

LOGO

The **FIEGE** Magazine
No. 97 | 2024

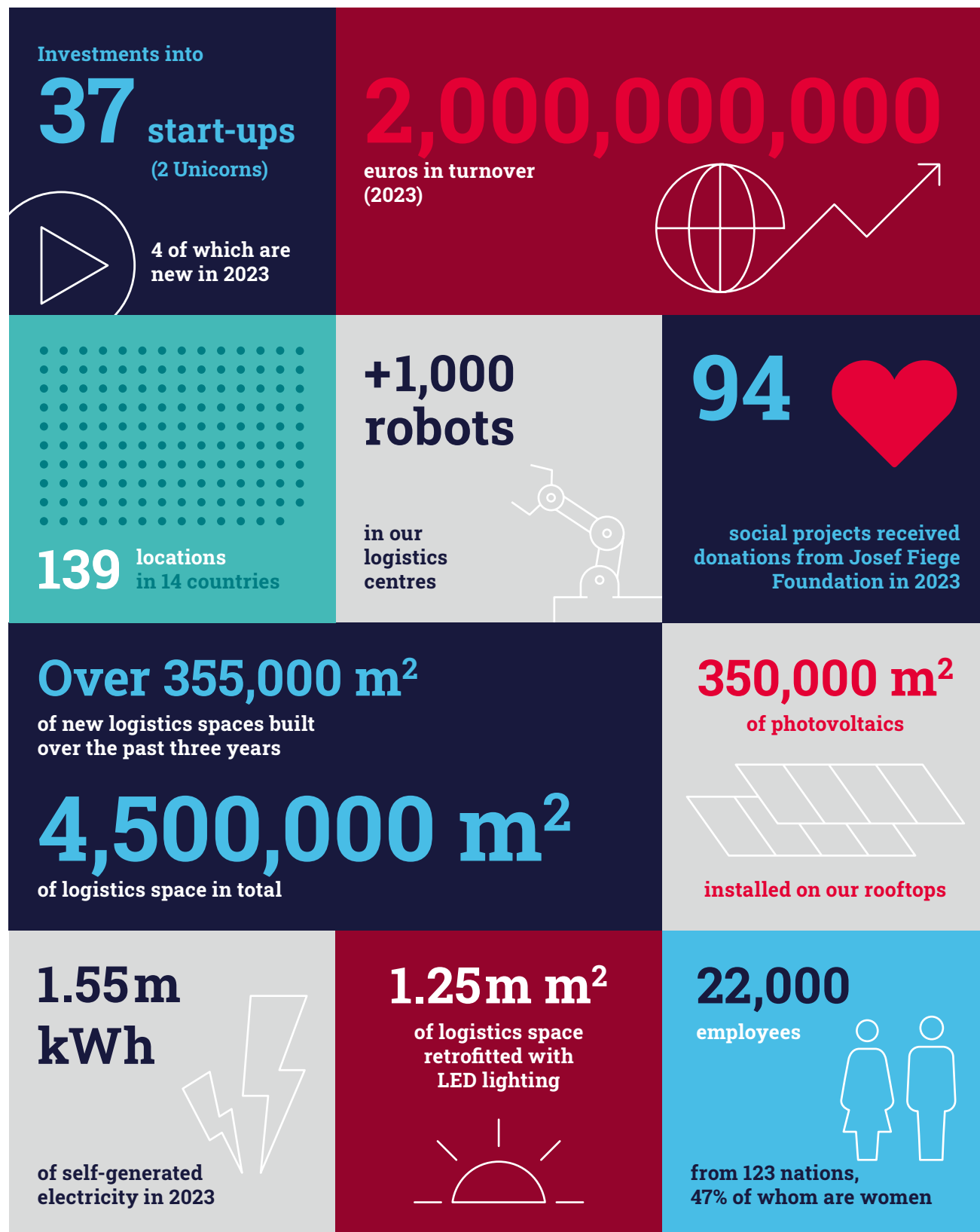


CREATING.

MORE.

VALUE.

FIEGE in numbers



Dear Colleagues, Dear Partners and Friends, Dear Readers,

There are things in this world that are valuable due to being truly rare: the Northern Lights, for example, or a white Christmas (at least in Greven), or the Red and the Blue Mauritius postage stamps. And sometimes, even the business of football – which tends to be for the most part totally hyped up and overwhelming. Big-time football here in the beautiful Münsterland – apart from our annual FIEGE Soccer Cup, of course – has been way too rare for far too long which, however, SC Preußen Münster impressively rectified last summer by moving up to enter the second division of Germany's football Bundesliga. Schalke 04, Hamburger SV, 1. FC Cologne: it is easy to get used to the names playing against the host on weekends at the Preußen Stadium.

