

trans·o·flex

magazine

656 g CO₂e

862 g CO₂e

2,579 g CO₂e

1,723 g CO₂e

A clear case for the climate

*Temperature control study: active beats passive,
up to four times lower CO₂ emissions*

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Customer Dental-Union

Pharmaceuticals and medical products
switched to ambient shipping

Certified security

Another site awarded the
demanding TAPA seal of approval

Always delivered fast

How to secure the advantages of
digital delivery authorisation now

++ ISO AND GDP ++

Doubly audited – always successfully certified



The certification company BSI Group Deutschland spent almost a month auditing and confirming the successful recertification of the quality management system (DIN EN ISO 9001:2015) and the Good Distribution Practice for pharmaceuticals (GDP 2013/C343/01) for all German trans-o-flex companies (Express, ThermoMed and Logistik-Service). The GDP conformity was certified independently of this and, additionally, also by TÜV Süd. trans-o-flex first had its quality management system certified in 1995. GDP conformity was first certified in 2010 and then raised to a new level in 2013 with the publication of the new EU-GDP. "GDP certification is so important to us that this year we purposely used two different expert organisations to have our system audited by independent experts," says

Wolfgang P. Albeck, CEO of trans-o-flex. "The GDP certification reflects the quality of trans-o-flex, which of course also benefits customers outside the healthcare industry." Among other things, quality control, training, safety, cleanliness, active temperature control at 15 to 25 degrees Celsius and 2 to 8 degrees Celsius and internal monitoring procedures were audited. The new certification is valid for three years.

As regards ISO standards, the companies trans-o-flex ThermoMed and trans-o-flex Logistik-Service were also certified according to the environmental management system DIN EN ISO 14001 for the first time this year. trans-o-flex Express was recertified according to this standard.

Legal notice

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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,

I was recently asked on behalf of a major German daily newspaper what the megatrends in logistics are. I would have loved to have put this magazine on the table and said: "Read for yourself!"

Because once again, our customer magazine is full of examples of the megatrends of sustainability and digitalisation, which I believe are also significantly driving developments in the logistics industry. Allow me to highlight just a few examples. With our new sites, such as in Wildenfels, we are setting standards in both economic and environmental terms; with active temperature control, we are up to four times more environmentally friendly than others with passive solutions, according to a new study; we are also making contributions to biodiversity with smaller campaigns such as green space activation and bee colonies at sites; we are testing climate-neutral delivery in Bremen with cargo bikes and are also looking at innovative deliveries of ambient items; with digital delivery authorisation, we are making it easy for senders and consignees to further increase the rate of successful first-time deliveries; with the S-Data project, we are using state-of-the-art camera technology (OCR) and artificial intelligence (AI) to be able to deliver items without delays despite missing item data.

Yet all these initiatives are no coincidence. Rather, such innovations are part of our nature as an express service provider. Express services have always brought innovations to the market as special customer solutions that are only adopted years later by other service providers, for example guaranteed early delivery the next morning, electronic consignment tracking and electronic proof of delivery.

Today, express no longer stands for speed alone, but for quality, for flexibility, for special industry solutions, for customised customer service, for the most diverse combinations of services that make the work of consignors easier and reduce costs from an overall perspective. It entails logistics solutions geared to specific industries or individual customers for which express services are chosen and paid for today.

Word gets around and leads, among other things, to trans-o-flex receiving more and more awards. We were recently named one of Germany's best postal and courier services. And Focus Money has named us "Price Winner" for the third time because our price-performance ratio is so good.

But what we like best are the awards from customers, where they specifically choose trans-o-flex because we offer exactly the quality of logistics service they need. This is what happened at Dental-Union, which purposely uses trans-o-flex to deliver all temperature-sensitive products from its central warehouse within the room temperature range. Read more about it in this magazine.

So you want to find out more about sustainability and digitalisation in logistics? I come back to the recommendation I made at the beginning: Read for yourself!

I hope you enjoy an interesting read

*Wolfgang P. Albeck
Chief Executive Officer*



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++ INTERNATIONAL SHIPMENTS ++

trans-o-flex proves best quality

For the sixth year in a row, trans-o-flex Express has received the award for the best operational quality in the international EURODIS network. "Even though it looks like we have subscribed to this award, winning is anything but automatic," said CEO Wolfgang P. Albeck when accepting the award. "If you're already good, it gets harder and harder for you to get even better. And the other partners at EURODIS are following suit, which is why the race at the top is getting closer and closer. All the more reason for our team to be proud of having received this award once again."

The criteria for winning an award in the network for joint international transport of parcels and pallets in 36 European countries are numerous quality measurements. For instance, over the course of a year, data such as transit times, status information, completeness of data transmission or proof of delivery is collected and evaluated on a daily basis.



Jens Reibold, Managing Director EURODIS (right), congratulates Wolfgang P. Albeck, CEO trans-o-flex, in front of the trans-o-flex headquarters in Weinheim on winning the award for the best operational quality in the network for international combined freight transport.



++ ACTIVE TEMPERATURE CONTROL ++

B2C Pharma: safe delivery of medicines to end customers

Mail-order selling of medicines increased significantly during the coronavirus pandemic. "And this trend seems irreversible," says Albeck, CEO of trans-o-flex. "That's why trans-o-flex customers can now also use our actively temperature-controlled transport services in the ambient range for shipments to end customers." trans-o-flex has developed its B2C Pharma service for this purpose.

"We are receiving more and more enquiries, for example from mail-order pharmacies, for whom non-temperature-controlled or only passively cooled shipping with a normal parcel service is unsafe with regard to the efficacy of the medicines," reports Wolfgang P. Albeck. "That is why we also want to offer a safe transport alternative for private deliveries in the room temperature range, in which the majority of medicines are transported." The service is not limited to certain regions, but is being offered nationwide within 24 hours. A temperature history, where consignees can also view the temperature of their consignments throughout transit, is also part of the B2C Pharma service.





The Pharmaceuticals Customer Forum at Speicher 7 in Mannheim once again provided a platform for an intensive exchange about needs and supply options in pharmaceutical logistics.

++ INDUSTRY WORKSHOP ++

Pharmaceuticals Customer Forum 2022

Nine representatives from eight pharmaceutical customers met with nine trans-o-flex representatives at this year's Pharmaceuticals Customer Forum. The aim of the workshop is for industry experts and logistics experts to listen to each other in order to pick up on trends and developments at an early stage and also to be able to correct them if necessary. The focus of this year's dialogue was the topic of sustainability.

++ GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY ++

Haulage company has been driving for trans-o-flex for 50 years

The haulage company Roman Mayer from Gersthofen near Augsburg and trans-o-flex have been working together for 50 years. Businessman Roman Mayer, who has overseen and shaped the working relationship through all five decades, was presented by trans-o-flex CEO Wolfgang P. Albeck with a glass sculpture at a ceremony to mark the anniversary. "You don't often find such a long and successful cooperation, which has proven to be strong and sustainable even in the vicissitudes of history," said Albeck. "Both companies have developed very positively in this partnership and can be proud of it."

The haulage company is now part of the Roman Mayer Logistik Group, which consists of 19 companies, is represented at 29 locations worldwide and employs more than 1,400 people. The group has around 130,000 m² of logistics space with 100,000 pallet spaces in high-bay warehouses and uses almost 400 of its own trucks. Around 60 of them are regularly deployed for trans-o-flex in line haul.



"In gratitude for 50 years of successful service" is engraved on the glass sculpture that trans-o-flex CEO Wolfgang P. Albeck and the Business Unit Manager Line Haul, Michael Zorell, presented to haulier Roman Mayer at a meeting in Weinheim.



++ RECOGNITION ++

FOCUS MONEY

Award winner for the third time

For the third year in a row, trans-o-flex has been the winner of the "Deutschlandtest" (Germany Test) by Focus Money magazine and the Hamburg Institute for Management and Economic Research. The study "Preissieger 2022" (Price Winner 2022) examined around eleven million internet mentions for around 19,000 brands and com-

panies in Germany between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2022 and evaluated them on an industry-specific basis. Only those who score extremely positively in terms of "price" and "overall impression" receive an award. trans-o-flex received the award in the logistics company category.

