

## Application Report

### Trendsetting logistics at Future Electronics

Sensor manufacturer Leuze electronic equips distribution center in Leipzig

Since the beginning of 2010, the Canadian distributor Future Electronics has been supplying customers in the whole of Europe, the Middle East and Africa with electronic components via its new distribution center in Leipzig, Germany. The Parkstein-based system integrator Witron Logistik + Informatik GmbH was responsible as general contractor for the planning and implementation of the facility, while all the sensors were supplied by Leuze electronic GmbH + Co. KG based in Owen, Baden-Württemberg, Germany.

The Future Electronics distribution center in Leipzig has replaced the manually operated central warehouse in Hayes, England, as the logistics center in the British Isles had no scope for further growth. As one of the Canadian electronics component distributors' three logistics centers worldwide, Leipzig now plays a central role in the company's further strategic orientation. *"The distribution center for the EMEA region in Leipzig forms the logistics heart of our next day delivery service within Europe, the Middle East and Africa,"* says Lothar Hüther, Maintenance Manager and Head of Technical Service at Future Electronics in Leipzig. *"This facility also enables us to handle the complete warehousing for our customers, on request, and to offer numerous further value-added services."*

#### High availability and performance capability of the facility

Customers from the electronics industry in the whole of Europe, Africa and the Middle East are supplied amongst other things with semi-conductors, passive connecting components, LCD displays, wireless transmission media, RFID solution modules and a vast variety of other electronic components via the 15,000 square meter distribution center in Leipzig. The range of articles also includes parts measuring only about one millimeter.

*"The scope of our services from the logistics side includes not only the design and fine planning, but also the supply, mounting and commissioning of all the mechanical warehousing and materials handling equipment,"* explains Witron project manager Hans Schütz. *"That also includes all the necessary IT systems, the warehouse management software, PLC systems, networks and peripheral devices."*

In view of the high availability demands on the facility – which can be used if necessary up to 365 days a year, 24 hours a day – the sensors also play an important role. The range of products from Leuze electronic employed in the facility extends from the simple Light Beam Device for materials handling through barcode scanners and laser-based distance sensors right up to the sensors for high-bay storage devices and the whole scope of the safety sensors. This holistic approach and the fulfillment of the project partners' highest demands on the availability and durability of the facility are absolutely central in the activities of both Leuze electronic and Witron.

*“High-quality sensors are an extremely important criterion for the profitability and availability of mechanical logistics systems,”* adds Witron project manager Schütz. *“It is therefore important to work together with competent partners for this aspect, and Leuze electronic has been just such a partner for many years.”*

### **Logistic performance significantly enhanced**

Thanks to the automation support, the quality of order picking, delivery performance and the transparency of whole processes at Future Electronics have been significantly improved compared with a manual solution. A great advantage here was that Leuze electronic could meet all the demands and supply the whole bandwidth of sensors. That applies to the barcode scanners employed, and to the laser distance sensors. Crucial factors here apart from the integrated interfaces were the high measurement dynamics, very high functionality and simple configuration.

The Reflection Light Beam Devices used in many places reliably detect even objects shrink-wrapped or covered with stretch film and offer not only high ranges but also high performance reserves. For this reason, and also due to their sturdiness and resistance to soiling, they are absolutely predestined for use on roller conveyors.

Leuze electronic has the right sensor for every conceivable application in the Future project – right down to the light barriers for personnel protection, because safety at work is also an area in which Leuze electronic has made a name for itself with a wide variety of reliable safety sensors.

On the basis of the overall product package, the comprehensive application know-how and ongoing partner-like support, Leuze electronic proved to be the ideal partner for Witron for the implementation of the project at Future Electronics.

### **Distribution center with exemplary character**

In view of the positive experience in Leipzig, Future Electronics considers it quite conceivable that similar logistics systems could also be installed at other locations,

because they see the similarity of the systems at the various locations as a further competitive advantage in international business. *"For us and our customers, a globally linked supply chain management system including procurement and warehousing is of crucial importance,"* says Lothar Hütter. *"We want to be able to handle the delivery to individual regions absolutely flexibly, with a "ship from everywhere to everywhere" principle."* A good concept that can only be implemented with outstanding logistics solutions and experienced partners.

