we will continue to expand and improve our service," says TMA Managing Director Christian Lienhart.

**SPECIAL PHARMACEUTICALS SERVICE**

## ***ThermoMed Austria launches nationwide same-day delivery***

***Minimal warehousing and fast delivery of high-priced pharmaceuticals to 1,500 pharmacies and hospitals – Exclusive cooperation with binder pharma services***

trans-o-flex ThermoMed Austria (TMA) is the first carrier in Austria to launch a nationwide same-day service for special pharmaceuticals. "Public pharmacies and hospitals can place their orders by 12 noon to receive deliveries on the same day," says Christian Lienhart, Managing Director of TMA. "Even later orders are possible, depending on the delivery address." In most cases, Lienhart plans a delivery within two to four hours of receiving the order. "Only for consignees in very remote regions are we required to calculate five to six hours delivery time."

In order to ensure same-day delivery to the approximately 1,500 Austrian pharmacies and hospitals, the goods must be stored at four TMA sites. "We start from the nearest warehouse and deliver the consignment directly," explains Lienhart. "Our largest site in Vienna serves as our central warehouse. From here, not only the consignees of the surrounding regions receive their deliveries, but the other three warehouses are also replenished overnight when consignments are called off from them."

While the physical warehousing and distribution of goods from TMA sites is carried out by TMA personnel, order processing, dispatch optimisation, control of the flow of goods and quality management are handled by binder pharma services (BPHS). Both companies have entered into an exclusive partnership for the new same-day concept.

The company, which was only founded in 2016, sees itself primarily as a ser-

vice provider for the pharmaceutical and healthcare industries. "We combine many years of experience in the pharmaceutical and IT sectors and design processes that enable optimal logistical handling. Digitisation, scalability and precision are the central aspects," says company founder Axel Binder. BPHS also holds licences as a pharmaceutical wholesaler at all four locations, which form the physical backbone of the same-

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*Regular delivery on the next working day, including Saturday, or delivery on the same day: Customers of trans-o-flex ThermoMed Austria can now combine both variants in a tailor-made logistics concept for high-priced pharmaceuticals.*

day concept. "The licences pursuant to §63 of the Medicinal Products Act were an essential prerequisite for our being able to implement this concept."

This includes, for example, that BPHS provides special roll containers for the storage and picking of medicines. Binder: "The steel containers have their own temperature sensors and report the current temperature at fixed intervals to our servers via a wireless network. We also operate our own IT infrastructure at all four sites, which enables us to transfer picking and shipping orders directly to TMA. In addition, our systems are connected to the TMA shipment system and communicate the consignment data in TMA format almost in real time." BPHS receives the orders from Monday to Friday by 6.30 p.m. and then forwards the orders to the site that can reach the consignee the quickest. Orders received on Friday afternoons can be delivered by 12 noon on Saturdays.

"The cost of same-day delivery throughout Austria is very high and therefore companies will only use this service for very special, high-priced drugs. However, the market potential for such innovative solutions is there – we are already in advanced negotiations with two customers and expect to start in September," says Binder. ■

*Axel Binder, owner of  
binder pharma services GmbH*



*Christian Lienhart, Managing Director of  
trans-o-flex ThermoMed Austria GmbH*

## ***Two partners – one concept***

Axel Binder and Christian Lienhart jointly developed the concept for the Austria-wide same-day supply of special pharmaceuticals. Before becoming self-employed, the 40-year-old Binder worked for 20 years in leading positions at well-known Austrian pharmaceutical, wholesale and logistics companies. Since 2016, he has focused on his own company binder pharma services, which provides services to pharmaceutical and healthcare companies ([www.bphs.at](http://www.bphs.at)).

In June 2017, 44-year-old Lienhart took over responsibility for sales, quality management, IT and operations as Managing Director of trans-o-flex ThermoMed Austria. The qualified logistics manager, has many years of experience in national and international logistics management. He has worked for instance for 17 years at Schier, Otten & Co. as branch manager and also as Head of Sales and Head of the Air/Sea Department. He worked for five years as branch manager at Transdanubia in Kalsdorf and almost four years as branch manager for the forwarding company Englmayer in Wundschuh and in Leopoldsdorf.

## SERVICES EXTENDED

## Express with no ifs or buts

Since July of this year, 36-year-old Eugen Günther has been in charge of trans-o-flex sales. His main objective is to increase the number of express consignments carried by trans-o-flex national and international networks. In this interview, Günther explains why customers increasingly perceive trans-o-flex as an express service, what the favourite product of trans-o-flex express customers is and what special advantages the Group's express portfolio offers.

