



“Process automation is an essential lever for success in the tough world of e-commerce.”

Konrad Plankensteiner
CEO at SportOkay.com

Requirements

Reliable yet flexible packaging

Ability to manage peak demands

Pack a broad assortment of varying size goods

Use less packaging materials

Challenges

Focusing on alpine clothing and sports equipment, ecommerce specialist SportOkay is located in the heart of the Alps in Innsbruck, Austria. The company has more than 40,000 different items of outdoor, mountain climbing, cycling, and skiing equipment from over 300 well-known brands in stock.

Coming from Zalando and Amazon, Konrad Plankensteiner, CEO of SportOkay.com is well aware of the ever present competition in the online retail market. “From my point of view, reliable, flexible, and easily scalable solutions are ideal for a

rapidly growing company such as ours,” says Plankensteiner. SportOkay.com aims to get customers’ orders out fast, enabling them to be as active as possible, as quickly as possible, with the necessary gear. In order to accommodate this task, Plankensteiner opened a 16 meter high distribution center in 2018 that allows customers in Germany and Austria who place orders online before noon to receive their goods the following day.

Success wasn’t long in the making, as the company experienced double-digit sales growth very quickly. On peak days, employees would pack up to 2,000 parcels manually. “With such rapid growth, the packaging area could have become a real bottleneck,” recalls Plankensteiner. Instead of hiring more staff for the warehouse area, he decided to purchase an automated packaging system. “I really liked the sustainability of the CVP Impack and that the system can automatically produce a tailor-made package approximately every 7 seconds without void fill using 3D scanning technology,” says Plankensteiner. To see the solution in action, he visited the production site in Drachten, the Netherlands. “I was impressed by the performance of the system and the extensive expertise of the automation specialists.”

Solution

In 2020, Plankensteiner ordered their first CVP Impack Automated Packaging Solution, and by October, Sparck’s experts had the machine up and running within three days of arrival. Whether it’s an outdoor jacket, trail running shoes, or a foldable hiking pole, the CVP Impack is designed to handle both single- and multi-item orders of hard or soft goods. The packaging process is extremely fast, taking just seconds to complete. With the machine now successfully in use for several months, CEO Plankensteiner is feeling positive. “The system is efficient and very reliable. We’re already seeing the benefits of the savings,” says Plankensteiner. According to his figures, corrugate consumption has fallen by around 30 percent, while the transport volume has been reduced by more than 20 percent. Even more important are the benefits it provides in terms of staffing. On peak days, which are usually Mondays, employees used to pack up to 2,000 parcels manually. Today, SportOkay.com needs just two staffers in the packing area – leaving the rest of the employees available for other, higher-value tasks.

Plankensteiner describes himself as “very satisfied” – not just with the throughput of the system, but also with the support. In addition, with the integration of the CVP Impack, SportOkay.com has had no issues complying with social distancing rules in the dispatch area during the

COVID-19 pandemic. “In the past, the eight employees working at the manual packing tables were sometimes less than two meters apart. Now we have just two employees working on a 82-foot-long machine,” explains Plankensteiner.

Benefits

Ability to manage sudden peaks in demand with no additional labor

A reduction of corrugate consumption by 30%

Fit-to-size packaging reduced shipping volume by 20%

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