But just what makes the value of something, apart from being rare? How do we measure the value of intangible goods, such as services? What do our clients value? And more importantly: How do we create as much value as possible for our partners – ideally, real added value?

This question drives us and disturbs us every single day. Which is why this year, the 97th instalment of the LOGO Magazine has the title: "Creating. More. Value." Creating value is a key element in our understanding of ourselves as a service provider. We can only fulfil our mission of providing a value-creating service for our clients when we, as an organisation, align ourselves to the clients' individual needs as best as possible.

This is exactly why we have been working on this with great zeal over the past twelve months. We turned every rock to see where we could discover further potential for optimisation. Our Executive Board peer, Martin Rademaker explains in this issue's feature interview starting on page 20 how we approached this; what is especially dear to us; and why an open and honest exchange with our clients bears such relevance for us. And since customer orientation always starts with listening, we naturally also asked our partners about the challenges they are currently focusing on. Read a digest of the answers given from page 24 onwards. These answers motivate us to continue our path with purpose and, as a company, to keep reinventing ourselves so that, in the end, we are and remain the best possible service provider and ally for our clients.

For now, we hope you will enjoy reading our LOGO#97. Wishing all of you a Merry Christmas and all the best for 2025!

Warm regards,



Felix Fiege and Jens Fiege



Imprint

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WINNER



German
Sustainability Award
Companies 2025

natureOffice



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Materials
Transport
Production



g CO₂e per
480,32
print product






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The Power of TRUST

Some relationships age, others mature. The latter applies most certainly to the partnership between FALKEN and FIEGE. In 1983, the FALKEN brand was founded as a subsidiary of Japanese tyres maker, Sumitomo Rubber Industries. Ever since, it has been skyrocketing. FIEGE has been on board as the logistics provider for 15 years now, supporting FALKEN's continuous growth in Europe. The key to success is trust, Stephan Wittenbrink (5th from right), Managing Director of FIEGE's Industrial business unit tells us: "When we started storing tyres for FALKEN in 2009 on an area the size of a penalty box, the potential for growth was barely tangible for everyone involved. Today, we oversee a logistics area for FALKEN that measures approximately fourteen football fields across multiple warehouses in Europe, and supply fifteen different countries. The deep trust that our client extended and continues to extend to us on this journey to this day is the most important currency for us as a service provider." FALKEN COO Bettina Feldman (I) attests to this: "Dependability plays a major role. Our customers rely on having less inventory responsibility and on our capability to deliver on time. FIEGE is a dependable and innovative partner whose support ensures that we can keep moving forward and maintain our flexibility at the same time."





Left to right: Bettina Feldmann (COO FALKEN), Pia Pricken (FIEGE), Kerstin Schneider (PR Specialist FALKEN), Maiko Schwindt (Supervisor OE & Quality Assurance FALKEN), Alexandra Lechermann (Business & Executive Support Manager FALKEN), Thomas Teritte (FIEGE), Martin Olivera (Supply Chain Specialist FALKEN), Malte Pellner (FIEGE), Nicole Schultz (Supervisor Market Operations Replacement FALKEN), Henning Off, Stephan Wittenbrink, Dario Faraci, Andreas Oberle, Matthias Koch, Dustin Wolters (all FIEGE).



FAST & FORWARD Studios

FIEGE x FALKEN
15 years of partnership
in the fast lane





The Power of LOVE

On the occasion of this year's European elections, SC Preußen Münster, FIEGE and the Münster 4 Life online platform released a special jersey. The front of the jersey which usually sports FIEGE in large letters flaunted an unmistakable message: Münster 4 Love. Martin Rademaker, Executive Board member at FIEGE, explains: "We are happy and proud at just how diverse and liberal-minded the Münsterland region is – and we want it to stay this way. That's why it was important to us to take a clear stance before last year's European elections that took place in June: Compassion and tolerance are always a better solution than hate and inflammatory speech. For this reason and in addition to this campaign, we have also joined forces with more than 120 family businesses to support the Made by Vielfalt initiative by one of our clients, Vorwerk. Our viewpoint is clear: Diversity makes us stronger as a company – and diversity is not negotiable for us!"

