

# *trans·o·flex* **magazine**

## ***Ingeniously digital***

*What advantages the completely redesigned trans-o-flex online booking service offers and how it works*



### ***Prizes for quality***

Not only has Arvato awarded trans-o-flex a prize – Focus Money and other media have as well

### ***Service for hairdressers***

Why cosmetics group Kao has relied on trans-o-flex for almost 30 years

### ***Returnable box for vet use***

How MSD Animal Health saves 60 t of cardboard packaging every year with trans-o-flex

## ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

# The best stories from 50 years of trans-o-flex



Combi-freight in an entirely different way: In the 1970s, many trans-o-flex consignments were still delivered with estate cars.

Because trans-o-flex has been in business for 50 years this year, the next issue of this magazine will be devoted in detail to the anniversary – and all customers can take part. Send us your best story with trans-o-flex! This can be a funny anecdote, a case in which trans-o-flex helped you or your company out of a jam, but also an embarrassing mishap or personal memories of individuals. We are also looking for newspaper reports, historical photos, letters, advertising material or similar.

Send us your memories, experiences or documents by e-mail or post. We would like to use your memories in our anniversary issue or for an anniversary presentation. The originals will be treated with care and will, of course, be returned. However, if you no longer need an original and would like to make it available to the trans-o-flex archive, you can note this separately. Many thanks in advance and: You can look forward to an exciting issue!



Please send your contributions by e-mail to [claudia.hepper@tof.de](mailto:claudia.hepper@tof.de) or by post to trans-o-flex Express GmbH, Marketing, Hertzstraße 10, 69469 Weinheim.

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Errors and omissions excepted. The details given in this magazine do not, in any circumstances, replace the General Terms and Conditions of Business of the trans-o-flex companies. For ease of reference, in German the masculine form is used to designate persons (e.g. the customer). Such terms should be understood to apply to both sexes.



## Dear Readers,

Given the prizes and awards that trans-o-flex has won in recent months, it's hard not to get carried away. Naturally, we are proud of this. That is why there is a separate section in this issue to make room for the various company rankings in which trans-o-flex ranks among the best. But as nice and important as the reviews from independent media such as Focus Money, from other national and international business journals or even from the Federal Office for Goods Transport are, what we like best and most important are the reviews from our customers. And even here, we have two prizes to show for our section. And we are particularly proud of them.

For example, Bertelsmann's logistics subsidiary Arvato Supply Chain Services presented us with one of its inaugural Carrier Awards. Five winners were chosen in five categories and the prize for Special Performance went to Weinheim. Read the reasons on page 9. As well as the reasons why our Dutch partner PostNL was also among the winners. We have been working with PostNL in the EURODIS network for many years and are pleased that only one international transport network was able to present two winners at the Arvato Awards - our EURODIS network!

The very best recommendation, however, was given to us by all those who took part in one of the now quarterly customer surveys last year. We've never had so many fans. Never before have there been so many customers who actively recommend us to others, all three business units of trans-o-flex: the Express and ThermoMed networks and the Logistik-Service. On behalf of the entire trans-o-flex staff, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks for this top recommendation.

At the same time, I promise you that we will not let up in our drive for quality and innovation. There are also examples of this in this magazine. For example, we have already built up a pool of returnable containers for two key customers, which simplify many processes for both consignors and consignees and, incidentally,

save packaging material and thus CO<sub>2</sub>. A year ago we presented the solution for the expert specialist retail group, in this issue it is the solution for MSD Animal Health. And soon it can be a solution for many of our customers! Because we are working on supplementing the customised container systems with a generally accessible option. And that includes the new, transparent consignment tracking of the returnable containers, for which we have developed our own software. It will be ready by autumn at the latest.

But the trend towards returnable containers is not the only customer need that we are addressing in order to turn it into a new, innovative service. Further examples are our product *tof.cover* (page 28) and the totally redesigned online order entry system *tof.now* (page 12). In both cases, the aim is, among other things, to make express delivery even easier and available to everyone at all times. Let us surprise and delight you.

Delighting its customers – that is the best path a company can take. And this is the path we take! As my contract as CEO of trans-o-flex was recently extended before the end of its term, I will now be able to accompany the company on its chosen path as CEO for at least another three years. I think that's wonderful and I'm really looking forward to it!

Yours

Wolfgang P. Albeck  
Chief Executive Officer



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**++ E-SMART DONATION ++****trans-o-flex makes a donation of green mobility for youth welfare**

At its headquarters in Weinheim, trans-o-flex donated a purely electrically powered four-seater Smart to a social welfare organisation for young people and the disabled. "We are pleased to be able to support Pilgerhaus Weinheim on its way to becoming a climate-friendly and sustainable social welfare institution," said trans-o-flex CEO Wolfgang P. Albeck at the handover of the keys. Pilgerhaus currently supports and accompanies around 250 children and young people as well as 150 people with disabilities, and is the responsible body for a special education and counselling centre, a centre for inclu-



Handover of an electric Smart car. From left to right: Bernd Baldus, Managing Director of Autowelt.Ebert, trans-o-flex CEO Wolfgang P. Albeck and Pilgerhaus Chairman Uwe Gerbich-Demmer.

sion as well as psychological family and educational counselling. The partner in the donation was Autowelt.Ebert, which sells Mercedes-Benz, Smart and Skoda vehicles and through which trans-o-flex obtains its fleet of company cars.

**++ EURODIS AND EUROTEMP ++****International services at a glance**

A new pocket guide has been available since spring 2021, providing an overview of the wide range of international transport services offered by trans-o-flex, primarily via the EURODIS network in 36 European countries. The handy pocket format presents in detail in which countries trans-o-flex provides which services with which

partners. Information on consignment dimensions and weights in the various countries rounds off the overview.

In order to draw attention to international shipments with active temperature control, the guide briefly introduces the EUROTEMP network. This network also organises actively temper-

ature-controlled pharmaceutical shipments in Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Austria at 2 to 8 and 15 to 25 degrees Celsius. Customers can either order the pocket guide from their personal trans-o-flex contact or download it as a PDF file from the trans-o-flex website in the Media-Center/Downloads section.





### ++ E-COMMERCE TREND ++

## Specialists like trans-o-flex increasingly important for online retailers

In 2020, the number of online retailers who offer their customers the option of having their goods delivered by specialised logistics service providers such as trans-o-flex in addition to traditional B2C service providers almost doubled. This is the result of the latest e-commerce shipping study by Parcellab. The international provider of a platform for processing online orders, which also integrates consignment tracking into the consignor's brand presence, once again surveyed the 100 largest German online retailers for this purpose. Another finding of the study: Online retailers whose customers can choose among different shipping service providers are considered more professional and reputable and thus increase their own sales chances.

According to Parcellab, the share of providers who also use special logistics providers such as trans-o-flex in addition to pure B2C service providers rose to just under 21%. In the previous year's study, it was only 11%. "In fact, more and more consignors recognise trans-o-flex as an important partner in online retailing as well," confirms Lutz Blankenfeldt, Business Unit Manager Strategy, Commercial and Marketing at trans-o-flex. "The reasons for this lie on the one hand in the special expertise we have acquired by specialising in certain sectors such as health, electronics and other sensitive and high-value goods. On the other hand, more and more customers are taking advantage of the fact that, in addition to the classic B2B solutions, we have added dedicated 2C solutions to our portfolio, which lead to a particularly high rate of successful first-attempt deliveries to private addressees." The complete study is available via the following link: <https://bit.ly/37P8hkh>

### ++ POTENTIAL FOR CAMPAIGN SHIPPING ++

## Logistics-Service opens third warehouse in Weinheim

In order to be able to meet the increasing demand for special campaigns, trans-o-flex Logistik-Service opened a new warehouse in January 2021. The new logistics hub is the third warehouse in Weinheim and the fifth nationwide. The basic capacity utilisation for the 3,000 square metre warehouse, which offers space for a total of 4,000 pallets, is ensured by a supplier of pharmacy supplies. For this customer with its various shipping campaigns, Logistik-Service organises a complete service from the storage of the respective campaign quantity to picking and preparation for shipping. The proximity to the Weinheim warehouse of trans-o-flex Express ensures late cut-off times for national or even international distribution. "The warehouse is ideal for companies looking for a way to store and ship goods for their own campaigns," says the responsible business unit manager Peter Astor. "Here, they can particularly benefit from the well-practised processes and the experience of the Weinheim logistics team in campaign shipping." In addition, the warehouse has a cold storage area of around 400 square metres, in which temperature-sensitive goods can also be stored in compliance with GDP.



