

SORTING SOLUTION

Carsten Manske, director of the sorting business unit at Böwe Systec, discusses how automation can help courier and parcel service providers, as well as distribution centers, meet the challenges of e-commerce growth

Where do you see the trends and challenges in the sorting market?

We are clearly seeing strong growth in smaller shipments direct to the end customer. I have personally found that online distributors such as Amazon are no longer consolidating, but splitting orders into multiple individual deliveries. The usefulness of this development is debatable, but what it does mean is an enormous increase in the number of small deliveries, despite identical recipients.

And that's on top of an online business that's already booming. At peak times could this end up being too much for many companies?

Yes, and that's just one development I'm seeing. Alongside mailing volumes, the number of 'unusual' items is also increasing. Many deliveries, especially of goods from China, are round, exceptionally small or light, and packed in polybags or with adhesive tape. It's here that automated sorting systems reach their limits.

What makes Böwe Systec's OptiSorter sorting technology suitable for these special requirements?

The design of the OptiSorter is different from conventional shoe, cross-belt and bomb-bay sorters. It runs at a lower speed than those alternatives – which protects light or round items from falling off – and has no open edges where packaging films might get caught. At the same time, the OptiSorter also handles very heavy items. It can automatically cover an enormous



Above: The OptiSorter runs at a lower speed than other comparable industry offerings

Right: Carsten Manske, director of the sorting business unit at Böwe Systec

range of widely differing items, from very light things such as business cards up to heavy items like sandbags. It is not only CE-certified but also UL-certified.

It's true that we can't quite compare to cross-belt sorters for very large items, but don't forget that the real comparison for the user is based on the total cost of ownership. The operation of cross-belt sorters usually requires an incredible amount of power, not to mention the noise. As safety at work regulations become stricter, this could be a problem. Noise levels with the OptiSorter are below 70dB and for longer periods of use we benefit from lower power consumption and minimal servicing costs. Sorting equipment does not earn the customer money, but rather improves their processes. That makes it all the more important to identify the most favorable, efficient and customized solution for each individual requirement.

To what extent do you involve your customers in planning and product development?

In general, the modular design of Böwe solutions means that they can all be tailored to individual customer needs. Our software is also able to model all the relevant customer processes, but it has an open



architecture, which means that as an alternative it can easily be integrated into existing systems. We always develop our solutions with our customers and seek to react to market requirements. One example of this is the inclusion of a scale integrated into the sorter, which we have patented and which saves our customers money as soon as they go live. Our solutions can maximize the automated handling of everything from arrival to dispatch and can be adapted to the processes of our customers.

Is automation worthwhile for smaller companies?

Yes, if they use it to streamline their processes. However, this is also related to local conditions – the higher the local wage costs, the more automation makes sense. This means that things differ between India and Scandinavia, for example. Elsewhere, companies might simply improve their quality through automation but eliminate sorting errors and the cost of correcting them. No matter what requirements or location conditions your company has, we will find the right solution.

KEY FACTS

- The OptiSorter's noise levels are below 70dB
- The OptiSorter can automatically cover an enormous range of widely differing items

FREE READER INQUIRY SERVICE

BÖWE SYSTEC

To learn more about this advertiser, visit www.ukimediaevents.com/info/po NOW!

READER INQUIRY XXX