++ OPENING CELEBRATED ++

New site in Saxony sets standards

“New sites not only have to increase the capacity and efficiency of a transport network, but also score points with sustainability,” said Wolfgang P. Albeck, CEO of trans-o-flex, at the official opening of the new logistics centre in Wildenfels near Zwickau in Saxony. “The new site meets these requirements and sets standards at the same time.”

For example, a logistics centre has been built in Wildenfels on a 30,000 square metre site with a very compact warehouse area of 5,000 square metres and a relatively high number of 99 gates for fast loading and unloading. “We have invested more than average in highly efficient thermal insulation, which permanently reduces operating costs and climate impacts,” Albeck continues.

“The temperature control of the facility, which is necessary for the safety of the sensitive goods we transport, is carried out by an eco-friendly and economically favourable combination of free cooling via supply air grilles and exhaust air fans as well as an air conditioning system.” LED lights ensure sustainable workplace safety.

As a further investment in greater sustainability, all rain that falls on roofs and sealed surfaces of the site is not drained into the sewage system. Instead, a special pipe system has been laid under the yard surface to collect all rainwater and enable controlled, natural infiltration. Charging points have been installed for employees’ electric vehicles in addition to connections for charging delivery vehicles. Operationally, network efficiency has increased



The aerial view clearly shows the compact and efficient design of the facility. The two loading wings at the bottom for delivery vehicles and the wider loading wing at the top for the large long-haul trucks form a Y shape. This shape minimises turning space and allows a large number of loading bays in a relatively small area, as well as fast cross-docking between the long-haul and last-mile areas.

due to the new facility, among other things, because two previously separate sites have been merged here. Albeck: “The new branch is both a transshipment centre for our trans-o-flex ThermoMed refrigerated network with temperatures between 2 and 8 degrees Celsius and for trans-o-flex Express with non-temperature-controlled and actively temperature-controlled shipments in the ambient range of 15 to 25 degrees Celsius.”



trans-o-flex CEO Wolfgang P. Albeck (left) handed over a symbolic key to branch manager Peter Morgenroth at the official opening of the new trans-o-flex site in Wildenfels.

++ HIGH LEVEL OF SECURITY CONFIRMED ++

Another site awarded the demanding TAPA certification

The Herford branch is another trans-o-flex site that has now received the demanding TAPA certification. TAPA stands for Transported Asset Protection Association and is an independent organisation supported by consignors, which has established the highest security standards in transportation worldwide. Like the other TAPA sites, Herford was certified according to the TAPA standard FSR-C 2020.

“The certification is very demanding and constitutes for us the basis for the further development of our security processes and technology,” explains Wolfgang P. Albeck, CEO of trans-o-flex. “The highest security standards are vital for a company that specialises in the transportation of sensitive goods.”

Certification requires all security-relevant processes to be described. Clearly defined technical security installations are required. Both are audited annually. Last but not least, all persons involved in transportation and handling must regularly undertake security training. TAPA, which was founded

by discerning consignors, also makes very specific constructional demands, for example on fences, access regulations and video surveillance. For example, all the certified sites have been equipped with a video management system that enables a targeted and quick search for individual packages.



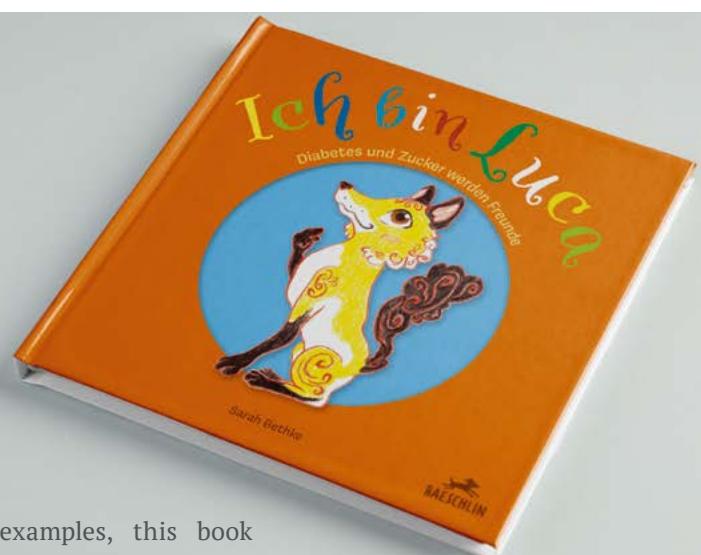
Officially certified: The consignor organisation TAPA has confirmed that the trans-o-flex site in Herford complies with the safety standards according to the demanding FSR-C 2020 standard.

++ EDUCATION AND SUPPORT ++

Children's non-fiction book about diabetes

Because trans-o-flex has covered the printing costs, the first edition of a picture book about diabetes in children can soon be published. “As a specialised logistics service provider for the healthcare industry, we share their concerns and want to offer help and education regarding a widespread disease,” says Wolfgang P. Albeck, CEO of trans-o-flex.

In the picture book “Ich bin Luca” (I am Luca), illustrator Sarah Bethke, who herself was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes at the age of ten, explains the disease and raises awareness for the feelings of fellow diabetics. “With prac-



tical examples, this book also makes it easy to adjust one's own blood sugar levels,” says Bethke. “Until now, there was no such book for diabetics.” With Luca as the main character, the author chooses a narrative style appropriate for children and a surprising perspective. Luca is, in fact, a cunning fox.

COVER STORY

Pharmaceutical transport: active temperature control significantly more eco-friendly than passive

Study proves clear benefits of actively temperature-controlled logistics chains over passive temperature control – up to four times less climate impact, shipments in returnable containers always perform best

What is the most environmentally friendly method of transporting pharmaceuticals and other sensitive goods safely and without the risk of loss of efficacy or even loss of function? "We must be able to give an accurate and informed answer to this question as a responsible company that offers active temperature control of the entire logistics chain to make shipments safer." For Wolfgang P. Albeck, CEO of trans-o-flex, this was the reason to commission a study. It was not only intended to critically examine the company's own business prac-

tices. Rather, the question was to be clarified as clearly as possible on the basis of scientific data. "Because there is a lot at stake here," says Albeck. "On the one hand, sustainability plays an increasingly important role for our customers, and we want to offer not only safe and reliable but also environmentally friendly logistics solutions. On the other hand, it is a question of whether we are on the right track with the investments that are necessary for the further expansion of actively temperature-controlled transport networks."



Study examines single-use and returnable packaging

The trans-o-flex study calculated the level of climate impact for each of the two methods in two variants: with single-use and with returnable packaging. "It was to be expected that the returnable systems would have lower emissions than the single-use systems in both cases," says Albeck. "But we didn't expect active temperature control to be so much more environmentally friendly than passive."

The impacts on climate produced by passive temperature control are at least twice as high as those produced by active temperature control. The following four core results were reached:

- 1** The climate impact of active temperature control with a returnable container is 2.63 times lower than with passive temperature control with a returnable container.
- 2** It is 3.93 times lower than with passive temperature control with single-use cardboard.
- 3** The climate impact of active temperature control with single-use cardboard packaging is twice (2.0) lower than passive temperature control with returnable containers.
- 4** It is 2.99 times lower than with passive temperature control with single-use cardboard.

The results of the study surprised even the experienced logistics manager Albeck. "At least I didn't expect it to be so clear," he admits. The analysis and comparison of the methods for temperature-controlled shipments that can be considered in principle has clearly demonstrated the superiority of active temperature control with regard to the emissions balance. "Our investigations based on scientific calculations have led to the conclusion that the climate impact of an actively temperature-controlled shipment is up to four times lower than that of a passive temperature-controlled shipment."

In the case of passive temperature control, the correct temperature is to be provided by cold packs and special packaging. With active temperature control, the load compartments of the vehicles and the transhipment zones in the logistics centres are kept completely within the respective temperature range, which means that consignments do not require special packaging.