*Thanks to an additional warehouse in Weinheim, trans-o-flex Logistik-Service now has even more space for promotional goods – and an additional cold storage facility.*

## CSR AWARD

# Another silver medal from Ecovadis

There are now more than 75,000 companies from 160 countries that have their efforts in corporate social responsibility (CSR), i.e. sustainability and social responsibility, evaluated by the independent auditing organisation Ecovadis. trans-o-flex has already undergone this assessment for the fourth time and was again awarded a silver medal in February this year.

The overall assessment by Ecovadis includes the sub-areas of environment, sustainable procurement and ethics. trans-o-flex scored above average in the Environment category and, according to Ecovadis, is among the top four per cent of all companies in the road haulage sector.

The Ecovadis platform can also be used by consignors to view the CSR rating of service providers. This saves them and their partners individual independent CSR audits. According to Ecovadis, companies such as BASF, Bayer, Johnson & Johnson, Merck, Nestlé and Nokia use this service.



ecovadis

TRANS O FLEX EXPRESS GMBH (GROUP)

wurde mit einer

**Silber-Medaille**

zur Anerkennung ihres EcoVadis Rating

- FEBRUAR 2021 -



*trans-o-flex received its latest silver medal in its collection of awards for its commitment to sustainability and social responsibility.*

## ARVATO CARRIER AWARD

## Prizes for best pandemic performance and for highest delivery reliability



trans-o-flex is one of the five companies honoured in the Carrier Awards presented for the first time this year by logistics and e-commerce service provider Arvato Supply Chain Solutions. The Bertelsmann logistics subsidiary awarded trans-o-flex the prize in the “Special Performance” category. It is to be awarded every year for special achievements in a topic considered not only of high importance for the logistics industry, but also the dominant topic of the year in general. trans-o-flex was among the top 50 of a total of 120 Arvato service providers from all over Europe for its exemplary performance during the coronavirus pandemic.

trans-o-flex Express and trans-o-flex ThermoMed transport consignments for Arvato customers in very different service areas, both actively temperature-controlled at 2 to 8 and 15 to 25 degrees Celsius and non-temperature-controlled with the Healthcare and Consumer Electronics industry solutions. The winner in the “Special Performance” category was trans-o-flex with 96 out of a possible 100 points. Detailed and proactive communication was singled out for praise. The regular and unsolicited information updates were explicitly mentioned, as well as the fact that trans-o-flex did not cut volumes or services even at the height of the crisis and did not use the crisis to hike prices.

Arvato also awarded prizes in the categories “On-Time Performance” (delivery reliability), “Best Customer Service”, “Best B2C Capabilities” and “Best Collaboration”. The Dutch trans-o-flex partner PostNL received the award for the highest delivery reliability. According to Arvato, PostNL was able to “score points with continuously high performance and high network stability in all phases of 2020”. Arvato says that keeping to the promised delivery time is “immensely important”. The reason: “High delivery reliability always reduces follow-up costs. Experience shows that the faster the goods are delivered, the lower the return rate.” The central criteria for assessing delivery reliability were “delivery performance, status data quality and delivery stability per week”.

PostNL and trans-o-flex are both members of the European transport network EURODIS. This makes EURODIS the only international network to be the winner in two categories. In addition, EURODIS members Österreichische Post and PostNL took second and third place in the “Best B2C Capabilities” category.



## ADVANTAGES THANKS TO SPECIAL STATUS

## trans-o-flex appointed partner for civil emergency response services in Germany



The first certificate of the new status and the certificate of priority authorisation in telecommunications was issued to trans-o-flex ThermoMed, the second to trans-o-flex Express.

Due to the efficiency of its networks and its importance in the German pharmaceuticals supply sector, trans-o-flex has been appointed partner of the civil emergency response services for road traffic in the Federal Republic of Germany. This applies to both trans-o-flex Express and trans-o-flex ThermoMed. The new status is linked on the one hand to trans-o-flex's voluntary commitment to provide the German Federal Government with transport capacity for medicines and medical supplies for emergency response services. Payment is regulated by the Federal Remuneration Act. On the other hand, the status has specific advantages. "These are direct advantages for trans-o-flex, but they also indirectly benefit our customers, because our ability to deliver in crisis situations is secured and strengthened by the new status," says Wolfgang P. Albeck, CEO of trans-o-flex.

For one, trans-o-flex was granted the so-called telecommunications priority authorisation certificate due to its new status. This certificate is only awarded to companies which are particularly relevant for providing services to the population, which must be contactable by the Federal Government at all times and whose telecommunications must therefore function 100% even in crisis situations. In practice, this means that fixed network telecommunications faults are cleared as a matter of priority and without delay. And mobile phone connections are prioritised.

For another, in an emergency, trans-o-flex will receive state support in the provision of its services. This means, for example, that trans-o-flex vehicles will also be allowed to enter areas that may be cordoned off, or they will be given a police escort. Thirdly, trans-o-flex will be given priority by government agencies in emergencies.

Before trans-o-flex was granted the new status, numerous discussions took place between the company and government freight transport experts. "Official representatives approached us about this," Albeck emphasises. "We were delighted with the trust that was placed in us there and supported the talks at the highest level." Initial contacts came about back in August. The first certificate was issued in November. In the meantime, representatives of the authorities have satisfied themselves that trans-o-flex is one of the companies able to ensure provision of basic medical supplies for the population in the transport and traffic sector. For example, the company's own and third-party transport capacities were assessed, as well as the proportion of regularly transported general cargo and parcel volumes, especially in the actively temperature-controlled ranges of 2 to 8 degrees and 15 to 25 degrees Celsius.

The status granted is not subject to a time limit. The telecommunications priority authorisation certificate is valid until 15 November 2030.

## COMPANY RANKINGS



## Excellent value for money

According to a study by the Institute for Management and Economic Research (IMWF), Hamburg, trans-o-flex is one of the four logistics service providers in Germany with the best price-performance ratio. On behalf of the magazine Focus Money, the IMWF has conducted the study “Preis-Sieger 2020” for around 23,000 brands and companies in Germany. trans-o-flex scored 85.1 out of 100 points and received a Silver rating for its price-performance ratio. No logistics service provider was awarded the Gold rating. Only three other logistics service providers were awarded

between 85 and 89 points. Eleven other logistics service providers, who scored less than 80 points, were awarded Bronze.

*“It’s great to be counted among the four best logistics service providers in Germany,” said trans-o-flex CEO Wolfgang P. Albeck about the Focus Money award.*



## Always in the top 10

In addition to the ranking of the price-performance ratio, trans-o-flex also came in among the top 10 of all logistics companies surveyed in Germany in two other comparisons commissioned by renowned media companies. The subsidiary of a nationally published Frankfurt daily newspaper, for example, used a method similar to that of Focus Money to investigate how well companies advise their customers. trans-o-flex was ranked 10th out of a total

of 54 logistics companies surveyed. For the second time, trans-o-flex is among the rising stars of the year in the Parcel Service & Logistics category of a business newspaper published every trading day. Decisive criterion that is assessed here: How often are companies recommended by their customers? This is where trans-o-flex already came first in the previous year. Most recently, trans-o-flex has improved by another two points compared to 2019.