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**For about a year now, trans-o-flex has been using the term Express in its name. Is trans-o-flex perceived as an express service in the market?**

That's just in the process of changing. After all, our product portfolio has long corresponded to that of an express service provider, and we have even extended that further. Our long-standing customers also know that we offer express products like before 12 noon, before 10 am, Next Day Guarantee and more. Nevertheless, in the past the market did not perceive us entirely as a genuine express service because we were a closed system until now.

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**What do you mean by that?**

In order to be able to send something, a complete customer connection process had to be carried out. Typical express customers, however, want an open system, since express delivery often arises from an ad hoc request. There must be the option of being able to send something immediately.

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**Does trans-o-flex offer this?**

Yes, that's why we introduced trans-o-flex.now last year. With this online tool, even sporadic users can spontaneously and simply order an express delivery that is collected on the same day. ➤



Is not only a fan of express consignments, but also of the Bundesliga football team Borussia Dortmund: Eugen Günther, Head of Sales at trans-o-flex, hopes that his black-yellow team will finally take the championship trophy from Bayern in the new season.

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***What is the favourite express product of trans-o-flex customers?***

Currently it is still our delivery service before 12 noon the next day. However, we see the greatest potential in deliveries before 9 a.m., which we introduced in 2018. This service is in high demand, particularly in the B2B market.

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***Why do many trans-o-flex customers book this or another express option?***

Often the requirement for express delivery is driven by the recipient, who simply needs certain products by a specific time. However, there are also examples where the consignor generally sees a competitive advantage in delivering to his customers as early as possible, or by noon at the latest, in order to make it easier for them to distribute the products on the same day.

Another important reason for using time-definite deliveries is that recipients can better control their incoming goods if they know exactly when their goods will arrive at the latest.

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***What are the strengths of trans-o-flex's express services?***

A unique selling point of trans-o-flex in the express market is without doubt the combination of active temperature control and express delivery, whether in the range of 15 to 25 degrees Celsius or at 2 to 8 degrees Celsius. Another USP is our combi-freight service. Often not only small packages have to be dispatched in a hurry, but also pallets and quite often a combination of them. We offer a one-stop service for such deliveries. Further advantages of trans-o-flex's express services are our flexible network, the wide product range which leaves nothing to be desired, the option of sending several packages as one consignment or the fact that every trans-o-flex customer has a personal contact person.

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***Around 97% of all standard trans-o-flex consignments are delivered the next day. Is this value too good for senders to say: I don't pay an express surcharge for all my consignments, just so that the few exceptions arrive the next day?!***

No, on the contrary. High performance is a hallmark of our quality and reliability. That way the customer really knows: They can do it! In many cases, however, this is not enough. Rather, our customers want to be able to rely 100% on their consignment arriving the next day or even by a specific time. And this is precisely our Express Promise, which we even back with a money-back guarantee.

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***What about international express products? Does trans-o-flex need to adapt here?***

Definitely not! For many years now, we have been successfully delivering shipments internationally with our EURODIS and EUROTEMP networks and work together with very efficient national partners. They also offer in the express market what consignors and consignees expect in their country. Our international express service is therefore not a uniform standard service throughout Europe, but a country- and customer-specific solution that is worth every cent you pay for it. ■

**TRANSPARENCY IN THE WAREHOUSE**

***“I can finally sleep peacefully again”***

*All-round worry-free service for 2,500 items and more than 60,000 shipping orders per year: Why alessandro International, a specialist in nail cosmetics, has awarded trans-o-flex the contract for warehouse logistics following its transport logistics activities*

Since the foundation of alessandro 30 years ago, trans-o-flex has been distributing the nail polish specialist's deliveries to customers in Germany and several neighbouring countries. But it took almost three decades and some incisive experiences before alessandro entrusted trans-o-flex not only with shipping but also with warehouse logistics. “We were actually pretty satisfied with our first warehouse logistics service provider, Esüdro,” remembers Andreas Zander, who acts as Head of Logistics at alessandro. “But then the Einkaufsgenossenschaft Deutscher

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Drogisten, as Esüdro was officially called, went bankrupt and had to completely cease business in March 2018. When we were looking for a replacement, we probably had trans-o-flex on our radar as a proven carrier, but not yet as a warehouse logistics provider." Instead, it was to be a service provider whose warehouse was located no more than 100 kilometres from the company's headquarters in Düsseldorf.