The Power of **PARTNERSHIP**




Left to right: Martin Rademaker (FIEGE Board member), Jörn Compernaß (COO & Board member Vorwerk International), Katharina Bäuerlein (Head of Transport & Warehouse Management Vorwerk International), Jens Fiege, (Co-CEO of the FIEGE Group)

At the end of July, Vorwerk and FIEGE inaugurated a new warehouse and logistics building in Schwelm. With this new location in proximity to their largest production site, the Wuppertal family business known around the world for their quality household appliances accounts for their ongoing growth. "Vorwerk is growing – and growth requires infrastructure, logistics and solid forward planning", so Dr Thomas Rodemann (4th from right), Board member with the Vorwerk Group. FIEGE is responsible for all operations at the logistics centre. FIEGE Co-CEO Jens Fiege (4th from left) highlights: "We are very grateful to have been enjoying a constantly growing partnership with Vorwerk for almost 30 years. The inauguration of the new warehouse and logistics hall in Schwelm is a further important milestone in our client's strategic development and we wish to congratulate the entire Vorwerk team on this achievement."



Left to right: Dr Thomas Rodemann (Board member with the Vorwerk Group), Meike Schmidt-Krenz (Managing Director Consumer Products at FIEGE), Christoph Mangelmans (Managing Director Fashion & Lifestyle at FIEGE), and Philipp Debuch (Managing Director Industrial at FIEGE)





The Power of AUTOMATION

Successful premiere: FIEGE's inaugural invitation for its Together in Automation event went out in September. The goal of the new series of events is an open and honest exchange about automation in logistics between manufacturers and users at eyelevel. Christoph Mangelmans (r), Managing Director of the Fashion & Lifestyle business unit at FIEGE, summarised the event which was attended by around 100 invitees, like this: "For us, this was never about showcasing automation solutions that can also be admired at the big logistics fairs. Instead, it was much more important to us to discuss and demonstrate under real working conditions which technology really works operationally – and which doesn't, and if so, the reason why. We were able to take a lot of vital inspiration and many insights with us, such as that automation is very much about flexibility, resilience, software, trusting partnerships, and being brave. And that – despite all the technology – people need to remain at the heart of things because in the end, it is the people who make sure that automation becomes a winning formula." A concept which, according to Peter Buse (l), COO at Snipes, worked out: "An extremely well-organised event which showcased a very broad range of all things automation. I took a few good points with me about the requirements and planning that automation solutions – especially for packaging – call for."



THE POWER OF AUTOMATION

Motion picture of our first
'Together in Automation' event

The right partner by your side



Either you find a way, or create a new one. This motto probably best summarises the cooperation between MANN+HUMMEL and FIEGE. The past nine years have witnessed the steady growth of this collaboration. And now, the world market leader for filter technology and FIEGE have renewed their contract and are preparing themselves for the next challenges.

It is hot on this day in summer in August. Stefan Hausbeck, Manager Logistics at MANN+HUMMEL and FIEGE Branch Manager Marc Styrnal are sitting in the office wing of the logistics centre for suppliers, the LLZ, in Marklkofen which launched in 2015. From here, FIEGE supplies the production lines of the filter specialist's largest production site on demand with purchased parts and semi-finished products – around the clock on six days of the week.

Despite sweltering temperatures, Hausbeck and Styrnal are positive. And for a good reason: the LLZ fulfils all orders from the production with a delivery rate of over 99 per cent, even though the team reduced the required

lead time from four to one and a half hours only over the past two years. "The zest to continually optimise our processes will only end when production tells us: you are too fast in logistics", Hausbeck says, laughing.

The advantages that MANN+HUMMEL draw from this are obvious, as Hausbeck explains: "Inventories remain consignment stock for as long as possible. This allows us to use transport systems at optimal capacity, to avoid duplicate movements and to reduce the material circulation at the factory to a minimum." This not only creates more space at the production lines, but also greater cost efficiencies.



Efficiency meets sustainability: MANN+HUMMEL is known for setting standards in filter technology.

Planning certainty for imminent investments

This year, MANN+HUMMEL renewed the contact with FIEGE early. "The FIEGE team in Marklkofen has been doing a great job since the beginning of the collaboration. Our service provider knows the business, and the confidence is high on both sides", Hausbeck highlights. That was also the reason why FIEGE, as from January 2025, will take on the operation of yet another production hall.