## trans-o-flex also top internationally

For the second time, a British business medium has studied how European companies deal with the issue of diversity in their companies. And for the second time, trans-o-flex is among the companies that scored best and received the “Diversity Leader” award. The special feature of this study is not only the large number of 15,000 companies that were surveyed. More significantly, this is a large-scale employee survey on a European scale where employees rate

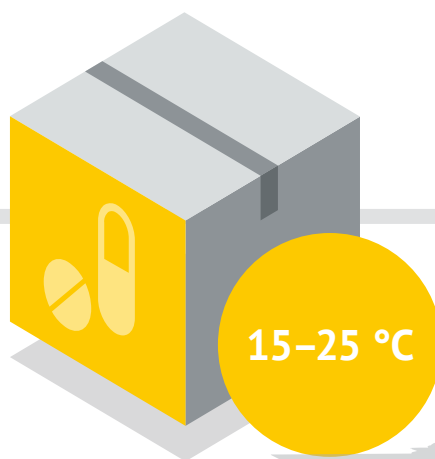
their employers. “At trans-o-flex, people from more than 50 countries around the world work together,” says trans-o-flex CEO Wolfgang P. Albeck. “If we were to discriminate against individuals, we would be cutting our own throats. What counts for us is how well someone performs and how he or she contributes to the team. Only in this way can we deliver the quality every day that enables us to succeed in the market.”

LEAD ARTICLE

# *This is how Express works:*

*Click on the shipping  
order, confirm the order,  
done!*

**tof.now:** Why trans-o-flex has completely redesigned its online booking system, what advantages it offers customers, how it works and when it can be used.



Can shipping also be simple? Can it be fun to place a shipping order online? Lutz Blankenfeldt is convinced: "It can't just be like that, it has to be like that!" And that is precisely the goal against which the Head of Strategy, Commercial and Marketing at trans-o-flex and his project team want to be measured. This is why they have completely redesigned their online booking system that will go online in spring. "Ultimately, we are concerned with radically seeing all processes from the customer's point of view, replacing them if necessary or redesigning them from scratch. We implemented this in the tof.now booking system because we have found that there are great opportunities here to take service to a whole new level for very different customer groups."

This is not just about the spontaneous sending of individual parcels or small quantities, for which tof.now was originally designed. "An online shop for shipments designed 100% from the customer's perspective is also highly attractive for regular customers because it makes working with trans-o-flex even easier, faster and more efficient for them too." This applies, for example, to customers whose logistics department uses its own shipping system, but where other departments also send

items from time to time and do not have access to the shipping system. They have been using the trans-o-flex online entry or easyFlex systems up to now. "tof.now will completely replace these tools in the medium term because it is much more customer-friendly and more efficient at the same time," says Blankenfeldt. "tof.now is probably the easiest shipping system there is in the express and logistics market and at the same time has the highest product variety." No wonder such software was not available for purchase.

"We wanted to buy a software solution first and then have it customised for our specific purposes," reveals the trans-o-flex manager. "But the online booking systems available on the market so far always turned out to be essentially systems for recording consignment notes. They merely translate analogue into digital processes." That was not enough for Blankenfeldt and his team for three important reasons.

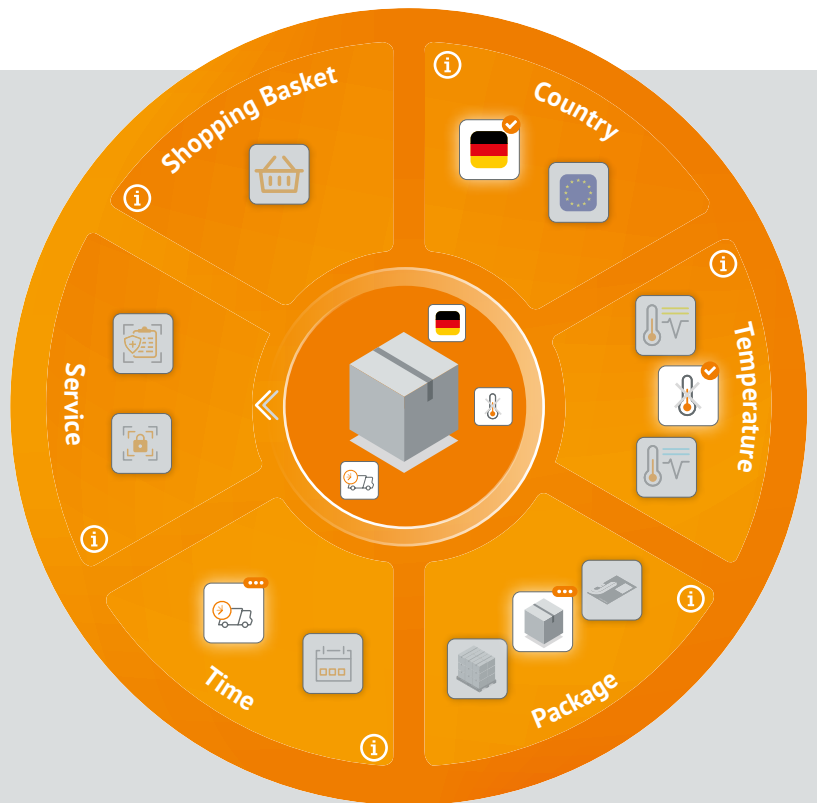
Firstly, too much is assumed. Secondly, the process continues to be designed from a product perspective, but not from a customer perspective. "No customer wants to have to study logistics to be able to send an international express consignment." Thirdly, the development team was and is convinced that the completely new possibilities offered by digitalisation can only really be used if the process is developed digitally from the outset.



*Customers can use the new online shop for trans-o-flex consignments not only to place shipping orders, but also to print out the necessary address labels and start tracking and tracing.*

## Disc solution: Selecting by navigation disc

tof.now makes the ordering process transparent for customers with a navigation disc. Step by step, all options are queried: National or international shipment? Active temperature control? Pallet, parcel or document pouch? Time options? Additional services? Then click into the shopping basket. Instead of configuring their consignment individually, the customer can also choose from three ready-made offers that are presented to them outside the disc on the edge of the screen. The respective consignment price is always displayed to match the selected options.



To be able to do just that, the IT service responsible for all software and hardware issues at trans-o-flex hired an additional web designer and a web programmer. This killed two birds with one stone. “We were able to develop the entire booking tool from scratch and design it in the way that best suits the customer’s needs. And when it comes to changes or the further developments are already planned, we are much faster and more flexible.” But how is the booking system structured, who is meant to use it and how does it work exactly?

### Basic principle: The customers decide what they want

“We have developed a simple and systematic process in which we apply consistently one basic principle,” says Stefan Süßkow. He is one of the developers of tof.now. “The principle is: the customer clicks on what they want and the system immediately shows them how trans-o-flex can fulfil their request. And so it continues through to the finished shopping basket.” The system automatically takes into account which product combinations are possible and which are mutual-

ly exclusive. At the same time, the process chain is set up in such a way that all the details required for the selected shipping options are automatically entered. It starts with the customer choosing between national and international shipping, with or without active temperature control, deciding between document pouch, parcel, pallet or a mixed form, and then between different delivery options. “Alternatively, the customer can opt for one of three pre-configured offers that we show them at the edge of the order window,” says Süßkow. “Here we offer the most common shipment options and one click is enough to select the offer.”