Actively temperature-controlled medicine shipments not only increase the safety of pharmaceuticals, but they are also more environmentally friendly than shipments with special packaging for passive temperature control.

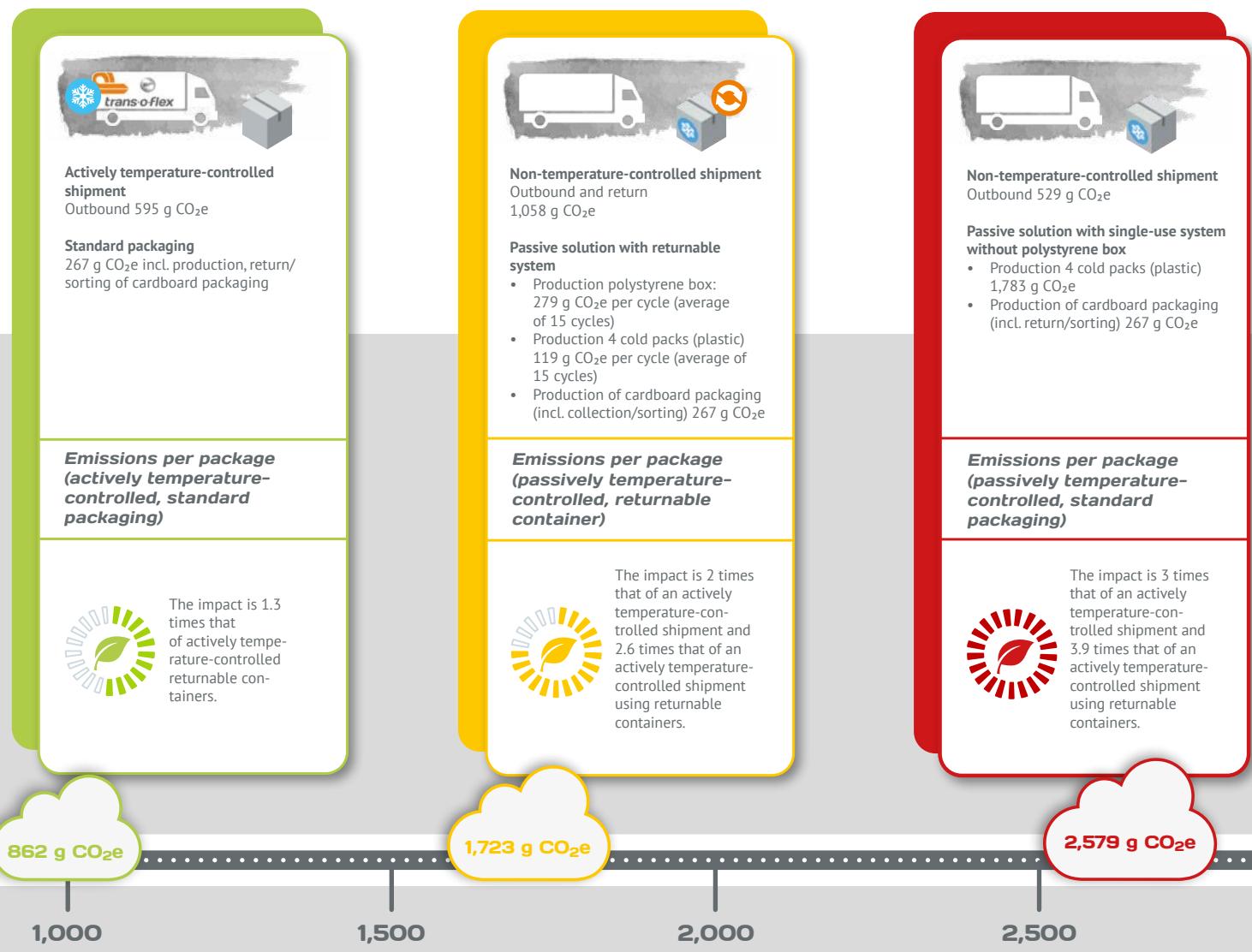
Comprehensive well-to-wheel approach

The analysis was conducted in three steps. Firstly, the greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) of a non-temperature-controlled shipment were calculated using the example of truck transport between Munich and Berlin. To do this – as well as for the other calculation steps – all direct and indirect GHGs were calculated in a well-to-wheel approach from the provision of a resource to its conversion into kinetic energy. These emissions are measured in terms of CO₂ equivalents (CO₂e), which means that other greenhouse gas emissions are taken into account in addition to carbon dioxide (CO₂). In the second step, it was determined how much additional CO₂e is produced when the consignments are transported with active temperature control. In the third step, the additional CO₂e (compared to non-temperature-controlled transport) was determined when the consignments are passively temperature-controlled.

The scientific basis for the calculations was, on the one hand, the GLEC framework (Module 5), a globally recognised method for emissions reporting that covers all transport modes and transhipment points of global logistics chains. On the other hand, the results of the distance-based calculations according to the GLEC standard were checked for plausibility using the EcoTransIT calculator. “The EcoTransIT calculator developed in close cooperation with neutral institutes such as ifeu, INFRAS or Fraunhofer IML has confirmed the GLEC results,” explains Albeck. “For example, for non-temperature-controlled transport, GLEC came to 47.63 kg CO₂e per tonne and EcoTransIT came to 47.33.”



Current average weights of packages transported by trans-o-flex were used to calculate emissions at package level. According to this, a package weighing 11 kilos is responsible for 656 g CO₂e when actively temperature controlled (in returnable packaging) between Munich and Berlin. However, if a package is transported on the same route with passive packaging (single-use system without a polystyrene box), 2,579 g of CO₂e are produced per package. If a returnable system is also used for passive temperature control, then 1,723 g of CO₂e are still produced per package. “In addition to the 2 to 4



times higher climate impact, passive temperature control also means additional cost and effort in disposing of the temperature loggers, handling the cold packs and stocking them,” says Albeck.

Albeck considers the varying degrees of security associated with the different transport methods to be equally important. “According to the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Parenteral Drug Association, nearly one in five health products is damaged during transport due to a break in the cold

chain.” And this happens above all when the “risk-based approach (= without temperature control) or passive temperature control in medicine transport” is used. “The risks of these modes of transport have always been there, but they have become unpredictable, not least given the increasing volatility of the weather and more transport delays due to traffic congestion.”

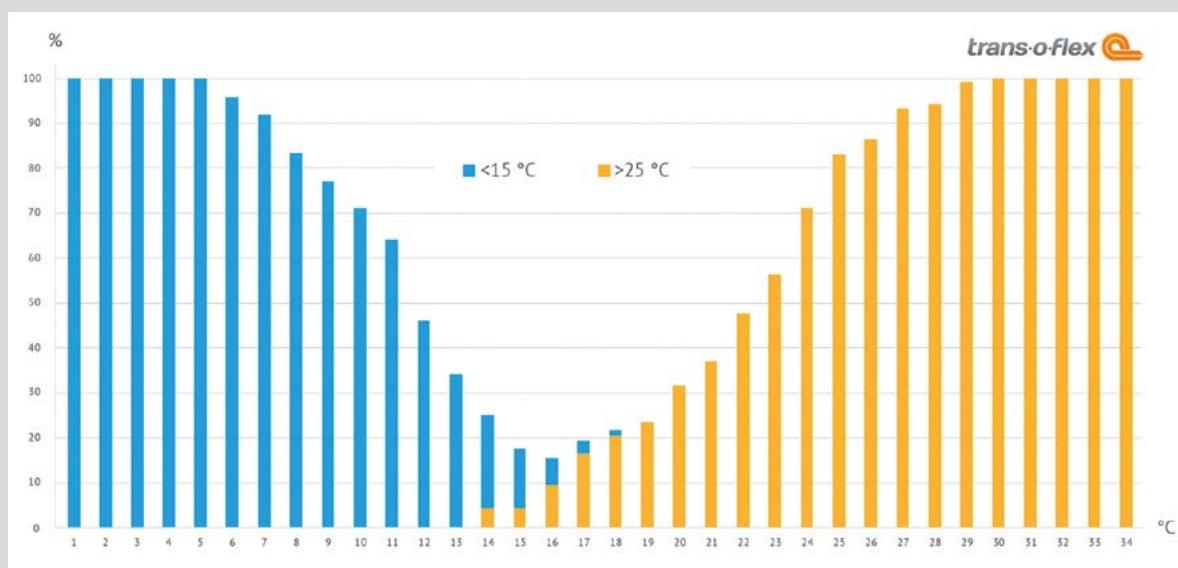
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Any shipment without temperature control can compromise the efficacy of pharmaceuticals