But even more important are the upcoming automation projects, which the early renewal helped to put on solid financial ground. Styrnal therefore also speaks of a genuine partnership: "We want to purchase a fully-automated pallet wrapper to optimise what in part is still a manual wrapping process. This then frees our employees and allows them to add value to those process flows where human skills are indispensable."

And the transportation of materials is also to be further automated. FIEGE and MANN+HUMMEL are jointly on the lookout for the right technology: "We have already piloted multiple systems in a live environment to be absolutely certain that in the end, we will find the best solution for our case", Styrnal explains. Hausbeck agrees: "Those types of projects only work if handled together. It is important that as partners, both sides have the courage to take risks and are not afraid to fail." And with much success: "Our tests have already confirmed: automated transportation can be carried out economically at our LLZ – the next step is to sort out the how."

Double back-up for IT

Speaking of risk: just about everything in logistics nowadays needs software. A few years back, FIEGE and MANN+HUMMEL launched a digital stacker control system to dispense with analogue paper logging. But Hausbeck knows: "As we can see almost every day in our personal or professional environment, IT systems do fail every now and then. However, the supply of the production line is on a tight schedule. If our LLZ is prevented from carrying out orders, production will come to a standstill relatively fast."

To prevent this, MANN+HUMMEL created a double safety net with FIEGE. "The LLZ has two completely separate networks with both running on their own hardware. Should one of the systems fail, we can continue working with the other without delay", Hausbeck explains. Should both systems be disrupted at the same time, outstanding orders are downloaded every thirty minutes into a text file. With help from the information in this file, the orders can still be carried out. Styrnal adds: "Our core task is to uphold operations through a guaranteed production supply. Our two sophisticated back-up plans keep us fully functional and provide a robust safeguard."

Working together, celebrating together

It almost seems as if the lines between the two companies are slightly blurred here and there. Hausbeck believes there is a reason for this: "Even in the future, there will be major projects that we will want to prepare and action together. Our partnership benefits from mutual knowledge sharing – it is the only way for our two companies to achieve the best possible outcome."

FIEGE's office party also embodied this spirit of sharing, since Styrnal and his team thought up something special this year: "On the occasion of the renewal of the contract, we also invited our colleagues from our client's neighbouring departments, to celebrate together. And what better way in Bavaria than to have your own in-house Oktoberfest." Well in that case: O'zapft is!

“Right from the start, it felt as if they understood us”



ROSE Bikes is gaining ground. The bike brand from Bocholt in North Rhine-Westphalia is conquering the world of bikes in no time. For part of its logistics, the family business established in 1907 used an outside logistics provider for the first time ever from the end of November onwards. Uwe Schmäing, Director Operations at ROSE Bikes, explains why FIEGE became the preferred choice.

How did the idea of outsourcing part of your logistics that you used to handle by yourself, come about?

We have almost doubled our turnover over the past five years. As a retailer, we grew very strongly by selling attire, accessories and spare parts for bikes, and naturally also by selling our own bicycles. Even post-Covid, we are still growing clearly above the sector's average. This then led us to repeatedly reaching our limits both in terms of storage capacities as well as logistical processing. Two years ago, we then had the idea to hand over parts of our logistics, i.e., our logistics for commodities, to an external service provider. We wanted to invest even more resources into our core business – and at the heart of our brand is and will always be the bike.

In your specific case, how do you define commodities?

In simple terms, this includes all parts except for bikes. The product portfolio encompasses everything from a cycling jersey in the garment segment to a spare crank handle and sprocket packages in the parts segment all the way to bottle holders, tyres, assembly keys or bike racks for cars. The product range that needs to be processed is quite broad in any case.

How did the contact with FIEGE come about? And what tipped the scales in favour of FIEGE?

The decision to outsource our logistics was a very conscious one and we created an elaborate process for this. For us, this was a big step and yet also a major change. Initially, we were in an exchange with more than 20 logistics providers. We held concrete talks with five of them. Throughout the entire process and especially also during the visits and talks it turned out that FIEGE showed up with great competency and experience. At any given point in time, we had the feeling that every contact person knew very well what mattered most in their respective area and how businesses operate – in the end, it was the idea of a team that convinced us, which we recognised at FIEGE.

About that idea of a team: Which role did the fact play that ROSE and FIEGE are two family businesses from the Münsterland, each with a company history that spans over 100 years?

That also played a role. I believe that, as a company, our construct of values or lines of thought sort of overlap quite a bit. Fundamental honesty, a positive image of humanity, mutual trust, the client is always the focus, persistent actions whenever things go wrong: there are many areas that overlap. ROSE has a workforce of roughly 700 people and we are surely a little more family like than FIEGE with its 20,000+ employees. Still, the value structure is fundamentally rather congruent. This also explains why we always felt very understood throughout the entire selection process at FIEGE.