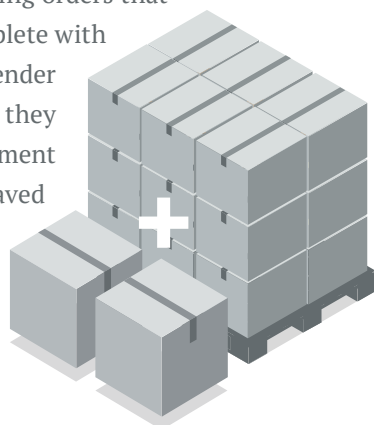
So that the customer always knows where they are in the order and what is still to come, a round action disc signals the respective status at a glance. Easy-to-understand icons show the user, for example, whether they have selected a national (German flag) or international consignment (EU flag), an actively temperature-controlled consignment (thermometer) or how large their consignment is (indicated in T-shirt sizes S, M, L). In each segment of the disc there is also a small “i” as an info symbol. If the customer clicks on it, they receive explanatory information in an additional window, such as the maximum weight and size of an M-size parcel.

## Order as a guest, or additional choice and convenience by registering

Each interested customer also decides whether they want to register or ship their consignment as a guest. As a guest, your details will only be stored for processing the respective order and then deleted. “Those who use this option usually only ship very sporadically, just want to send something quickly and, of course, want to know what the shipping costs will be.” The booking system therefore also shows a guest the cost of their shipment at every step and how the price changes if, for example, a time option such as delivery by 10 am is added or removed.

Those who choose to register, on the other hand, get lower prices that are automatically adjusted to their shipping volume, receive additional shipping options and more convenience for their orders. “Only if they register are we allowed to store the data for longer and can, for example, offer an address book in which the sender can store collection and delivery addresses and retrieve them at any time at the click of a mouse.” Registered customers also have the option of paying by invoice in addition to credit card and PayPal.

Ordering is made even more convenient by two additional functions. “Registered users can add items to the shopping basket, but they don't have to order them on the same day,” Süßkow explains. “The shopping basket automatically remains saved for 14 days, even if the user closes their browser in between.” The advantage being that if the person placing the order is distracted by another task or simply wants to work ahead, they can do so and do not have to repeat their entries later. Last but not least, the developers have built in the option to save certain shipping orders that occur more frequently, complete with all properties as well as sender and delivery address. “If they then have a similar consignment again, a single click on the saved template consignment is all it takes to complete the order.” ■



## What else is in the pipeline

Several enhancements are already planned for the on-line booking tool *tof.now*, which is due to be launched in spring, with the main aim of further increasing the selection options and ordering convenience. All extensions are expected to be implemented by the end of the year.

1. A chat function is designed to facilitate direct interaction between the customer and *trans-o-flex*.
2. Registered users will be able to book dangerous goods consignments online.
3. Additional option collection on delivery. The consignment is collected when *trans-o-flex* delivers to the collection address.
4. An XML interface is planned as an extension for frequent senders. This allows these “heavy users” to upload all shipping data to *tof.now* without having to re-enter it. “Heavy users” are usually companies that have a high shipping volume and therefore individual conditions, but do not use their own shipping system. Instead, they have so far been using the *easyFlex* or online data entry tools. As soon as the XML interface for *tof.now* is ready, these customers can also conveniently switch to the more modern system. Until then, the different systems can be used in parallel.

COSMETICS INDUSTRY

# Why hairdressers swear by trans-o-flex

*A team for almost 30 years: What is the secret of the cooperation between the Japanese Kao Group and trans-o-flex? An interview with Hans-Michael Steenbock, Director of Logistics Beauty Care EMEA at Kao*



What do cosmetics brands like Goldwell, Guhl, John Frieda, Molton Brown and Kanebo have in common? All of them belong to the Japanese Kao Group, whose products are delivered by trans-o-flex Express. The cooperation has existed since 1991, i.e. for 30 years. Hans-Michael Steenbock explained the secret of this long collaboration in an interview with this magazine. The Director of Logistics Beauty Care for the Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) region has experienced and shaped much of this working relationship himself, having worked for Kao (see box page 19) for almost 25 years.

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***Mr Steenbock, can you start by telling our readers what exactly trans-o-flex does for Kao?***

The main task of trans-o-flex is to collect the Kao products from our warehouse in Biebesheim near Darmstadt and to deliver the parcels and pallets throughout Germany. We mainly use trans-o-flex's standard service, but also time-definite deliveries. In total, there were around 180,000 consignments last year, the vast majority of which went to hair salons. A smaller part of the business concerns international shipments to Austria, Benelux, France, Poland and Switzerland.

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***This year marks 30 years that trans-o-flex and Kao have been working together. What do you see as the secret behind this?***

Such a long collaboration only works if the quality and price are right. At trans-o-flex, it is particularly the high reliability with which our consignments are shipped.

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***What does that mean in concrete terms?***

Above all, this means that the consignments arrive on time and undamaged at the consignee's address. Due to Kao's large range, a package often contains a wide variety of products in different sizes and packaging forms. We take great care to ensure that everything is packed well and securely. Nevertheless, there are heavy 1.5-litre bottles that have to be shipped together with small folding boxes or small tubes. And that's where any rough

handling is easily noticeable. If parcels were thrown, sustained hard knocks on sorting equipment or collided with each other in large piles at loading points, the risk of damage would be high.

And hairdressers in particular are very sensitive about damaged deliveries. This is because a hairdresser often only has small stocks and orders are sometimes placed at short notice. If for example customers have an appointment for a hair colouring and the right colour is missing or the bottle has run out, then trouble is inevitable. Something like that doesn't match Kao's deep understanding of customer service. Furthermore, for hairdressing customers, functioning logistics is the second most important criterion when evaluating suppliers – right after the effectiveness of the products.

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***Can a service provider maintain such high quality over the long term?***

From my point of view, that's his job. Minor fluctuations, especially during peaks, are accepted. Major or prolonged fluctuations in quality are not acceptable. At Kao, we therefore benefit from the trans-o-flex decision to focus primarily on customers from the pharmaceutical and cosmetics sectors as well as high-quality consumer electronics. The fact that trans-o-flex has said goodbye to individual customers who do not fit into the customer portfolio has been very good for quality.

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***Was this also true at the height of the coronavirus pandemic with the lockdowns?***

Especially during the lockdown, trans-o-flex was able to offer a stable service at all times. In my view, this is not least due to the fact that trans-o-flex concentrates on B2B shipments. This meant there was no sudden increase in the number of shipments to private households. And so there were no delays in delivery, as was the case with many other logistics service providers, and that was and is of course an absolute plus point. >>

***If you had to say in one sentence what you personally appreciate about the cooperation, what would that sentence be?***

Off the top of my head, I would say: it works well! On the one hand, this involves quality, but also things like dedicated contact persons in sales and customer service or the fact that Kao's base in Darmstadt and trans-o-flex are close to each other. This meant before the pandemic, and hopefully soon again, it was easy to get together at short notice or to look at certain things directly in practice, which made a lot of things easier. trans-o-flex is a service provider we can rely on. And because everything works so well, we save time.

I am also pleased that such a partnership is possible between our companies. That certainly also has a lot to do with corporate culture. Both companies have recognised that getting and keeping good employees is critical, and that requires a good corporate culture. In any case, I can say: The type of people who work at trans-o-flex matches the people who work at Kao.

***How satisfied are you with the pace of innovation at trans-o-flex?***

I'd like to start by saying that innovation is essential for us at Kao. The cosmetics market is highly competitive and this too drives us to align our actions with the Japanese Yoki-Monozukuri principle – the commitment to continuous innovation and constant improvement that never allows us to accept the status quo.