Just how high the risk is if the temperature at which pharmaceuticals are transported is not monitored and controlled was already demonstrated by trans-o-flex in its own extensive study in 2020. More than 150,000 readings were collected in a number of nationwide test series. The result: "Regardless of the time of day and whether the shipment is transported in summer or winter, our measurements have shown that there is no outside temperature at which pharmaceuticals without temperature control can maintain the room temperature range of 15 to 25 degrees without risk," says Albeck. The lowest risk is at an outside temperature of 16 degrees. Here, the likelihood of a consignment being transported in a vehicle without temperature control at below 15 or above 25 degrees Celsius on delivery is 16 per cent. Above and below this temperature the risk increases sharply (see graph).

"Especially with medicines that should actually be stored and transported in the room temperature range of 15 to 25 degrees Celsius, the risk is still massively underestimated to

this day." By taking measurements in different seasons, trans-o-flex has shown how high the risk really is. For the study, delivery vehicles were equipped with temperature loggers at 17 trans-o-flex sites distributed across Germany during the measurement periods. Three operational scenarios were tested at each site: an intercity route, a city route and a mixed route. The measuring instruments used (temperature loggers) recorded the temperature every 15 minutes with a deviation accuracy of 0.5 degrees Celsius and stored it together with the time and date of the measurement. A total of 152,920 readings were recorded in this way during the test periods. Each of these temperature values was related to the outside temperature that was simultaneously recorded at a measuring station of the German Weather Service that was closest to the vehicle. To reduce the evaluation effort, trans-o-flex concentrated its analysis on 40,151 readings, which were collected between 8 am and 4 pm Monday to Friday.



The graph shows how high the risk is when consignments are transported in a non-temperature-controlled delivery vehicle at a specific outside temperature of less than 15 or more than 25 degrees Celsius. Example reading: Even at an outside temperature of 22 degrees, the risk is almost 50 per cent. In other words, one in two consignments will likely be transported at more than 25 degrees Celsius.



Temperature alarm: Service quantifies risk of non-temperature-controlled deliveries

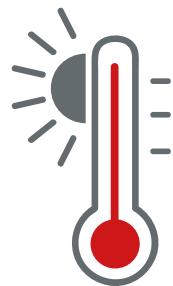
"We chose these time periods because our delivery vehicles are typically on the road by then," explains Albeck. "And on the basis of this data, our IT department has developed the temperature alarm website tool. This allows anyone to quantify the risk of non-temperature-controlled shipments." The temperature alarm service on the www.trans-o-flex.com website provides daily details of the maximum and minimum temperatures to be expected and the corresponding risk of a consignment being transported in a vehicle without temperature control at more than 25 degrees or below 15 degrees.

With an outside temperature of 23 degrees, more than 50 degrees on the load bed

"The test results allow one conclusion only: There is no day without considerable risk," Albeck notes. "In addition, the study provided, or rather confirmed, important general findings." Firstly, the temperature in the load compartment of a vehicle without temperature control follows the rise in outside temperatures during the course of the day without any significant time delay. Secondly, the load compartment does not heat up slowly and in parallel with the increase in outside temperature, but the interior temperature increases in some cases exponentially in relation to the outside temperature. Even at an outside temperature of 16 degrees, 10 per cent of all measurements in the load compartment indicated temperatures of more than 25 degrees. "This means that even at normal outside temperatures there are considerable deviations if actively

temperature-controlled vehicles are not used." With an outside temperature of 23 degrees Celsius, peak temperatures of more than 50 degrees Celsius were measured in the vehicles, with an outside temperature of 30 degrees Celsius even more than 60 degrees Celsius.

Further studies conducted by trans-o-flex have shown that, in addition to the temperature inside the vehicles, the temperature in the warehouses also poses a high risk for the shipment of medicines. "If not actively controlled and counteracted, the temperature in conventional distribution centres rises continuously throughout the day," says Albeck. "According to our measurements, the temperature does not peak at midday, but in the late afternoon, exactly when the customers' deliveries arrive." Once the heating process has started, the large mass of the buildings means that a rise in temperature, for example above the 25 degree limit of the room temperature range, cannot then be prevented at short notice without active air conditioning. "Cooling has to start early, usually in the morning. And to know exactly when and how much intervention is required, continuous measurement, documentation and evaluation of temperature logs are necessary." ■



CITY LOGISTICS IN BREMEN

Delivery by cargo bike: pilot to be extended and expanded

The delivery of trans-o-flex consignments by cargo bikes, which started in Bremen in May, has been so successful that the pilot has been extended and is to be expanded. "We are currently testing whether we can also deliver ambient consignments with the help of a special temperature box that can heat or cool during transport," says Michael Löckener. He is responsible for the pilot project as Business Unit Manager Operations Area Production at trans-o-flex. "Before being piloted in practice, the temperature box would still be extensively tested in the laboratory and then initially used for the transport of specially prepared parcels." Specific ideas are already in place for the subsequent practical application: The box can be transported either in the load compartment of the cargo bike or with a trailer.

"From the beginning, our goal was to test not only the delivery of conventional consignments, but also of temperature-controlled consignments," Löckener reports. "That was one of the reasons why we chose a system bike from the Bremen-based company Rytle for the pilot phase, as they already offer a solution for temperature control."

The two cargo bikes used in the pilot in Bremen can accommodate an interchangeable box with around 1.4 cubic metres of loading space and have a payload of 180 kilos. The delivery couriers load the bicycles in the morning from a special swap body for which trans-o-flex has been given a parking space in Bremen's city centre. The swap body serves as a mini-hub that is loaded early in the morning from a trans-o-flex truck with consignments to be delivered. In the evening, consignments that have been collect-



Since May, two bicycle couriers have been delivering trans-o-flex consignments from this container, which serves as a mini-hub, in Bremen's city centre.

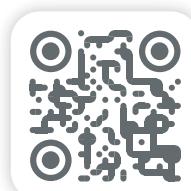
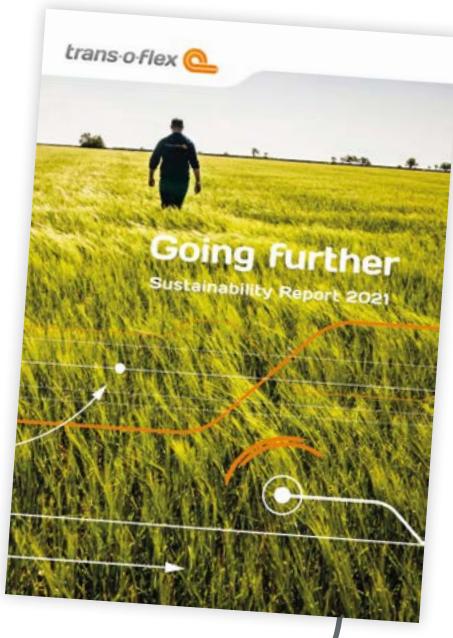
ed by the couriers can be transported from the mini-hub to the trans-o-flex branch in Bremen and from there to the consignees.

The cargo bikes have two electric motors. They are built into the rear wheels and assist the riders up to a speed of 25 km/h. "Because the cargo bikes start in the middle of the delivery area, the distances are very short and, to date, the couriers have travelled less than 20 kilometres a day." Thanks to exchangeable batteries, the riders have enough power even for much longer delivery routes, without having to recharge during the day. The batteries are charged overnight in the mini-hub.