In the name of one ROSE:
Uwe Schmäing, Director
Operations at ROSE Bikes.



A final point: The go-live at the FIEGE location in Apfelstädt has just happened. What is your vision? Where do you want the journey for ROSE Bikes to go in the years to come?

We believe that, by outsourcing our logistics for commodities, we will be able to distinctly scale our core operations even better than we have managed over the past years. Our pursuit within the bicycle trade is a strong growth trajectory which, so far, has been working out well. We are convinced that our partnership with FIEGE will clearly increase our flexibility in logistics yet again while at the same time, reduce the complexity for us enormously – allowing us to focus even more strongly on what we are best at: designing, building and selling cool, quality bikes.

Home Suite Home



Levelling up: FIEGE has created a modular, integrated all-in-one solution for D2C businesses with its eCommerce Suite. By pairing software with services, e-tailers can map all processes transparently and cost-effectively from a single source – from the order to the return and in line with the respective needs.

There is no doubt about it: with every online order that has been delivered, expectations of recipients go higher and higher. Shops and e-tailers are to deliver parcels even faster, more conveniently and more sustainably – at times within a preferred time window, using the preferred carrier, and with maximum transparency even before the Buy Now button has been hit. There is no room for delays and mistakes – competitive pressure in the eCommerce sector is simply too fierce.

Felix Hettlage knows a thing or two about the dilemma that many D2C businesses are faced with. Together with Boris Scholz, he oversees in the capacity of Managing Director the Digital business segment which covers FIEGE's complete eCommerce product portfolio. "The complexity of eCommerce operations is growing by the minute. Stand-alone solutions no longer suffice to help e-tailers advance. To enjoy success, one must be able to rely on a seamless interaction between digital services, the logistical infrastructure behind them and the actual service as such", Hettlage explains.

Customer journey: wheretogo?

Customers only reach their journey's destination when they are greeted by simple, and more importantly, customer-focused processes at every single touchpoint along the way. Every time a fork along the road does not have the right signpost, many potential shoppers simply back off and look elsewhere. Hettlage adds: "This is exactly where the FIEGE eCommerce Suite sets off. Our integrated solution pairs software with services yet is still composed of modular, flexible components that can be combined freely. This allows us to simplify eCommerce many times over."

What may sound trivial at first is the decisive advantage of FIEGE's solution. After all, no two eCommerce businesses are exactly the same: different products, different inventory and third-party systems, different sales channels, different growth plans. "Our eCommerce Suite offers access to solutions for D2C starters which for reasons of cost were reserved to the big players in the past. Established e-tailers, in turn, can tap as needed

a total peace-of-mind package or dedicated individual services – in combination with the certainty that we can handle any level of scaling”, Hettlage tells us. “This makes us an ideal partner for all companies wishing to build and expand their online operations strategically.”

Value chain – exploiting the full potential

The eCommerce Suite works as a custom-fit solution even for e-tailers aiming to access the European market. Hettlage explains: “We can combine the necessary software with the required services according to the individual requirements. Our clients receive exactly – and only – what they really need. That creates flexibility and financial security.”

The offer encompasses the full value chain of digital retailing: from marketplace solutions, omnichannel and stock management to eCommerce fulfilment and parcel shipments to financial services, carrier claims management and customer service. And even data-based tools that optimise the shipping process, such as the pick-up navigator, are included in the Suite. Everything is used via a single interface, that is to say, a transparently arranged user interface, to keep an eye on all activities. Boris Scholz adds: “The FIEGE eCommerce Suite with its level of depth and degree of modularity is one-of-a-kind in the market. Next-level eCommerce probably best describes this system.”



Value chain solutions in e-tailing: from eCommerce fulfilment to AI-based tools for parcel deliveries.

Supported by artificial intelligence

Meanwhile, FIEGE has been relying increasingly on intelligent technologies in order to further optimise their services offering. “The great advantage for us are our years of experience. We developed the ability to spot digital trends and align them with the needs of our clients at a very early point in time. This is also helping us in the age of artificial intelligence”, Scholz says.