Against this background, I think that a lot has happened in the last few years, especially in IT. The new shareholders also seem to be generating some impetus of their own. This year, for example, we are planning a test with returnable transit containers. They come from Smart Container Loop, a company that belongs to the group of the trans-o-flex shareholder Schoeller. We can imagine that the new returnable containers are particularly suitable for the salon business. Because we have very regular deliveries to the hairdressers, where empty containers can be taken away easily. As a result, there are



never many containers at the hairdresser's and the containers can be used efficiently for many returns in a relatively short time.

### ***In your view, what demands will service providers like trans-o-flex face in the future?***

The topics of the environment and sustainability will gain in importance. trans-o-flex is already doing a lot here, for example with plastic pallets, returnable containers, e-vehicles, green electricity and CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral shipments via co<sub>2</sub>de green. But the need to act sustainably will become even more important and sustainability will also become an increasingly important issue for customers when choosing a service provider. This is especially true as we at Kao have very ambitious environmental protection goals and we cannot accept that our service providers do not follow the same path.

### ***Is it a question of service providers having the smallest possible carbon footprint or of them being particularly transparent and, like trans-o-flex, publishing an annual sustainability report?***

Transparency and the carbon footprint are both important, also because a carrier can use them to reduce its own costs. But above all, it is important that logistics providers help their customers to work as efficiently and environmentally friendly as possible. The returnable containers mentioned, for example, do not have a direct impact on trans-o-flex's carbon footprint, but they do have an impact on the customers' emissions footprint. They are also an increasingly important issue for consumers and business consignees alike. This is because returnable containers also eliminate the need for customers to dispose of cardboard packaging. ■



*Hans-Michael Steenbock, Director of Logistics Beauty Care EMEA at Kao, has become a fan of Japanese management ideas.*

### ***What a North German logistics company appreciates about Genba and Yoki-Monozukuri***

Hans-Michael Steenbock has been working for the Japanese consumer goods company Kao for almost a quarter of a century. The wholesale and foreign trade specialist started in 1997 at the Kao subsidiary Guhl Ikebana as internal sales manager, then took over field service support and came more and more into contact with logistics. When Kao divided the global business into regions, he was given the opportunity to take on responsibility for logistics for the EMEA region, covering all business areas: hair salons and retailers as well as the separately managed brands Molton Brown and Kanebo.

For the 63-year-old Steenbock, Kao is the third major station in his career. The first two were both in Hamburg: the Edeka headquarters and the hair cosmetics specialist Schwarzkopf. The move to a Japanese company immersed him in the world of Yoki-Monozukuri and Genba. "What I quickly adopted and still appreciate today is the Genba Walk," says the northern German, who was born in Henstedt-Ulzburg. "As a manager, you are then very close to the actual work processes, learn to systematically analyse and improve them and understand the real needs of our customers. I am utterly convinced that every company can leverage great potential for improvement by applying these principles."



現場

## “After Covid comes the Gemba Walk”

The only controversial thing about the Gemba Walk is the spelling. Those who follow the Japanese original write Genba because the Japanese word is composed of the syllables Gen and ba. However, because Genba sounds like Gemba in English and has also become established in this country, this is the main spelling used internationally. But be that as it may: “The Gemba Walk is not only a great tool to improve processes, but it is also suitable for awakening and promoting the potential of individual employees and boosting their motivation for their work.” This is Wolfgang P. Albeck’s experience with the technique, which originated in Japan and which he has been using for about 15 years. “We have already tested this at trans-o-flex, but have not yet introduced it systematically, because Covid got in the way,” explains the CEO. “And the Gemba Walk doesn’t work online. After all, its strength is that improvements are found out by and with the respective employee in a personal conversation with the manager.”

Albeck emphasises that Gemba is not a control system. “If employees feel that way, then they won’t open up when their supervisor comes and watches them work.” After all, it is about going into an employee’s workspace, observing the processes of their work closely and then having a conversation about whether the processes are OK or what they would do differently if they could.

“One of the advantages of the Gemba Walk is that it can be used universally – at the desk of an administrative employee as well as in the warehouses or when accompanying a delivery driver,” says Albeck, citing a practical example: “I once analysed the conveyor loading process and observed an employee putting the parcels from a truck onto the sorter. The man was left-handed and was constantly bending to put the parcels on. Many processes are designed for right-handed people. When I asked him about it, he immediately vented his anger and told me about his back pain. I promised him I would take care of it and the workplace was rearranged. When I

came the next time, not only was the employee happy and had already told his colleagues enthusiastically about it, but the work was also much easier for him and he got a lot more done.”

A mistake that, according to Albeck, one shouldn’t make with the Gemba Walk is to always apply it rigidly and statically with a view to optimising performance. “The most important thing is to observe impartially and precisely. And then specifically approach the employees about what has been noticed. Then, when talking to the employees, the benefits for all sides come about almost automatically.” Consequently, the effects of the Gemba Walk are manifold. “It can help to avoid mistakes and increase the quality of work, it can ensure greater efficiency and thereby lower costs, it can minimise stress for employees and make their work more enjoyable for them. I don’t know of any other approach where success is so systematically worked out together. That’s why I’m a real fan of the Gemba Walk! As soon as the Covid situation allows, we will take it up again.”

## PHARMACEUTICAL SHIPPING

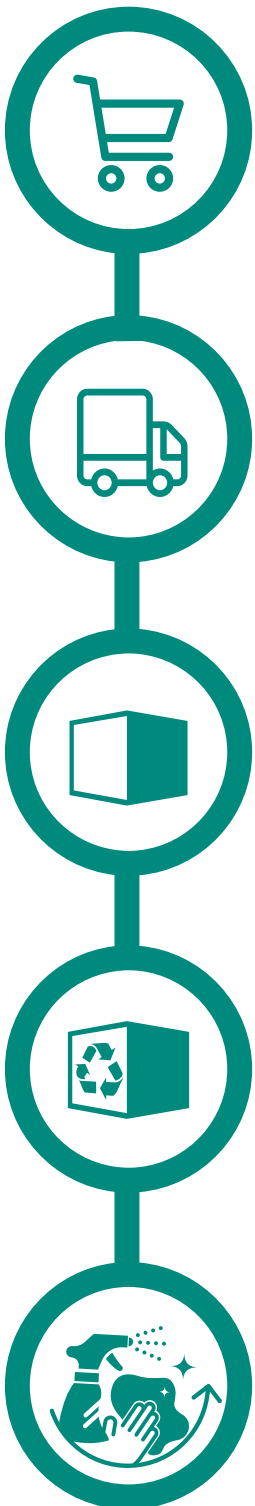
## Why MSD Animal Health is switching to returnable containers

**Goal: Save around 60 tonnes of packaging material in the first year alone. That is why trans-o-flex is launching a pool for pharmaceutical containers together with Smart Container Loop. IT subsidiary is developing its own software for transparent container management.**

The green light was given on 18 January. On this day, MSD Animal Health began to transfer an intensively prepared logistics changeover into regular operations. The company's goal is to completely switch its Germany-wide pharmaceutical shipping to transport in returnable containers. This applies to all shipments with trans-o-flex Express and trans-o-flex ThermoMed, both with active temperature control at 2–8 °C and 15–25 °C and also without temperature control. By dispensing with disposable cardboard boxes, the pharmaceutical company, which specialises in veterinary products, aims to save around 60 tonnes of packaging material by the end of the year. In addition, the returnable system reduces CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by around

50% compared to the use of disposable cardboard boxes, according to MSD Animal Health. The company bases its calculations on an average of 50 returns of a container and has also factored in the return logistics and cleaning of the containers.

For trans-o-flex, the containers used by MSD Animal Health are now the second large returnable transit packaging pool that the express specialist has prepared and implemented within a year. Prior to this, the electronics retail group expert had already switched from disposable cardboard boxes to returnable containers for deliveries to its stores. expert saves around 700,000 disposable cardboard boxes every year as a result. >>



MSD Animal Health uses five symbols to explain the delivery process in returnable containers to its customers (from top to bottom): 1. Order, 2. Delivery by trans-o-flex, 3. Emptying of the container by the consignee, 4. Automatic collection by trans-o-flex, 5. Cleaning and reuse of the container.