Initially, the bike couriers only delivered parcels weighing a maximum of ten kilos. "In the meantime, we have increased the maximum unit weight to 15 kilos, which is also going well," Löckener explains. "This has allowed us to increase the utilisation of the routes and the productivity of the bike couriers is now close to that of a normal van route." The pilot, which was originally limited to three months, has now been extended until the end of April, so that experience can be gained over a whole year with all weather conditions.

SUSTAINABILITY REPORT**New: based on GRI standards**

The recently published sustainability report of trans-o-flex for 2021 is based for the first time on the international standards of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), founded in partnership with the United Nations Environment Programme. “The GRI standards are regarded globally as best practice for reporting on the economic, environmental and social impacts of corporate activity,” says Wolfgang P. Albeck, CEO of trans-o-flex. “By applying these standards, we can make our development understandable, transparent and comparable beyond individual years for customers, employees and investors.” The complete 58-page sustainability report is available as a PDF file on the company’s website.

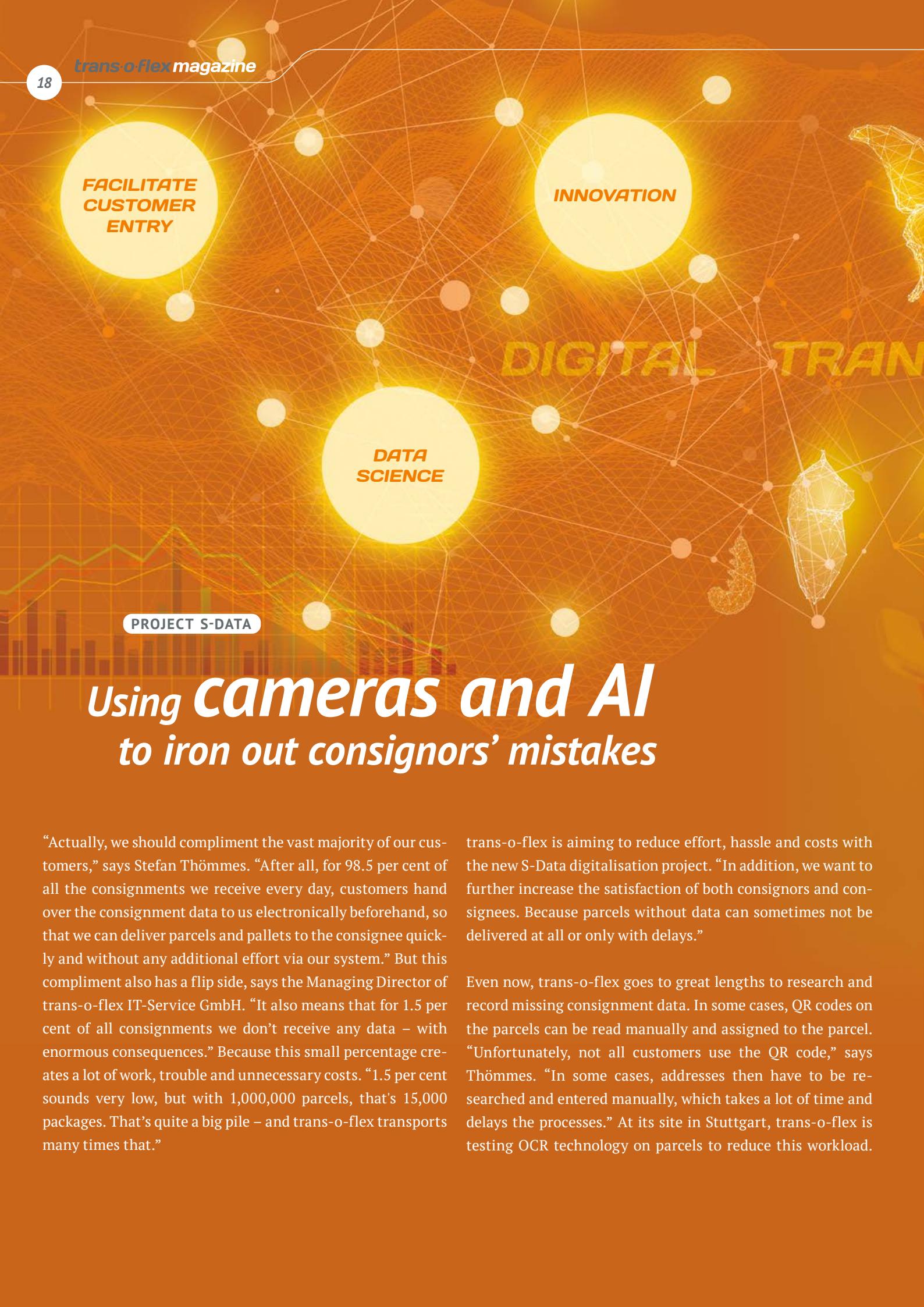


Click here for the online version
of the sustainability report:
<https://bit.ly/3edXAxV>

BIODIVERSITY***Sustainable green spaces
and bee colonies***

At up to 26 sites in Germany, trans-o-flex plans to set up bee colonies and use and design green spaces more sustainably. This is another initiative under trans-o-flex’s ESG programme. “The bee colonies are a contribution to biodiversity,” says trans-o-flex CEO Wolfgang P. Albeck. “And with sustainable green space design, we enhance the recreational quality and make it more attractive for employees to relax outside during their breaks.”

Driedorf is already ‘buzzing’ with activity: two bee colonies are already active at the Hessian site.

The background of the page features a complex network of interconnected nodes and lines in shades of orange and yellow, resembling a globe or a digital map. In the lower-left corner, there is a small bar chart with a green line graph overlaid. The overall theme is digital connectivity and data analysis.

**FACILITATE
CUSTOMER
ENTRY**

INNOVATION

**DATA
SCIENCE**

PROJECT S-DATA

DIGITAL TRANS

Using cameras and AI to iron out consignors' mistakes

“Actually, we should compliment the vast majority of our customers,” says Stefan Thömmes. “After all, for 98.5 per cent of all the consignments we receive every day, customers hand over the consignment data to us electronically beforehand, so that we can deliver parcels and pallets to the consignee quickly and without any additional effort via our system.” But this compliment also has a flip side, says the Managing Director of trans-o-flex IT-Service GmbH. “It also means that for 1.5 per cent of all consignments we don’t receive any data – with enormous consequences.” Because this small percentage creates a lot of work, trouble and unnecessary costs. “1.5 per cent sounds very low, but with 1,000,000 parcels, that’s 15,000 packages. That’s quite a big pile – and trans-o-flex transports many times that.”

trans-o-flex is aiming to reduce effort, hassle and costs with the new S-Data digitalisation project. “In addition, we want to further increase the satisfaction of both consignors and consignees. Because parcels without data can sometimes not be delivered at all or only with delays.”

Even now, trans-o-flex goes to great lengths to research and record missing consignment data. In some cases, QR codes on the parcels can be read manually and assigned to the parcel. “Unfortunately, not all customers use the QR code,” says Thömmes. “In some cases, addresses then have to be researched and entered manually, which takes a lot of time and delays the processes.” At its site in Stuttgart, trans-o-flex is testing OCR technology on parcels to reduce this workload.



TRANSFORMATION

**CUSTOMER
PORTAL**



OCR technology can take pictures of parcels and recognise characters.

OCR (optical character recognition) technology uses cameras to photograph the packages. The project name S-Data came about because the pictures are taken during the automatic sorting process – when running through the sorter.

Once the pictures have been taken, a special technology for reading packages is used in a second step. It is designed to recognise typed and handwritten addresses and information on the images in a matter of seconds with the help of artificial intelligence (AI) and make them available to the trans-o-flex system. “If this is successful, we will ideally have all the relevant data from each package in our system,” says Thömmes. “This allows us to send each package directly to the delivering branch, we can identify dangerous goods consignments and process them accordingly, and we can dynamically schedule all consignments for delivery so that we can guarantee fast and reliable delivery on routes that are used to optimum capacity.”