The spatial proximity was achieved. But it didn't help. The logistics quality went down. alessandro suffered – and with it the customers. There were major data and processing problems including delays in delivery. Long-standing customers cried out and prompted the then owners to appoint a new managing director.

"Then two aspects came together," Zander continues. "On the one hand, Sonja-Schneider-Hipper, the trans-o-flex account manager responsible for us, was very persistent and wanted to bring trans-o-flex on board as a warehouse service provider. On the other hand, our new managing director was

familiar with trans-o-flex's entire portfolio and gave the company the opportunity to come up with a concept." From then on, everything progressed very quickly.

"Our first contact with alessandro about a logistics concept was in June 2018," recalls Peter Astor, who developed the alessandro solution together with his team at trans-o-flex Logistik-Service. "We took stock and developed an integrated logistics concept that included everything alessandro needed to optimally handle its products and satisfy its customers: from quality control, warehousing and dangerous goods handling to order picking and shipping." The contract was signed in November 2018. "A month earlier, the first deliveries were sent from the trans-o-flex warehouse in Weinheim."

"We decided on trans-o-flex relatively quickly for three reasons," says Zander. "First, the concept was excellent and we felt that people knew what they were talking about and that they could implement it quickly." The second reason was the



one-stop service, which was expected to lead to late cut-off times and minimise interface problems between storage and shipping. “The third reason were the good experiences we had earlier with the distribution network.” But have these impressions, expectations and hopes also been confirmed in practice?

**“99.9% of the feedback from our customers is positive.”**

Zander takes a deep breath before answering with a sigh. “Yes, I can finally sleep peacefully again!” And then he adds without being asked: “99.9% of the feedback from our customers is positive. It’s now almost a year since we handed over the entire logistics to trans-o-flex, and we had around 40 customer complaints during the entire period, some of which were still our own fault. We had 40 complaints every day with the previous service provider.”

Via trans-o-flex and its international distribution partners, alessandro now ships around 50,000 consignments per year by truck. Around 80% of these go to German customers, the rest to the Benelux countries, Austria, France, Switzerland, Portugal, Finland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, Estonia, Italy and Poland. In addition, the trans-o-flex logistics service also prepares sea and air freight shipments to other countries, which are then taken over by other service providers. “The coordination between warehouse and shipment logistics is perfect. For us, this interface virtually goes unnoticed.”

What impresses Zander the most, however, is the transparency and accuracy of the warehouse management. “We had the impression in the run-up to the visit that it was a clean warehouse that was well organised, and in fact trans-o-flex had already processed all the backlog orders from the previous service provider two weeks after launch. But we really wanted to know for sure.” This is why Zander sent an external auditor to Weinheim when the entire inventory was moved to the trans-o-flex

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## **Specialist for beautiful fingernails**

alessandro International was founded in 1989, the year of the German reunification, and has since developed into one of the leading international companies for nail cosmetics. Inspired by the mission "Beautiful nails for everyone", alessandro has developed innovative products and tailor-made treatment concepts that are offered to both professional nail studios and end users alike. The Düsseldorf-based company has a production centre in Austria, operates in Europe with its own sales offices and outside Europe with sales partners.



*Andreas Zander,  
Head of Logistics at  
alessandro*

warehouse. "He checked 100 of the total of 1,200 shelving spaces from which orders are picked one by one and counted them individually: there was not a single deviation." Due to the error-free inventory management, alessandro can save itself the full inventory. "We are now doing a continuous inventory without interrupting operations. Each space will be counted at least once a year."

The logistics manager at alessandro attributes the transparency in the processes and documentation above all to the efficient IT support. "The IT solution is flexible on the one hand and fast and accurate on the other." One example of the flexibility and speed for Zander was the EDI connection of alessandro's major customer Galeria Karstadt Kaufhof. "They used an existing solution, which they only had to adapt and the job was done as quickly as possible at reasonable conditions." In order to describe the transparency and accuracy of the processes and their documentation, the 50-year-old has no hesitation in thinking of another example: "As soon as an employee has picked up and scanned a picking item and it is no longer on the shelf but on the trolley, trans-o-flex displays this in the inventory management system."