*This is the smallest size of the new pharmaceutical returnable containers. Empty containers can be stacked inside each other with the lids open to save space (see picture below right).*

## ***Proven cooperation between trans-o-flex and Schoeller Group***

In both cases, the containers are manufactured by Smart Container Loop. A new returnable container for shipping pharmaceuticals has been specially developed for use at MSD Animal Health. The company, which belongs to the Schoeller Group, is also responsible for cleaning and tracking individual containers as the pool operator. For this purpose, trans-o-flex Express collects empty containers from the delivery address and transports them stacked on pallets and bundled for cleaning. From there, they are transferred to MSD Animal Health's warehouse service provider for another round.

trans-o-flex IT-Service GmbH has specially developed new software to ensure that the operator of the container pool automatically receives all the information required for optimum control of the containers. It not only provides the pool operator

with typical status information, but also controls additional processes, corrects errors and thereby provides a flawless basis for the invoicing of the containers at all times. "Our conventional scans for every package at every shipping interface are the basis for this," says Wolfgang P. Albeck, CEO of trans-o-flex. "With the new software, however, we not only transmit the information about when a particular container reaches a specific destination, i.e. whether it has been delivered to the consignee or is on its way to be cleaned, for example. It is also checked whether the container number transmitted in advance is correct."

For this purpose, trans-o-flex has introduced an additional scan for shipping in returnable containers. When loading the delivery vehicle, the driver receives a message to first scan the package barcode and then also to scan the container ID. If there was a number error or typing error in the previously transmitted data record, the error in the data record is corrected based on this scan.

## ***Environmentally friendly returnable containers can also be procured for other customers***

"We want to make container management as simple, transparent and verifiable as possible for all sides to optimise the control of the pool and enable traceable and originator-based cost allocation," explains Albeck. According to him, both new returnable container types – the pharmaceutical containers used by MSD Animal Health as well as the returnable transit containers used by expert for shipping to specialist retailers – can also be used by other trans-o-flex customers in the future.



## E-COMMERCE MONITOR 2021

## Customers want fewer boxes and more environmental friendliness

co<sub>2</sub>de green, the trans-o-flex service for CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral shipping, and the returnable container pools currently being used by customers in the electronics industry (expert) and the pharmaceutical industry (MSD) are striking a chord with more and more consumers in online retailing. This is the result of the representative survey “E-Commerce Monitor 2021 – Parcel Delivery from the Consumer's Perspective” conducted by Spectos GmbH in Dresden. When it comes to questions about sustainability in the mail-order business, reusable or recyclable packaging material ranked first in the Spectos survey (91%). This was followed by CO<sub>2</sub>-neutral deliveries (78 %). 52% of respondents said they would even pay a premium for environmentally friendly packaging, compared to 47% for environmentally friendly carriage. In total, almost 2,000 participants took part in the latest e-commerce survey between 27 November and 18 December 2020.

The biggest annoyance with delivery also had to do with packaging. 64% of respondents are most annoyed by “excessively large packaging for small contents”. Second on the list of annoyances was “no delivery despite in” (61%). This was followed quite a way behind by damaged delivery (40%), “no notification card” and “too short a response time to ringing the doorbell” (34% each), “parcel left on the front doorstep” and “delivery date not kept” (28% each). Another 27% are particularly annoyed by “packaging waste generated by mail order”.



For MSD Animal Health, the switch to returnable transit packaging is part of its sustainability strategy, which explicitly includes logistics. “We have previously switched to compostable bubble wrap and delivery notes made of grass paper, for example,” explains Jan Nemeč, Managing Director MSD Animal Health. “The introduction of the returnable container was the next logical step for us.” MSD Animal Health has now started with the smallest container size. The container

used for this has the dimensions 30 x 20 x 16 cm. The containers can be stacked both empty and full. A total of 688 empty containers fit on one pallet. In the course of this year, MSD Animal Health also intends to convert all other cardboard packaging sizes to gradually phase out disposable cardboard boxes as transit packaging material altogether from its pharmaceutical distribution. ■

**Interview****NATIONWIDE SOLUTION POSSIBLE**

## *How vaccine logistics could work even better*

*In this interview, trans-o-flex CEO Wolfgang P. Albeck provides insights into the current distribution of Covid-19 vaccines in Bavaria, comments on the special challenges and explains how the federal states can be supported with their logistics in future and work even more efficiently.*



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### ***Is it because of the logistics that more people have not already been vaccinated against Covid-19?***

For Germany, but also for Europe, this can be ruled out given the current state of affairs. Of course, we all wish that more people had already been vaccinated. But we must not forget that this really is a pandemic! And there is one and the same problem worldwide – not enough vaccine has been produced yet. The quantities made available for Germany so far have been distributed as planned in the shortest possible time.

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### ***Were there really no glitches during the distribution?***

It would be surprising if, despite careful planning, one or two mistakes did not occur during this large-scale action. However, we are very happy that it has not happened so far in the vaccine logistics for which we are responsible. This shows us that our processes and also the special solutions we employ here are robust and efficient.

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### ***For which part of the vaccine logistics is trans-o-flex responsible?***

After several rounds of tendering, we have been awarded contracts by the Bavarian Ministry of Health to ensure state-wide distribution from the Bavarian storage sites of coronavirus vaccines to around 100 different locations.

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### ***What conditions were attached to the awarding of the contract?***

The prerequisite for the successful tender was, above all, that the EU-GDPs are complied with in every process that may be used – from the receipt of the goods to storage, commissioning and shipping of the vaccines. This includes, in particular, the end-to-end guarantee of the cold chain. The prescribed temperature must be guaranteed throughout the entire transport chain, i.e. also during intermediate storage or handling. The temperature profile must be constantly recorded electronically and documented and saved in a tamper-proof manner. This includes the fulfilment of corresponding requirements on suitable storage and commissioning facilities, on refrigerated vehicles and transport containers and, last but not least, the suitability and training of the personnel. As a leading German company for the nationwide distribution of medicines, we have been fulfilling these requirements for years.

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### ***What are the special logistical features of this contract?***

With the first approved mRNA vaccines (the products from BioNTech/Pfizer and Moderna), there are special features to be observed concerning temperature. While conventional vaccines (such as AstraZeneca's Covid-19 vaccine) are usually subject to cold chain requirements, i.e. they must be stored and transported at 2–8 degrees Celsius, BioNTech/Pfizer and Moderna have defined different and varying specifications for their Covid-19 vaccines.

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### ***What does that mean in concrete terms when you think of the example of supplying the vaccination centres in Bavaria, for which trans-o-flex is responsible?***

In concrete terms, this means that there are various storage sites for the BioNTech/Pfizer vaccine in Bavaria. Until it reaches these sites and for the time it is stored there, it is kept at an ultra-low temperature of minus 70 degrees Celsius. When trans-o-flex collects these vaccines from one of the storage facilities, we receive them in insulated containers





*The vaccination centre in Erlangen is one of around 100 Bavarian locations to which trans-o-flex delivers the Covid-19 vaccines.*

without coolants and transport them to the respective vaccination centre in one of our vehicles that are actively temperature-controlled at 2 to 8 degrees Celsius. The transport time is specifically used as thawing time and the vaccine is stored in the centre at 2 to 8 degrees Celsius until vaccination. Different rules apply to the Moderna vaccine. It must be stored and transported at minus 20 degrees and is handed over to trans-o-flex in an insulated container with coolants that continue to keep the vaccine passively at a temperature of minus 20 degrees until it is delivered to the vaccination centre.