The use of OCR technology would bring trans-o-flex closer to its goal of 100 per cent data availability for scheduling. “Both consignors and consignees would benefit from this,” explains Thömmes. “Because complete scheduling data means that routes and stops can be optimally planned and arrival times can also be determined and communicated.”

Since the use of OCR and AI is “technically highly demanding”, because the solution would first have to be implemented area-wide even if it were successful and because, last but not least, it would involve considerable investment, Thömmes warns against too high expectations. “The test system and the associated AI software are currently being piloted in Stuttgart,” says the IT expert. The tests at the Stuttgart site will continue until the end of October. If the results meet expectations, the next step would be a rollout at all collection centres, which could be implemented in the third quarter of 2023 at the earliest.

DIGITAL DELIVERY AUTHORISATION

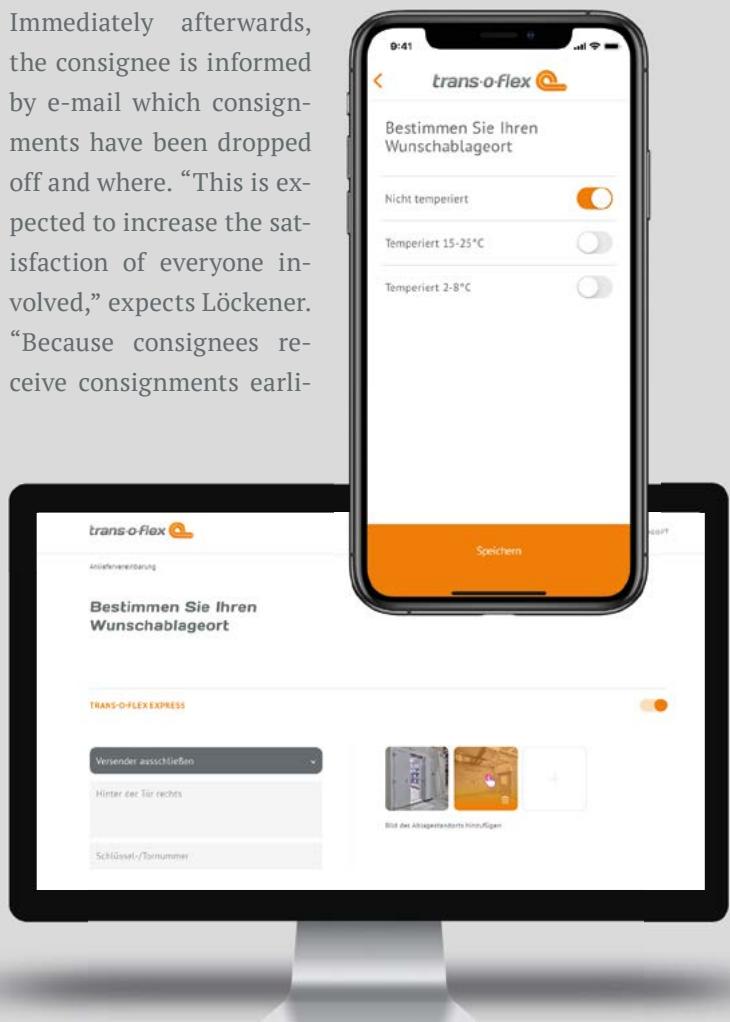
Register now and secure your advantages!

It's about less paper, simpler, clearer and more secure processes, but above all, it's about speeding up the delivery of items where the consignee is temporarily unavailable. "Digital delivery authorisation enables us to achieve and implement advantages for everyone involved in the logistics chain," says the ThermoMed Managing Director responsible for the project and Business Unit Manager Operations Area Production, Michael Löckener. "Numerous customers have already contacted us and given us the necessary consent for all or some of their consignments." The next step: trans-o-flex will contact all consignees who receive goods from consignors who have consented to digital delivery authorisation. These consignees will be informed about the possibilities and advantages of digital delivery authorisation. "The consignees then just have to give their consent digitally with a few clicks!"

This is made possible by the new delivery agreement feature of the trans-o-flex consignee app insight. "Delivery agreements are now widely used," says Löckener. "The tool allows trans-o-flex Express and trans-o-flex ThermoMed to control the issuing and handling of delivery authorisations in Germany entirely digitally in future." Up to now, a lot of paper had to be printed out, sent and archived for a delivery authorisation arrangement. "Now the process will be easier and faster and also more secure. At the same time, it was important to

us that both consignors and consignees always have control over their consignments." For this reason, the delivery agreement can be changed or revoked at any time.

In practice, the delivery process should work like this: If a consignee is not at home when a trans-o-flex delivery driver rings the doorbell, the driver drops off the consignment at the agreed location. For this purpose, the delivery computer displays whether or for which items delivery authorisation is in place for this consignee and where the respective drop-off location is. Immediately afterwards, the consignee is informed by e-mail which consignments have been dropped off and where. "This is expected to increase the satisfaction of everyone involved," expects Löckener. "Because consignees receive consignments earli-



er, the process is as transparent as possible, and we can deliver on the first delivery attempt and don't have to make a second trip."

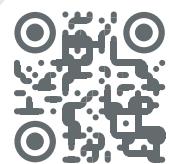
Löckener's appeal to all consignors: "Anyone who has not yet given us consent for their consign-

ments should do so as soon as possible! For legal reasons, we can only initiate the subsequent process and deliver the advantages for all parties involved after that."



Consignor

- 1 Decide whether or for which of your consignments a delivery agreement is possible: for non-temperature-controlled consignments, for temperature-controlled ambient consignments (15 to 25 °C), for temperature-controlled refrigerated consignments (2 to 8 °C).
- 2 Download the consent form at www.trans-o-flex.com/trans-o-flex-insight-alv, complete it and send it to trans-o-flex by post or e-mail.



Simply download the
consent form here:
<https://bit.ly/3UZHt0>



Consignee

- 1 Download the trans-o-flex insight consignee app and log in.
- 2 Use the 'Delivery Agreement' module of the insight app to specify the desired drop-off location, upload images of the desired drop-off location and, if necessary, define different drop-off locations for different types of goods. Save!

Who has to do what?

In order for trans-o-flex to be allowed to drop off consignments if a consignee is not available, both the consignor and the consignee must give their consent. The following overview shows who has to do what.

ACTIVE TEMPERATURE CONTROL

“Somebody has to lead the way!”

Why Dental-Union was the first mover in the dental sector to switch to ambient shipping, first for pharmaceuticals and then for medical products as well



In July last year, Dental-Union (DU) launched the first stage. In consultation with its shareholders, it switched the shipping of pharmaceuticals to ambient transport with trans-oflex. Eleven months later, in June this year, the second stage followed. Since then, DU now also has items from the medical products range transported using the Ambient service. What had happened?

DU operates a central warehouse in Rodgau, situated about halfway between Frankfurt Airport and Aschaffenburg. From there, the company supplies everything that is used by dentists and needed for this purpose: from the material for a filling to anaesthetics, hygiene products, dentures, disinfection and instruments. Managing Director Stefan Bleidner: "We have a range of almost 100,000 products that are shipped from our warehouse directly to dentists and laboratories."

"As far as I know, there is one other market competitor in the dental sector who ships medicines using active temperature control; in the medical products sector, we are the only supplier who has these products shipped using active tempera-

ture control," says Bleidner. "This has caused a stir in the market because actively temperature-controlled transport is of course more expensive than standard shipping. Every package that is shipped via the ambient route reduces our shareholders' margins." Nevertheless, the decision to use ambient shipping was made together with the shareholders. Two reasons were decisive here.

