

HEMA – using one container for everything

A returnable container for storage,
order-picking and transport

HEMA is one of the leading department store chains in the Netherlands with more than 300 outlets located in the Benelux countries and Germany generating an annual turnover of approx. 1.3 billion €.

At the central distribution centre in Utrecht the different non-food goods for all outlets are stored. After arrival, the goods are transferred into SSI SCHAEFER foldable boxes. Then the boxes are recorded and directly conveyed to an automatic warehouse where they are stored for five days. Having one box size creates an efficient, universal Stock Keeping Unit (SKU) for delivery to stores.

With the foldable (FK) box from SSI SCHAEFER a returnable transport system was introduced, that stands out due to its excellent conveying properties and that takes optimal advantage of the storage capacities of the automatic warehouse. The reinforced base does not deflect even with heavy contents. This way, the FK boxes can be positioned in the automatic warehouse accurately to the millimetre.

The entire, predominantly automated process of storage, order-picking and transport can now be efficiently completed with one type of container without the need for repacking. Order-picking takes place via Pick-by-light, which requires a bar code to be applied to every container. Following this, the containers are temporarily stored in the buffer warehouse for order consolidation. For delivery, the containers are transported via a conveyor to the load station, where they are stacked onto dollies in manageable despatch towers. When empty, these can be folded up, resulting in a 75% volume reduction during return transport. This saves space and money.



Recording the goods and transferring them into returnable containers



Order-picking goods for despatch to the outlets

Interim storage in the automatic warehouse





Loading the containers temporarily stacked as despatch towers



HEMA Store in the Netherlands



Receiving the goods at one of the stores