### ***What are the biggest challenges in practice and how do you mitigate the risks?***

The greatest challenges in the transport of Covid-19 vaccines are, similar to the usual shipment of pharmaceuticals, security and transparency. Security is about risks such as theft or breakage on the one hand, but also about maintaining full effectiveness. trans-o-flex has therefore specifically developed processes and standards to minimise these risks. Examples include fencing, guarding, video surveillance or access control in storage and handling centres, goods-protecting sorting systems and vehicles monitored by GPS. As a unique selling point, trans-o-flex has actively temperature-controlled networks in the range of 2 to 8 as well as 15 to 25 degrees

Celsius. These networks control and document the temperature at which consignments are kept throughout the logistics chain. Passive packaging with coolants is not necessary to maintain the selected temperature range. But it is also possible to transport consignments in other temperature ranges with the aid of passive packaging in these networks, as the example of Moderna vaccine shows.

A temperature history is automatically created for each consignment and is available online. This makes it possible, for example, in the event of an accident (or if the cooling of passive packaging were not adequately dimensioned) to determine how long the consignments were exposed to which ambient temperatures. And the consignor can then decide on the basis of the stability data whether externally intact products may be delivered or not.

### ***Couldn't you do this job outside of Bavaria too?***

Of course, because trans-o-flex has established nationwide networks for the transport of pharmaceuticals with active temperature control in Germany and other European countries. This would also make it possible to increase the efficiency of vaccine distribution.

*Because the vaccines are a very valuable cargo of high social importance, the Bavarian police provide escort protection for the trans-o-flex shipments.*

### How would that look?

For the first two vaccine candidates, the options are relatively limited as long as their stability data at plus degrees are relatively low and therefore only very short time windows are available for distribution logistics. Then there is practically no other option than to deliver these vaccines in direct shipments, as is currently the case. However, for the distribution of other vaccine candidates, e.g. from AstraZeneca, the stability data also allow transport at 2 to 8 degrees Celsius and the time window for logistics is therefore larger. We could organise the logistics for these and other vaccines uniformly throughout the country. This would relieve the federal states and enable a uniform standard for deliveries throughout Germany, not only at vaccination centres, but also at pharmacies, hospitals or directly at doctors' surgeries or old people's and nursing homes.

trans-o-flex could take delivery of the vaccines at any location in Germany or in the individual federal states, manage the commissioning for the individual vaccination centres and guarantee delivery within 24 hours, with deliveries up to 8 or 10 am if required. With this nationwide distribution via one network, the administrative burden for the contracting authorities decreases, and the more so the more federal states join forces here. In addition, the bundling of shipments is increased, which is good for the environment and, last but not least, reduces transport costs. These options also exist for all vaccine candidates with similar stability data. ■



## EXPRESS SHIPPING SUPER EASY

# 1, 2, 3, 4 – done!

*With the new express document and small items shipping service tof.cover, customers no longer need their own packaging. Offer for items up to five kilos including delivery by 12 noon and climate-neutral shipping bag*



“Flexible, fast and secure is not enough,” says trans-o-flex boss Wolfgang P. Albeck. “Express shipping also has to be very easy. Because it is also used by people who don’t send parcels every day.” This is why trans-o-flex Express has launched its new tof.cover service. With this express shipping service for documents and small items, trans-o-flex provides its customers with their own shipping bags. “This means customers no longer need to buy or stock their own packaging for tof.cover.” According to Albeck, the new express service is completed in four steps. “Firstly, enter the consignment data, secondly,

stick address labels on the shipping bag, thirdly, pack the folders, documents, products or samples to be sent and fourthly, hand the consignment to the trans-o-flex driver.”

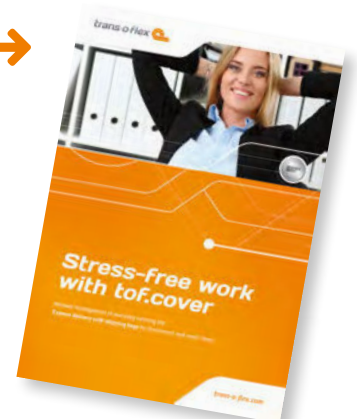
Drivers either pick up the shipping bags from tof.cover along with other consignments during standard collection or collection can be booked via tof.now. Delivery will be made on the next working day before 12 noon. “If you want, you can of course also book any other

express service with tof.cover – from delivery before 8 am to our evening service.” Furthermore, the following applies to all tof.cover consignments: delivery is only possible with a signature. “Even if posting items through the letterbox would be feasible in terms of their size, we deliberately don’t do that. With trans-o-flex, easy express shipping does not mean compromising on transparency and security for customers!”

trans-o-flex deliberately uses plastic shipping bags. “The shipping bags are produced in a climate-neutral way and

are fully recyclable,” explains Albeck. They come in two sizes. The smaller version S (Small = 35 x 26 cm) fits A4-sized documents or catalogues. The larger version L (Large = 44 x 36 cm) also fits a full A4 folder. Both variants weigh only a few grams and can weigh up to five kilos when shipped. For customers with particularly high security requirements, trans-o-flex supplies additional security labels at cost price. They look like small plasters, can be easily stuck over the edges and leave clear marks if tampered with.

All the information is summarised in a flyer, which is available in the download area of the trans-o-flex website.



## SURVEY RESULTS 2020

## More and more customers recommend trans-o-flex

The results of the latest customer survey are the best recommendation that customers have ever given trans-o-flex. For the first time since trans-o-flex introduced systematic customer surveys, the so-called Net Promoter Score (NPS) is positive at all trans-o-flex companies: at Express, at ThermoMed Germany and Austria and at Logistik-Service.

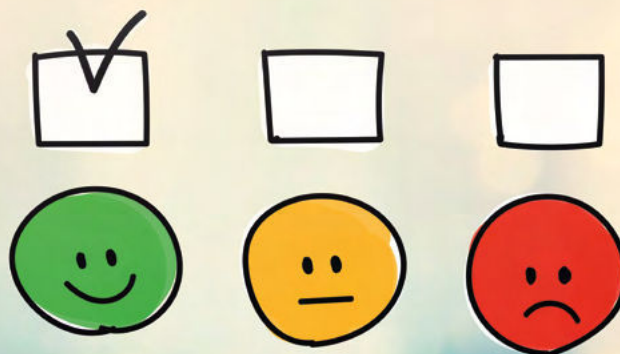
The NPS is a key factor for customer satisfaction. To calculate it, customers are divided into three groups according to the results of the respective survey: promoters, passives and detractors. The promoters are advocates who recommend trans-o-flex on their own initiative. The passives are neutral. Detractors are customers who are dissatisfied with their service provider and therefore do not recommend them and even spread negative word of mouth. To determine the NPS, the number of critical customers is subtracted from the number of satis-

fied customers. So the key question is: Are there more advocates (promoters) than critics (detractors)?

“If the NPS is positive – as it is now in the entire trans-o-flex family – then the company has been doing a lot right,” says Lutz Blankenfeldt, whose team regularly organises and evaluates the customer survey. “There are two details that deserve special mention in the current results,” added the Head of the Strategy, Commercial and Marketing division. “Firstly, the NPS is not only positive in the fourth quarter, but for the whole of 2020. Secondly, we have the biggest fans among our top customers, while critics are more likely to be found among smaller customers.” The survey has therefore provided another starting point on how to further increase customer satisfaction. Blankenfeldt: “We will look closely at why some D customers are dissatisfied.”

With the survey in the fourth quarter, trans-o-flex has concluded its first year with four customer surveys. “The feedback has become more differentiated, we can identify seasonal fluctuations in the customer experience and also act more swiftly in the event of an incident, as we can quickly identify the areas of action that are relevant to our customers.”