"The top priority is, of course, maintaining product quality and patient safety." On the one hand, Bleidner refers here to climate change, to the increasingly longer periods of heat and the temperatures that already prevail in the load compartment of trucks at normal outside temperatures. "If you transport filling material at 40 degrees, the material may break or have a much lower quality and durability." However, product quality is at risk when using non-temperature-controlled shipping not only during the day, but also at night. "Nighttime is not on many people's radar, but this is where significant sub-zero temperatures can be reached in the vehicle during winter transport and therefore impact product quality."

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On the other hand, Bleidner cites the regulatory pressure regarding temperature-controlled shipping. "We are driven by the Medicines Act on the one hand and the new MDR on the other." The Medical Device Regulation (MDR) is the European regulation for medical products. It officially came into force together with the In Vitro Diagnostics Regulation (IVDR) on 25 May 2017 and became mandatory from 26 May 2021 after a four-year transition period. "At Dental-Union, we have decided to abide by the rules and go ambient. We started with pharmaceuticals because that's where the regulatory requirements are the clearest." Not least in Germany, the regional councils are increasingly drawing attention to this. And Dental-Union, due to its shareholder structure and as a nationwide consignor, has dealings with every regional council in Germany. "Usually, only one regional council is responsible for our competitors who work regionally. We have to deal with all of them." The regulatory practice is not always standardised. Some competitors are not under pressure from the regulatory authorities because not all regional councils are equally concerned with the temperature control of pharmaceutical shipments. But Bleidner has been told by several regional councils "that they don't agree when goods that should be travelling at 15 to 25 degrees are transported without temperature control".

For the 57-year-old, who joined DU in 2002 as a controller, became commercial managing director in 2007 and has been the sole managing director since 2018, one thing is certain: "The market is not yet sensitive to the risks involved in the transport of pharmaceuticals and medical products, but that will come. And the delivery of medical products will also come under the spotlight of the regulators at some point."

Bleidner and DU, however, did not want to be among the driven, but preferred to drive the market forward. And since ambient shipments of pharmaceuticals went well right from the start, DU followed suit this year and also transports medical products via the Ambient service. "This is definitely also fuelled by the new MDR," Bleidner admits. "Somebody has to lead the way!"

Especially since he also sees opportunities to score points with customers as the first mover. "The problem is that customers often don't even know which transport service is used to ship their orders and what risks are associated with inadequate temperature control." To change this, Dental-Union gave customers a small gift in the summer. All consignees who had goods delivered via the Ambient service received two cool packs with the consignment, which were provided with a sleeve. The sleeve (see picture) drew the consignees' attention on the front to how "easy & cool" ordering and the actively temperature-controlled delivery were. On the back it says, among other things: "Now we also deliver many of your medical products with temperature-controlled shipping. It will be hard for anyone to achieve the same result quickly."



This summer, Dental-Union sent 10,000 of these cool packs to customers who received goods via the Ambient service to draw attention to their safe shipping.

Who is Dental-Union?

At first glance, Dental-Union is an unusual company. This is because the company, founded in 1967, has neither its own distribution nor customer relations. The 14 shareholders of the company handle both. They have contact with their end customers, who are, in this case, dentists, laboratories, clinics or medical care centres. At second glance, Dental-Union thus proves to be a lean and focused company. Its (almost) exclusive purpose is to operate a central warehouse for dental products and to organise the best possible shipping service on behalf of the shareholders. By establishing a central warehouse, the individual depots operated by the shareholders were able to offer a more extensive product range without giving up their established regional identity and the all-important direct contact with local customers.

Today, Dental-Union operates one of Europe's largest central warehouses for dental supplies in Rodgau, Hesse. On a total area of more than 11,000 square metres, over 37,000 immediately available items are stored on two floors, sourced from suppliers all over the world. The approximately 100 affiliated depots operated by the shareholders in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Albania and the



*Stefan Bleidner,
Managing Director
at Dental-Union*

Netherlands can place orders around the clock in Rodgau. All orders received by 5 pm are processed directly, shipped and reach the customer the next day. More than 57,000 additional items can be procured at short notice. This means that the shareholders of Dental-Union have access to a total range of 94,000 dental products from over 400 manufacturers for their customers.

In addition to operating the central warehouse, Dental-Union organises international distribution, which is not handled by the shareholders. For this, the company relies on independent sales partners who are based from Stockholm to Bergamo and from St. Petersburg to Madrid. ■



KÜHLRAUM II

2°C - 8°C

SYNERGIES BETWEEN TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS

Customised complete service from a single source puts Logistik-Service on course for growth

Peter Astor has been steering the fortunes of trans-o-flex Logistik-Service for many years. In an interview with this magazine, the business unit manager reveals why the logistics and transport businesses complement each other perfectly and why the combination creates added value for customers.

Mr Astor, what role does Logistik-Service play in the trans-o-flex portfolio and for customers today?

Certainly a much bigger role than most people think and perceive. This is because it offers both Express and ThermoMed customers the opportunity to realise additional, comprehensive services that cannot otherwise be realised by transport networks. These can be warehousing, order picking or other services, even very individual ones. Logistik-Service perfectly complements the transport business – with optimal interfaces to customers and the transport networks, and all this in full service.

Can you give us an example?

For example, the Covid-19 rapid tests for schools and authorities in multiple federal states. At the height of the coronavirus pandemic, these were received by Logistik-Service, stored, checked and individually commissioned according to orders from schools and authorities, and then handed over to trans-o-flex Express for scheduled delivery. In addition, we have set up our own webshop for this purpose. This ensured that schools and authorities could customise their orders to meet their needs, avoiding unnecessary on-site storage. And the customers received all this from a single source.

In your view, what are the particular strengths of Logistik-Service?

On the one hand, Logistik-Service covers a broad spectrum. It has a highly specialised pharmaceutical division, including anaesthetics processing and manufacturing activities in the clean room through to perfume, gas cylinders, promotional goods for pharmacies and marketing materials. On the other hand, our various warehouse sites have customer- and product-specific specialisations. This allows them to implement tailored solutions that require special industry know-how.



Peter Astor,
Business Unit Manager
Logistics at trans-o-flex

The central strength, however, is naturally the connection to trans-o-flex's transport business. Logistik-Service can offer an optimal connection to the Express and ThermoMed transport system as well as – due to the proximity to the transhipment points – the best possible cut-off times. Last but not least, this reduces costs for collection and improves the carbon footprint. After all, there is no system break on the IT side or operationally. This provides customers with optimum flexibility, the best possible service times and perfect handover points.

All this sounds very personnel-intensive. Do you get enough employees?

We are lucky to have a great team, which is characterised by two things in particular. For many years, we have had a core team that has acquired comprehensive process know-how, without which we would not be able to implement our wide range of services. At the same time, we have managed to establish a team spirit. There is a good atmosphere, everyone is committed to each other, we celebrate the successes and the work is fun.

Where do you see Logistik-Service in five years' time?

The services are in great demand. Therefore, one thing can be said quite clearly in a five-year forecast: we are on course for growth! It is foreseeable that we will also expand our operational capacities. It is important that we do this with a sense of proportion. We will take it one step at a time. [>>](#)

SPECIALITY LOGISTICS

One customer, multiple warehouse sites?

When can it make sense for customers not to consolidate their goods centrally at one warehouse site, but to distribute them over several? "This is not the norm, but sometimes it makes sense if we can use it to optimise warehousing for customers and make it cheaper," says Peter Astor, Business Unit Manager of trans-o-flex Logistik-Service. "It is one of our specialities because we have the possibility to combine split storage with consignment deliveries."

