

Augsburg, July 19, 2018

**Installation of a Simex Letter sorting system at Südwest Mail in
Langenau/Germany**

No compromises, just 'state-of-the-art' equipment

The project now underway in Langenau (Germany) can only be described as thoroughly ambitious, involving, the near simultaneous move into a new building, the bringing together of sorting activities from three different sites, the phasing out of a third-party supplier, and the investment in and commissioning of new equipment. To cap it all, Südwest Mail has completely redefined for itself what mail sortation means with a BÖWE SYSTEC Simex Letter.

Südwest Mail Brief + Service GmbH was founded in 2005 as a private postal service provider for the regions of Ulm and Crailsheim. It is a wholly owned subsidiary of the newspaper publisher Südwest Presse and this association brings considerable benefits to both parties. The Südwest Presse newspaper delivery network gives Südwest Mail dense household coverage and logistics experience whilst the newspaper publisher is able to improve the utilization of its deliverers' capacity by also delivering post. It's a win-win arrangement. There are approximately 1,100 deliverers for the daily newspaper and a similar number for the publisher's weekly free sheets and these numbers mean that the delivery network has been able to build on a firm foundation. Südwest Mail processes and delivers around 100,000 letters every day with peaks of up to 130,000, and over 1,000 customers rely on the capacity of this private service provider.

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Up until the spring of 2017, the sorting work was split between sites in Ulm, Crailsheim and Aalen but with the move to a new building in Langenau and the investment in a new sorting system, the plan was to handle everything at one central site. "We're talking here about around 40,000 to 50,000 letters a day that were still being sorted by hand in Crailsheim and that, following the investment, would also need to be processed by machine", explains Uwe Groß, Managing Director of Südwest Mail Brief + Service GmbH. "The aim was to put everything on a professional footing." No compromises ran the slogan, just state-of-the-art equipment and software.

After thoroughly investigating the market, Uwe Groß and Production Director Oliver Handke struck gold in Augsburg with the manufacturer BÖWE SYSTEC. Its Simex Letter was exactly the mail sorting solution that Südwest Mail was looking for. "We wanted a resilient and reliable solution", explains Uwe Groß. "It was also vital to us that the machine was very easy to operate and could cope with the widest possible spectrum of products." "One of the targets that we set ourselves was to be able to process at least 75 per cent of the daily volume by machine", adds Oliver Handke.

As a mixed mail sorter, Simex Letter can actually process letter formats from C6 to B5 and even C4, and items up to a maximum thickness of 8 mm. Automatic thickness measurement and calibrated scales that weigh products without having to slow down processing are integrated into the machine.

And that speed impressed Südwest Mail. The Simex Letter can handle up to 47,000 items per hour. "If the letters are predominantly small ones, then we are done in two and a half hours" reports Oliver Handke. For a postal service provider whose mail delivery times are tied to those of the daily newspaper and that therefore has a correspondingly tight time window, this is a crucial aspect. Over at Deutsche Post [the German Post Office], letters are not ready at the delivery centers until six in the morning but by this time daily

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newspaper deliverers have already completed their rounds. The post therefore needs to be sorted by around midnight at the latest.

A further criterion was the interface to the current ERP system, which models Südwest Mail's processes and records as well as coordinates numerous workflows.

Has the choice of the Simex Letter turned out to be the right one? Uwe Groß and Oliver Handke nod almost as one. Besides the technical advantages, which the pair were able to validate in advance both at BÖWE SYSTEC and at other users, they are also full of praise for the way the manufacturer has overseen the project's progress.

The machine was delivered at the end of 2016 and was assembled on site in the new building. "It was great to watch it take shape", recalls Oliver Handke. "Everything went smoothly." The first trials took place at the end of January 2017, the machine was accepted, the operators trained and operations began."

The machine, which, at less than 70 decibels, is astonishingly quiet, is now up and running and has been handling all the mail volumes from Ulm and Crailsheim as well as the work outsourced to Aalen for quite some time. The staff particularly likes the ergonomic arrangement of the post boxes and the easy access to the machine, as well as other features. What's more, after intensive training by BÖWE SYSTEC engineers they are now also able to sort out minor problems themselves.

Currently, it is possible to sort the bulk of the post by machine and in fact just 12 percent of the post is sorted by hand. The Simex Letter has therefore more than fulfilled the requirements of the Langenau facility. The machine automatically detects forwarded mail and reliably bypasses it. The connection to the ERP system is working well and the company has further projects in its sights. One of these is a planned partial automation of returns processing, and another is walk sorting – sorting the letters in the sequence in which they will be delivered, further improving the processes.

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Letters are, as Uwe Groß says, “nickel business”. Profit per letter is a matter of cents – and that is only if everything works. However, if for example, a letter ends up with the wrong deliverer, then you lose a euro. What this means is that 99 per cent reliability is not enough. It needs to be 99.9 per cent. The Simex Letter has a critical role to play in this.

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Project_Team.jpg: Pride in their joint project (from left to right): Uwe Groß and Oliver Handke from Südwest Mail and Michael Gartz, Director Sorting at BÖWE SYSTEC. (Source: BÖWE SYSTEC)



Handling.jpg: The simple handling of the Simex Letter inspires the machine operators. (Source: Südwest Mail)

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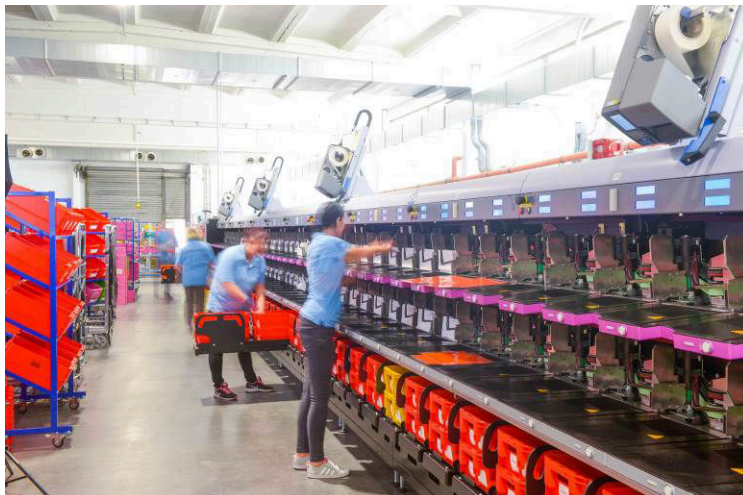
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Ergonomics.jpg: A big advantage of the Simex Letter are the easily accessible output compartments. (Source: Südwest Mail)



Format_Spectrum.jpg: The Simex Letter processes letters in formats from C6 to B5 and even up to C4 for mixed mail. (Source: Südwest Mail)

BÖWE SYSTEC GmbH

Company profile

BÖWE SYSTEC is one of the world's leading suppliers of smart automation solutions. For over 70 years, the technology company's products have streamlined and optimized work and production flows across a wide range of very different industries. Whether it be inserting systems for classic transactional applications or mailings, card processing solutions, letter or parcel sorting systems for modern post processing centers, automation solutions for intralogistics or pharma serialization, BÖWE technologies play an important role in numerous industries. Headquartered at its production and development facility in Augsburg, the company serves its customers around the world through some 20 subsidiaries and over 50 general agencies. Since 2010 BÖWE SYSTEC GmbH has been owned by the Possehl Group, which generated annual sales of around €3.8 billion with a global workforce of approximately 12,500 in 2017. The sole shareholder of L. Possehl & Co. mbH is the charitable Possehl Foundation in the Hanseatic City of Lübeck. More information is available at www.boewe-systec.com and www.possehl.de.

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