In addition to the decisive change in NPS, the latest survey showed that trans-o-flex has gained 11% in reliability year-on-year from the customer's point of view. Customers continue to give the products a good rating and have noticed an average increase in the efficiency of the trans-o-flex staff. The fact that trans-o-flex is increasingly perceived as an express service can be seen in the competitor analysis. Only other express services that customers use most besides trans-o-flex are seen as the main competitors.



## BEST SECURITY CONCEPTS

## TAPA certifications in Hamm and Cologne

“High security standards are vital for a company that specialises in the carriage of sensitive goods,” says Oliver Kuhn, Head of Security at trans-o-flex. For this reason, trans-o-flex is continuing the strategy of gradually certifying its sites according to TAPA standards. The Transported Asset Protection Association (TAPA) is an independent organisation supported by consignors, that has established the highest security standards in transportation worldwide. trans-o-flex achieved two more TAPA milestones in 2020. “The new site in Hamm was certified for the first time. The new TAPA FSR-C 2020 standard was applied in the process,” Kuhn explains. “In Hürth, near Cologne, we passed the interim audit.” Hürth was trans-o-flex’s first site to be TAPA-certified in 2019. The certification process has to be completely reviewed every three years, with an annual audit of the processes being required each year in between. “By 2022, Hürth will already be due for recertification according to the latest TAPA guidelines.” Kuhn anticipates that in the meantime other sites will also receive TAPA certification, following the example of Hürth and Hamm.



## NETWORK EXPANSION

## New sites in Saxony and Hesse

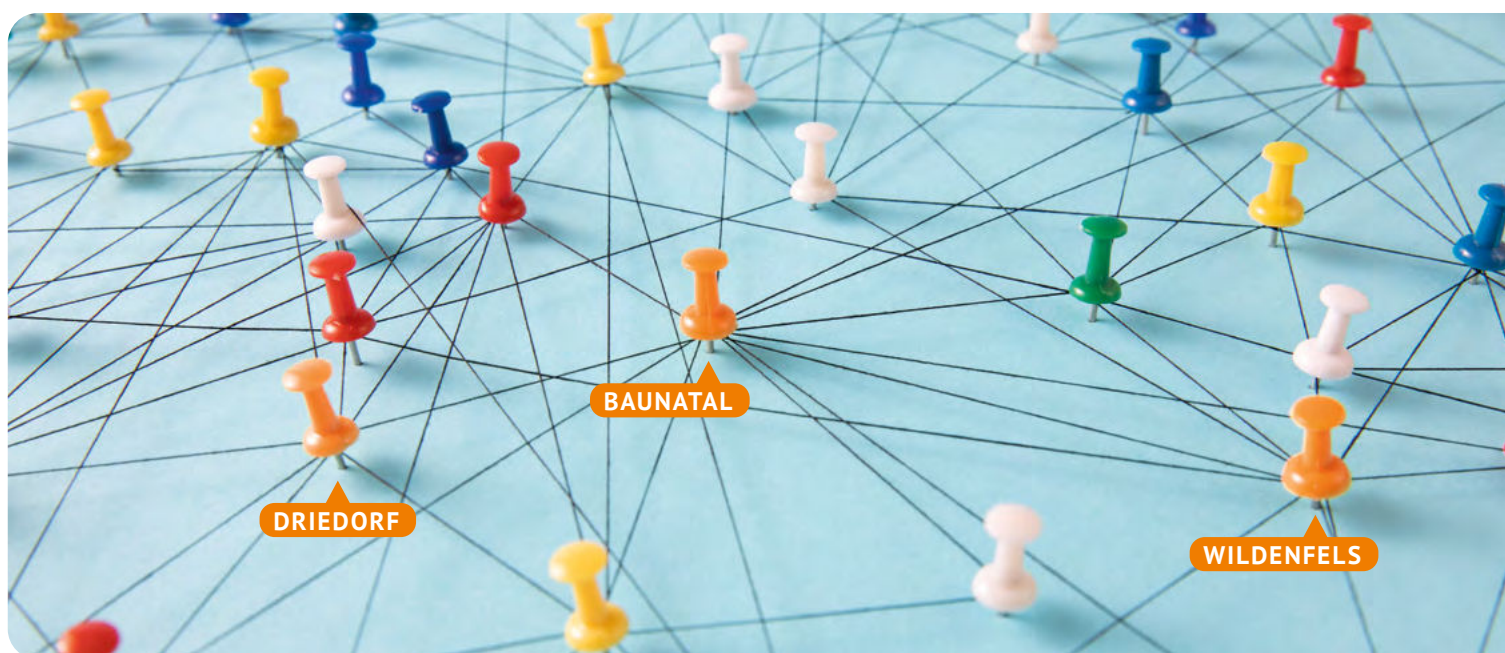
More capacity and more speed through automation. The main focus of the network expansion of trans-o-flex Express and trans-o-flex ThermoMed is currently in Zwickau in Saxony and in Hesse. Two sites are concerned there.

At ThermoMed’s hub in Baunatal, where a new warehouse was added during ongoing operations and then an automatic sorting system was installed, the new sorter is to be officially accepted and handed over to ThermoMed in spring 2021. “We are noticing a clear relief and acceleration,” says ThermoMed Managing Director Michael Löckener. “Our plan to increase the capacity of the ThermoMed network by at least 25% has been fully realised with the increased warehouse space of 2,000 square metres and the additional loading and unloading gates in the new part of the building.”

The new Express and ThermoMed site in Driedorf, Hesse, is scheduled to come on stream as planned in May this year and will then feature a completely newly developed handling technology. “It will sort the goods just as gently as our current sliding shoe sorters,” says trans-o-flex project manager



With the expansion of the trans-o-flex ThermoMed central hub in Baunatal, the capacity of the entire network has increased by more than a quarter.



David de Vega. “But we are now getting a system that is modular in design. This is unique in Germany to date and has decisive advantages.” This is because the three different sorter modules can be taken into operation individually. “The whole system doesn't have to be up and running before we can do the real tests. And even in real operation, the modular design offers a considerable gain in reliability because we can simply continue sorting with other system components in the event of a partial failure of the system.” Finally, maintenance and the replacement of defective parts is much easier because most modules are connected via plug-in connections.

A completely new site is also being built in Wildenfels near Zwickau in Saxony. Planning has been completed, construction work is set to begin in April 2021 and commissioning is planned for the first quarter of 2022. The hub is being built on a 30,000 square metre site in an industrial estate next to a motorway service station. There is direct access to the A 72 motorway via the nearby Zwickau-Ost junction.

In Wildenfels, trans-o-flex is once again relying on the proven, space-saving Y-shaped construction. This means



*The installation of an automatic sorting system is an essential factor in speeding up the handling operations in Baunatal.*

that the distances in the warehouse with 5,000 square metres of handling area are short, but 99 loading bays are still possible. 21 of them are for trucks, the rest for vans. Similar to Hamm-Rhynern and Driedorf, the temperature in the hall is controlled by a combination of free cooling and air conditioning. The largest part of the warehouse will be operated at 15 to 25 degrees Celsius, and there will be a separate refrigeration cell for ThermoMed at 2 to 8 degrees.

## ***Best prospects for strong partnerships***

Only a strong partner can be a good and reliable partner. The current pandemic requires absolute reliability in pharmaceutical logistics, which is one of the decisive factors for success in the fight against Covid-19. Not least due to our certification in accordance with the EU GDP guidelines, we have been appointed as a partner for civil emergency response services in road transport within the Federal Republic of Germany and ensure that medicines such as vaccines reach their destination efficiently, quickly and reliably.

We are also the strong partner you can rely on for the special requirements in logistics for cosmetics, high-tech and electronics. Your dedicated contact at trans-o-flex will be happy to advise you: +49 6201 988 444.