Last but not least, as a seasoned professional who has already worked in logistics departments in retail, forwarding and industry, Zander was pleased to learn more with trans-o-flex. "When it came to dangerous goods, trans-o-flex asked completely different questions and provided much more input than other service providers, who, for example, were not interested in the water hazard classes of our gels and varnishes. Internally, we have benefited greatly from this professional exchange and the information and, among other things, have expanded and adapted the master data of various products." ■

## MORE SUSTAINABLE AND PRODUCTIVE

## 17 million for new depot in Westphalia

On a 33,000 square metre site in the Westphalian town of Hamm-Rhynern, a transshipment centre is currently being built which will further increase capacity and productivity in the trans-o-flex network and reduce the environmental footprint. On 25 June, the shareholders and management of trans-o-flex laid the foundation stone for the logistics centre in the presence of numerous representatives from politics and business. "In Hamm-Rhynern, we will for the first time be establishing a standard that will serve in future as an environmental and economic benchmark for further conversions and new buildings," says Wolfgang P. Albeck, Chief Executive Officer of trans-o-flex. Around 17 million euros will be invested in the new facility, which is scheduled to go into operation in spring 2020.

A photovoltaic system to generate electricity will be installed on the roof of the more than 8,000 square metre transshipment depot. "We can use the energy to operate the automatic sorting system, to control the tempera-

ture of the load compartments of the vehicles before loading and to charge the batteries of possible electric vehicles used by employees, for whose cars we are planning a number of e-charging points," adds Albeck. The depot will be tailored for use within the trans-o-flex network and to facilitate handling in different temperature ranges. "We will be handling goods in the ambient range of 15 to 25 degrees as well as in the refrigerated range between 2 and 8 degrees Celsius." As a result, the new facility will be able to merge two previously separate trans-o-flex Group transshipment points. "We can integrate both the transshipment of refrigerated pharmaceuticals in the ThermoMed network and the transshipment of actively temperature-controlled goods in the room temperature range as well as non-temperature-controlled goods in the trans-o-flex Express network into the new facility in Hamm-Rhynern." Both facilities are currently located in Dortmund. "This will create further synergies between our networks."

*Laying the foundation stone for a logistics centre designed to set environmental and economic standards (from left to right): Peter Amberger (trans-o-flex shareholder), Sakir Ademi (future branch manager of the new site in Hamm-Rhynern), Thomas Hunsteger-Petermann (Lord Mayor of the City of Hamm), Dr. Karl-Georg Steffens (Managing Director, Wirtschaftsförderungsgesellschaft Hamm mbH), Wolfgang P. Albeck (CEO of trans-o-flex).*



## LOAD CARRIERS

# Lighter, sturdier, cleaner

## Why trans-o-flex bought 30,000 plastic pallets

If only one or two out of 30 pallets, which have been tested for two years under the harsh operating conditions of a branch, are slightly damaged, this (also) speaks for the stability and longevity of this load carrier. However, this is only one reason why trans-o-flex now uses so-called Euro H1 pallets nationwide for shipments between its sites. "The change has numerous operational advantages," says Jean Fürst. The Head of Handling was responsible for introducing the H1 pallets, of which trans-o-flex purchased a total of 30,000 units. The purchase of the pallets marked an investment in the millions. "Because the hygienic pallets last much longer, they are more environmentally friendly than traditional wooden pallets and the investment will reduce our costs in the medium term."

The wooden Euro pallets used so far withstood an average of eight cycles at trans-o-flex. They were then so damaged that they had to be replaced. The new Euro H1 pallets had withstood more than 450 cycles by the end of the test. They were always used between Hanover and Hamburg. The plastic pallet is also lighter than the one made of wood, which now weighs 24 kilos, absorbs more and more moisture in the course of its short life and becomes

even heavier. The plastic competitor weighs 18 kilos, a quarter less. And it retains its weight and its appearance. "Wooden pallets become dark and dirty through use. And pharmaceutical customers who give us new, light-coloured wooden pallets criticise the fact that they get dark pallets back and usually do not accept them either. Because only light-coloured pallets correspond to quality class A, which is GDP-compliant. This is also an issue in internal operations, as loading aids must not be contaminated here either." The plastic pallets are GDP-compliant as long as they are ready for use.