**((Box 1)) Future Electronics**

The Canadian distributor, Future Electronics, based in Montreal is the world's third-largest distributor for electronic components for all market segments. Future Electronics offers specific supply chain solutions – tailored to the individual needs of the customer and developed in very close partnership with customers and suppliers. The industrial segment has traditionally been a major focus of their business activities. For a number of years now the company has also been successfully active on the market for lighting technology and is expanding its segmentation, for example, to the fields of energy and audio. A further major focus is on technical support that ranges from pure customer advice right up to the specific development of complete solutions. Apart from the head office in Ismaning near Munich, the Canadian distributor also has five sales offices in Germany located in Hamburg, Dortmund, Erfurt, Frankfurt and Stuttgart. Future Electronics currently has over 6,000 employees worldwide in 169 branches and more than 40 countries.

**((Box 2)) Witron Logistik + Informatik**

Founded in 1971, Witron Logistik + Informatik GmbH with its head office in Parkstein (Upper Palatinate/Eastern Bavaria) is today one of the leading planners and suppliers of automated logistics system solutions. Numerous national and international market leaders from industry and trade rely on the interdisciplinary competence across a variety of industries that Witron has gained in now 40 years in the implementation of more than 2,000 specific logistics projects in a vast array of fields of the economy. As general contractor, Witron assumes the budget, deadline and functional responsibility during all the phases of the project, beginning with the concept and planning, through the mounting and whole implementation phase of the logistics facility and during the subsequent system start-up. Even after the completion of the project, users can still draw on the Witron know-how during the whole life cycle of their facility in the form of a customer support partnership. Depending on the customer's wishes, the company today also acts as operator and financing partner for customers and investors. The Witron Group has roughly 1,200 employees worldwide.

## Figures and captions



**Figure 1.** Future Electronics can deliver to all its customers within 24 hours from the distribution center in Leipzig - an enormous competitive advantage.

Photo: Witron



**Figure 2.** The electronic components for the orders are picked at 20 workplaces.

Photo: Witron



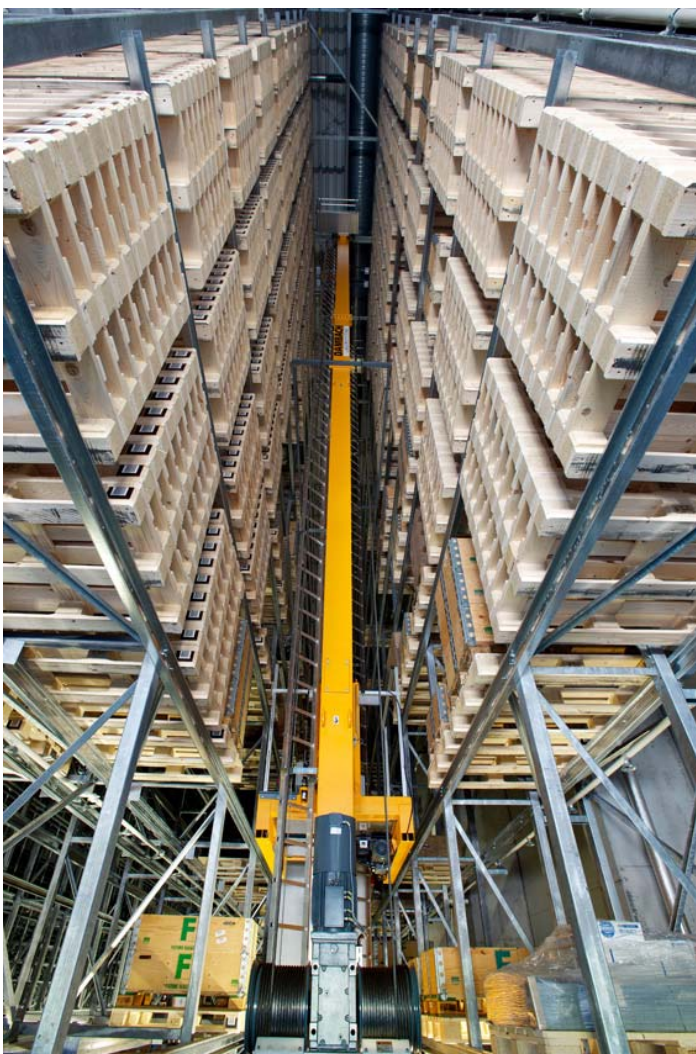
**Figure 3.** High-quality sensors are an important criterion for the profitability and availability of mechanical logistics systems – Leuze electronic supplied all the sensor components for the Future distribution center in Leipzig.

Photo: Future Electronics



**Figure 4.** The distribution center for the EMEA region in Leipzig is the logistics heart of Future Electronics' next-day delivery service from within Europe.

Photo: Witron



**Figure 5.** Through the automation support also in the field of sensors, Future Electronics has significantly enhanced process transparency.

Photos: Witron

**Press inquiries**

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