FIEGE already has its own market-ready solutions for optimal parcel freight, such as Risk AI. “The risk management tool combines data sources such as weather forecasts, traffic congestion reports or strike announcements”, Scholz says. “This makes early collections and diversions via alternative hubs, carriers or tours possible – and the delivery still reaches its destination via the fastest route.” As part of Communicate AI, the risk management informs end customers as well as other partners pro-actively and automatically of consignments that are at risk, which increases satisfaction and reduces service enquiries.

But how to find the best possible parcel service for eCommerce shipments in the first place? Especially when performance or prices fluctuate and many recipients have their very own preferences? FIEGE is already working on an AI-based solution for this, as Scholz explains: “The challenge lies in securing an optimum carrier mix throughout the ongoing process. Our Hero AI tool is to adapt automatically adapt with help from artificial intelligence when a partner’s priorities change on account of costs, duration, or quality.” This will put e-tailers one step ahead of the competition at all times.

“Open-mindedness is the foundation”



How does a business add value for its clients? What marks a solid partnership? And which factors are essential to remain a successful service provider in the future? Martin Rademaker, Executive Board member at FIEGE, speaks to us in this interview about challenges and recipes for success – and explains why feedback from clients is the most valuable currency.

As the year is drawing to a close, what special memories do you have? And what are your personal highlights from 2024?

Anyone who knows me even only a little will know that for Preußen Münster to be promoted to the 2nd division of the Bundesliga was, of course, an absolute highlight! – sorry, first things first! (laughs). Looking at professional highlights, that would definitely be things that happened in connection with our clients. This past year has most certainly been very demanding. We all feel the pressure coming from the market. The things that I then consider to be special are those that arise out of these challenges. When all of us grow together, as was for example the case due to the shared automation projects. And of course, whenever we are able to energise new clients for our company. That is always a highlight. Hisense comes to mind, as does OACE, who we went live with only two weeks after having signed the contract, or ROSE Bikes, to name a few. Generally speaking, we managed to attract a lot of great business and roll out many client projects this past year. We launched new locations for Action and SEPHORA in Italy; we inaugurated our new logistics centre in Bülach in Switzerland and began overseeing operations at a new warehouse in Schwelm for our long-time client, Vorwerk. 2024 has many highlights that I will remember.

In general: What were or are the biggest challenges that we are facing as a logistics provider?

A relevant share of our clients is definitely feeling the overall economic situation. It is very unfortunate that this year came with companies that recorded a distinct decline in volumes or even filed for insolvency. It is crucial that especially in times like these, we remain as close as possible to our clients and support them as best as we can in our capacity as a service provider. At the same time, we have clients who, despite the challenging times, are successful, continue to grow, and with whom we open new locations. Overall, we benefit from our robust position as a group that operates across multiple sectors, and from scaling our client's operations flexibly.

How can AI help with adding value? This topic was intensely discussed with clients, partners and start-ups at FIEGE's annual exchange format, FAST & FORWARD.

This issue's headline is: "Creating. More. Value."

How do you personally define added value? And how do we create this for our clients as a logistics provider?

Added value is something highly customised. There are no generally applicable standards for this. Instead, every client defines this in their own way. Which is why our mission – we are obsessed with creating value for our customers – not only excites us, but also brings us great joy. The bottom line is that, ultimately, it doesn't really matter how clients define added value for themselves. The decisive thing is, primarily, that we create it on behalf of our clients, and that clients therefore can focus on their core business. That's what we are here for. We are a service provider. Ours is not a product that sparkles or that we display in a shopwindow. Instead, we add value for our clients by being the best possible service provider we can be. How do we do this? We listen. And then we ask the right questions to find out for every one of our clients which specific value we can add for them. There are clients for whom this is all about cost efficiency, and others where it is the possibility to scale their operations flexibly. For yet other clients, it is about digitalisation or even developing new sales channels. It is our job to identify the respective needs so as to, in the following, contribute our part to these needs being served as best as possible.



**What would you say we are really good at?
And where is there still room for improvement?**

A big company's COO once told to me that we had become his most important logistics partner. In his own words: "You are fast with fixing mistakes." And that is a great strength of ours: Our thinking is always solution-minded, and we quickly find solutions for our clients' demanding challenges. If ever something does not work to perfection – which comes with our line of business – we respond fast and pragmatically. Also, we benefit from being close to our clients. This makes it easier to go through even difficult times and tackle challenges together and with resolve.

And where is there still room for improvement?

There is always still a little more room to optimise any process. The sustained improvement and striving for operational excellence do not have a natural limit. There is no finish line. That is the underlying rationale for lean management – which is why we will never stop evolving. I currently see this frequently here within our organisation because, for example, we are using the outcome and the findings from our Customer Survey to place a strong focus on our clients' wishes and become even better and more efficient operationally.