The new H1 pallets also mean changes to some processes. For example, mixed pallets coming from a customer are packed in the branch as before so



*The new Euro H1 pallets are also approved for the food industry. This was confirmed by the manufacturer Schoeller Allibert in Schwerin.*

***“Because the hygienic pallets last much longer, they are more environmentally friendly than traditional wooden pallets and the investment will reduce our costs in the medium term.”***

that the collis can be transferred from the pallet to the sorter and automatically transported to the correct chute. However, the empty wooden pallets are then not used for onward shipment in scheduled services. Rather, they are collected and, if possible, returned to the customer at the next collection. The parcels are now packed onto the plastic load carriers for regular shipment to the delivering company. And here, too, there is a process change. Because every H1 pallet is not only marked with trans-o-flex, but also has a QR code, which allows each pallet to be uniquely identified. When a master relation unit is formed, the QR code is linked to the respective relation label by scan. This link and the further scans along the shipping route allow the history of each H1 pallet to be mapped. trans-o-flex-IT has adapted and further developed the processes in such a way that the allocation of pallets is also booked automatically and the return from the delivery point to the collecting point can be better controlled.

An expansion of the system is already planned for the coming year. For example, the pallet manufacturer has been commissioned to develop a suitable clip-on frame. A frame that encloses the pallet from three sides is planned. This means that each pallet can be optimally loaded because the surface

can be fully utilised without items protruding, which could damage them later during shipping. The frame can be pulled together on the open side with a strap so that the entire structure is stable without the pallets having to be shrink-wrapped. Fürst: “The combination of H1 pallet and clip-on frame promises many more improvements. We want to test it as soon as possible.” ■

***At 18 kg, the plastic pallet weighs a quarter less than the wooden version.***



## INTERNATIONAL

## Third Gold Medal for Quality

trans-o-flex was presented with the Gold Quality Award for the third time in a row at the annual conference of EURODIS, the network operating in 36 European countries. "I am very happy about this award," said trans-o-flex CEO Wolfgang P. Albeck when he received the certificate. "After all, quality is our key success factor and cannot be valued highly enough." In addition to the award for quality, the winners of the two other internal EURODIS competitions were also announced. The Italian partner won the gold medal in Sales. This year, the award in the Partner Support category went to In Time in Slovakia.

In each category, the performance over the entire year 2018 was measured. The competitions are based on clearly defined criteria. For example, the quality award measures how accurately and quickly the partners comply with the defined processes in the network. For this purpose, all data from collection to delivery is evaluated every day. The various consignment scans, data transmission, consignment information or proof of delivery play a decisive role here.



A joyous occasion: EURODIS Managing Director Christian Knoblich presented trans-o-flex CEO Wolfgang P. Albeck with the certificate for the Quality Award, which his company had won once again.

## ST. INGBERT EXPANDED

***More tasks – greater customer proximity***

In order to achieve greater customer proximity, the trans-o-flex site in St. Ingbert, Saarland, has taken on additional tasks. The branch, which previously only delivered consignments, now also collects consignments from consignors. "The introduction of customer collection and sorting on night routes to other locations in St. Ingbert means more customer proximity in the true

sense of the word," says David de Vega from Operational Development. "We thus shorten the distances from collection to feeding into our network. This increases the stability of the system, but is only economically viable when a certain collection volume is reached in a region. This volume has now been reached in the St. Ingbert catchment area."

In order to ensure the smooth transition to the feed-in system in St. Ingbert, the individual customers were converted step by step. The cargo handling depot in St. Ingbert had previously been air-conditioned. This investment ensured that the ambient consignments are sorted at temperatures between 15 and 25 degrees Celsius.