And this is the background: according to logistics textbooks, it is clever to concentrate a stock of goods at one site. Because then the stock quantity and thus the capital commitment can be lower with the same or even higher delivery capability. However, this rule does not apply when working with trans-o-flex and it is possible to split a customer's products between two or more sites. "For example, we did this for a customer who has pharmaceuticals on the one hand and medical products on the other. The pharmaceuticals were stored at site A, the medical products at site B. This reduces the storage costs for the medical products because, for example, they do not have to be stored at a certain temperature. And if a consignee orders something from both product groups, trans-o-flex ensures that the different items are delivered together to the consignee. The consignment handling by trans-o-flex makes this possible," explains Astor. "Our IT takes the order and turns it into a consignment with two packages. The software automatically triggers the picking and packing of the pharmaceutical part at site A and that of the medical products at site B. The two packages are then sent on their separate journeys. But because they belong to one consignment, trans-o-flex combines them for delivery and delivers both parts of the order together." ■



Alzenau

Weinheim

CHANGE OF PERSPECTIVE

What a car rental company and trans-o-flex have in common

Interview with the Chairman of the trans-o-flex Supervisory Board Erich Sixt: "Digitalisation and artificial intelligence will further optimise costs and benefits for logistics customers"

It is a unique growth and success story that Erich Sixt, as head of the car rental company of the same name, has played a key role in shaping over five decades. In September 2021, he took over the position of Chairman of the Supervisory Board at trans-o-flex and now also wants to accompany the fortunes of this company. Erich Sixt revealed exclusively in an interview with this magazine what he has noticed so far, where he still sees potential and what the greatest similarities and differences are between car rental and industry logistics. [»](#)

Erich Sixt, Chairman of the trans-o-flex Supervisory Board



Mr Sixt, you have turned the Munich car rental company founded by your grandfather into a car rental group with a global presence, which you continue to support as Chairman of the Supervisory Board. What attracted you to also take on the Chairmanship of the Supervisory Board of trans-o-flex?

There are synergy effects between trans-o-flex and Sixt, especially with regard to the truck and van rental business. Apart from that, logistics is an exciting and promising business in which costs and benefits for customers can still be greatly optimised through more digitalisation and artificial intelligence (AI). It is about increasing the utilisation of the vehicles or optimising routes. At Sixt, for example, we now use AI very extensively to make predictions about demand. This is extremely important when it comes to how many vehicles are bought or leased. All of this is based on forecasts. There is certainly still significant potential to be leveraged here at trans-o-flex by analysing existing, but also previously unused, data more intensively and using artificial intelligence to transform it into solutions that benefit the company, the employees and, of course, above all, the customers.

What are the main differences between Sixt's business and that of trans-o-flex?

First of all, there are more similarities than one might think at first. A car you don't rent out for a day is just as irrevocably lost revenue as an empty pallet space in the warehouse or truck. And conversely, you can usually no more rent out a storage space twice than you can a car. Another thing in common: what trans-o-flex offers has to work just like it does at Sixt! No one can afford dissatisfied customers. That's why quality and customer service are key at trans-o-flex, just as they are at Sixt – we are both service providers.

Perhaps the greatest difference lies in the nature of our businesses: Sixt rents vehicles and makes them available to customers, including trans-o-flex. What they then do with them, whether the vehicle is just standing around, half full or well used, is no longer our concern. trans-o-flex naturally has a great interest in ensuring that the vehicles and their capacities are utilised as much as possible.

What surprised you most when you got to know trans-o-flex better?

I was actually surprised that Amazon is not a major competitor for trans-o-flex, but a customer. They have carved out a niche here with procurement logistics for Amazon, in which trans-o-flex works for Amazon and manages it very professionally. In delivery, on the other hand – where Amazon is a critical and superior opponent that is taking over more and more itself – trans-o-flex and Amazon have no points of contact. trans-o-flex has succeeded in positioning its service very professionally with Amazon and benefits for itself and its customers from its status as a “preferred carrier”, for example through fixed delivery slots when delivering to the central warehouses.

I was also surprised at how high the customer loyalty and how low the customer losses are at trans-o-flex. I don't know that at all from Sixt. This speaks for trans-o-flex, its employees and services, which have clear advantages. In addition to the combined transport of parcels and pallets in a network, these are certainly topics such as consignment consolidation, value-added services – and in the area of active temperature control, trans-o-flex even has unique selling points.

You once said: cutting costs is the easiest way to make a profit. Do you also see potential there for trans-o-flex? If so, where?

Cost reduction is a never-ending process. That's why there is always potential! This is true for all companies. We all run the risk of becoming too bureaucratic. As a rule, the greatest potential for cost reduction lies in the area of digitalisation. Examples at trans-o-flex are the digitalisation of invoice dispatch or the optimisation of routes using artificial intelligence and clever processes, which are to be further digitalised consistently. In addition, there is also cost-cutting potential in the area of purchasing at all companies.

You expect self-driving cars to be on the road in Germany in ten years at the most. Will transport service providers also be able to benefit from this?

The advantages will first be in passenger transport. For a car rental company, for example, it is an advantage if a car drives itself to the customer who can then get in. In the transport sector, I find it hard to imagine trucks driving around without drivers in ten years' time. How are the goods supposed to

get to the recipient in local transport without a driver? And a fully loaded van or truck is a risk. But all of that doesn't mean it won't happen. We didn't foresee the smartphone either.

How do you perceive the culture of trans-o-flex?

Here, I would like to compliment the management, because, in my view, they know how to motivate the employees. trans-o-flex not only has very loyal customers, but also extremely loyal employees. This is a credit to the management and shows that the employees play an important role for the company, because if they did not feel comfortable, they would leave. Furthermore, I like the pragmatic style of the management, which does not get lost in bureaucracy and is able to make decisions quickly. This is particularly necessary in the service sector in order to respond flexibly to customer requests. My impression is: entrepreneurship is put into practice at trans-o-flex. That is ultimately also Germany's strength. ■



**SDA EXPRESS COURIER**

Italian partner sorts up to 320,000 consignments daily in the hub of superlatives

1,200 kilometres in length, but only a maximum of 240 kilometres in width: logically, Italy is a challenge because of its geography alone. "In view of the difficult infrastructure, it is particularly important in Italy to have an efficient partner," says Sascha Caninenberg, Regional Sales Manager West and Head of International Sales & Operations at trans-o-flex. "With SDA Express Courier, we are doubly lucky. Given the geography, the express service can score points with its good network, is financially well equipped as a subsidiary of the state-owned Italian postal service and we probably have the best logistics partner there is in Italy." Within the Poste Italiane Group, SDA specialises in the delivery of heavy and medium-weight items, as

well as warehousing and integrated logistics solutions. SDA and trans-o-flex Express have been working together in the international EURODIS network since 2012.

"SDA has always been able to finance and implement even major projects and investments effortlessly," Caninenberg adds with regard to the new hub in Landriano near Milan. "It's a hub of superlatives, where our export consignments to Italy are also processed reliably and quickly." 60 million euros have been invested in the hub, which only opened in June 2021. Now up to 320,000 parcels are sorted there every day. The main work for this is done by four interconnected sorters that sort large,



*Sascha Caninenberg,
Regional Sales Manager West
and Head of International Sales &
Operations at trans-o-flex*

medium and small parcels with the support of AMR robot technology (Autonomous Mobile Robots). On the roof of the facility, 2,500 photovoltaic modules produce enough electricity to cover 80 per cent of the electricity consumption in the hub. According to SDA, this reduces CO₂ emissions from hub operations by 210 tonnes per year. Last but not least, the hub in Landriano has received the A+ certificate from the global consignor organisation TAPA, which certifies the highest safety standards.

“SDA has shown how capable it is, not least during the coronavirus pandemic,” Caninenberg says. “On behalf of the government, SDA has handled the storage, picking and distribution of more than 30 million doses of the covid vaccine in Italy via its dedicated GDP network.” In total, the express service transports more than 120 million consignments annually, employs around 1,120 people in 87 depots and uses 4,500 vehicles. “One of the strengths here is, not least, that SDA delivers not only B2B but also B2C consignments in high quality.”

Certified many times

The Italian trans-o-flex partner ensures the continuous improvement of its processes via various quality management systems. For example, SDA is not only certified according to ISO 9001, but also in environmental management according to ISO 14001, in occupational health and safety according to ISO 45001 and in anti-corruption according to ISO 37001. Last but not least, SDA is aiming for certification according to the EU-GDP regulations for the distribution of pharmaceuticals in the range of 8° to 25°C in 2023.



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