Speaking of which: Once again, we asked our clients for their opinion and feedback with a customer survey. What are the most important lessons learned from this?

Our customer satisfaction stats are high, which is the most important benchmark there is for us. And the trend continues to be positive. I am very happy about this since it tells us that we are on the right path. What I am also pleased about is that our trend with clients who one year ago were in part not that satisfied with our performance, is very positive for 2024. This impressively demonstrates how important it is to listen, and listen well; that we accept feedback and work with it – and that we enter into an exchange and build mutual trust and understanding. After all – this is yet another thrilling realisation – those clients who give us the most detailed feedback tend to be our most satisfied clients, on average. The more we know and understand our clients' needs, the better we are in creating additional value for our clients. And that's the reason why I am so grateful when our clients honestly mirror what is going well and what is possibly not going too well. Feedback is a great help for us.

We have been working with quite a few of our clients for several decades. To you, what defines a good, successful partnership with a client?

Open-mindedness. I believe that this is the foundation. When you openly talk to one another, trust can be built. Next to operational excellence, which must always be guaranteed, we also talk a lot about the relationship level. This is about the rapport that we share with our clients. An honest, open-minded exchange is always the foundation to building a solid partnership. This is a people business and people on both sides need to be a good fit. Beyond this, we naturally need to be able to overcome the challenges that our clients have. We need to be willing to respond fast to changes of our clients. We need to remain agile and flexible to ensure that the client's needs are always at the centre of attention at any given moment. Only then will we be the best possible partner.

“The more we know and understand our clients' needs, the better we are in creating additional value for our clients.”





Has there been a shift over the years or has the foundation for sharing success always remained the same?

What has changed enormously is the framework within which success is to be created. Today's requirements are very different to those of the past. Everything is much faster, and planning cycles are much shorter. Moreover, we had to deal with major disruptions over the past years. Covid, the dreadful war in the Ukraine, inflation, the escalating conflict in the Middle East: every generation has its very own challenges – and the speed at which everything is happening right now is incredibly fast. However, what has not changed is that the relationship level remains the decisive factor. The relationship with our clients, our partners, our colleagues – this has remained the foundation for our success across generations. Add to this our own standards that we place on our ourselves. As a company, we want to stay in motion and keep reinventing ourselves time and again – we have been doing this by now for 151 years.

“We will meet the challenges that lie ahead only together – and it is important that we realise this time and again because this is the only way we will remain successful.”

Flexibility through automation: scalable solutions such as the AutoStore or robotic arms work hand in hand with 22,000 human colleagues at FIEGE.

What will be decisive in the future for us to continue adding value for our clients?

Currently, we are working diligently on aligning our organisation even closer with our clients, to allow us to understand a little better what our clients and those hoping to become a client, need. We will need to respond even faster to changes and – often sudden – challenges on the client's part than we are doing already today. Going forward, our clients will expect even greater flexibility on our part, and it is for us to know how to deal with this. Add to this the major topics that are on everyone's mind and that worry us: digitalisation, automation, artificial intelligence and sustainability. Moreover, we wish to and must further consolidate our position as an appealing employer. For the tasks that lie ahead of us, we need a strong team – even with a labour market as tense as it is right now, we want to locate colleagues that are the best fit for us and tie them to us in the long run.

What is the role of cooperation with other businesses, such as start-ups?

A very central one. We are an organisation that is driven by partnership. Working together with our partners and suppliers is extremely important. For example, when talking automation, we do not create this by ourselves but need strong partners by our side with whom we devise, trial and market-ready solutions. This goes likewise for the entire innovation and development process where, for example, co-operating with start-ups is super important. The decisive thing is: we will meet the challenges that lie ahead only together – and it is important that we realise this time and again because this is the only way we will remain successful.

Signs of our times

Promoting sustainability, braving the shortage of skilled labour, harnessing artificial intelligence to create value, chancing innovation, and creating positive customer experiences: the list of challenges that companies are facing is long. We asked our clients about the topics that consumed them the most this year – and asked ourselves that very question.

Sustainable future

“Action is on a journey to make more and more customers smile. Our formula of everyday necessities and non-food products that make daily life easier or more enjoyable is loved everywhere. Customers appreciate Action because we always offer the lowest price.