## INTEGRATED NETWORK

***Seven further sites taken over under own management***

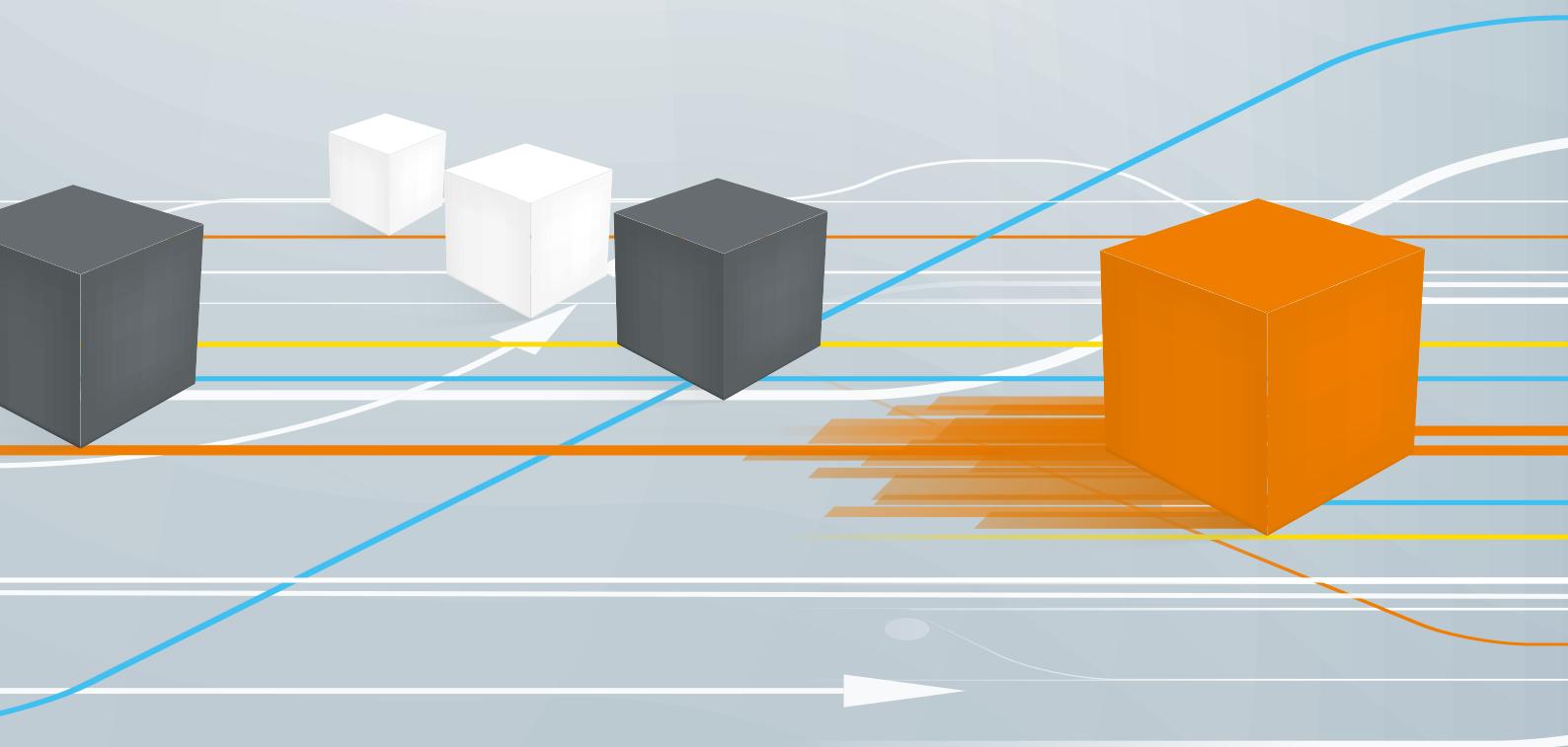
In the first half of 2019, trans-o-flex has taken over seven further sites under its own management on the way to an integrated network. These are the distribution companies Alzenau, Chemnitz, Dresden, Erfurt, Hanover, Herford and Osnabrück, which were formerly system partners. In the trans-o-flex Express network, more than 98% of all consignments are now sent via the company's own sites.

"We have thus reached another milestone in network integration," says Wolfgang P. Albeck, CEO of trans-o-flex. And he stresses: "The reason for this is not that we were or are dissatisfied with the performance of our often long-standing system partners. Nevertheless, the targeted takeover of sites is an important building block in our quality strategy. Experience has shown that some topics can be im-

plemented more easily and quickly at our own sites." According to Albeck, an integrated network is best suited to meet the high requirements of a premium service provider. "Particularly in the case of digital requirements – where the intervals between individual innovations are becoming ever shorter – the implementation of innovation in an integrated network is easier."



## **With express speed into the future**



Sometimes things simply have to go faster, as many of our clients discover every day. And we have a solution for that. Whether planned shipments or ad hoc – our express promise applies to all customers and there are virtually no limits to the possibilities. Simply order your express delivery via your usual interface or trans-o-flex.now and your goods will arrive even faster. You determine the time slot\* and whether active temperature control\*\* is required, from small parcels to pallet shipments or as combined freight.

**Express with no ifs or buts!**

### **Any further questions?**

Your contact in sales is looking forward to your call.

\* Before 10 o'clock, before 12 noon or next-day delivery  
\*\* 2–8 degrees Celsius, 15–25 degrees Celsius