We invest in a transparent supply chain, in product quality and in sustainability. Our cotton for instance is 100 per cent responsibly sourced and our chocolate 100 per cent fair trade for all Action and supplier brands. More than 99 per cent of our stores are off the gas grid and 100 per cent use energy saving LED lighting. We are making fast progress in realising our 60 per cent CO₂ emission reduction target for 2030 for our own operations.

In autumn, we are preparing for the busiest season in our stores: the Christmas holiday period. After recent inflationary years, Action has been able to reduce a lot of prices in the past year. This means our growth is coming from volume increases: we sell more products to more customers in more stores. All our supply chain partners support our ability to serve our customers. Everybody goes the extra mile to handle the increasing volume - something that makes us both proud and excited to succeed!



Ensuring that our customers are happy is what drives us at Action. All our distribution colleagues, including you, have a key role in this – something I’d like to sincerely thank you for!”

Hajir Hajji

**CEO
Action**

Embracing responsibility

“The Franziskus Stiftung, our Münster-based foundation, was given the mission by the Franciscans of Mauritz to advocate the well-being of the sick and disabled as well as those in need of care and underprivileged people. At a time when a lack of skilled labour is becoming increasingly widespread, new approaches must be found to fulfil this mission. A factor growing in importance even beyond a hospital’s individual location is an innovative collaboration that encompasses all locations and

sectors, to secure out-patient and in-patient care within the specialist medical fields for an entire region. This can improve the quality of the care. At the same time, this approach paves the way for establishing attractive, flexible working hour models and advanced training rotations. Digital applications, such as within telemedicine, open up ever bigger opportunities in support of collaborative treatments for the well-being of patients and employees alike.

This creates an overall environment of professional service that is highly attractive not only for working personnel but also for specialists in training as well as international specialists.”



Dr. Nils Brüggemann

CEO
St. Franziskus-Stiftung Münster

The diverging priorities of AI

“There aren’t many things that disrupt society in a way that artificial intelligence has. We, too, have been dealing intensely with the question this year on how to profitably tap AI for us and our clients. Our annual FAST & FORWARD exchange format proved to be particularly valuable in this regard. *Beyond the buzz: How artificial intelligence is changing industries* was this year’s motto which prompted many debates with clients, partners and start-ups on how we can harness the opportunities and challenges presented by AI. An important insight: nobody can predict with precision what the future of AI will look like. Which is why we will need to remain open, take a cautious approach, and keep trying new things.

With our AI on-demand process, we have created a way here at FIEGE to identify, rate and action promising use cases at our organisation – always under the premise of supporting the day-to-day work of our colleagues and delivering additional value for our clients. Currently, we are trialling AI applications to optimise routines or the use of intelligent mobile picking robots. Also, our Digital business segment is launching our first very own AI products in the market, such as Risk AI, our risk management tool.

A key foundation for all our efforts is our company’s own AI policies through which we secure the responsible use of AI without ignoring the risks that come with it. Because it is paramount for us that people remain at the heart of our actions. And this is how it should stay.”



Jens Fiege

Co-CEO
FIEGE

Diversity as a strength

“In 2024 – a super election year – the political situation in our society was a particular concern for us all. Next to the EU elections, many here in Germany were called on to cast their ballot in the three state elections and multiple municipal elections – and will soon have the opportunity to do so again in the early federal election. The start of the year 2024 in this part of the world was defined by demonstrations against right-wing extremism, which impressively showcased that democracy is not a given. We took this as a reason here at FIEGE to demonstrate our stance even more clearly and to stand up for our free and democratic constitutional order.

In May, our company joined the Diversity Charter. In June, we launched a special Münster 4 Love jersey, to make a statement against hatred and inflammatory speech jointly with SC Preußen Münster and Münster 4 Life. And in August, we set a clear sign with the initiative of our long-time client, Vorwerk, in unison with many German family businesses, through the Germany-wide Made by Vielfalt campaign which vouches for a tolerant, solidarity-minded and cosmopolitan society.

We are proud and grateful to have over 22,000 people from 123 nations doing their very best as one, every day, here at our family business. This diversity makes working at FIEGE so special and brings success for us all. It is a major contributor to performing as best as possible for our clients – therefore, diversity is a crucial competitive factor. Hence, it is our job to safeguard these values!”



Felix Fiege

Co-CEO
FIEGE

Innovation first

“Innovation plays a central role in our customer-centric transformation process. Businesses that fail to focus on innovation will soon disappear from the market in light of growing demands and drastically fast changing customer behaviour.

Coming from a technology-driven environment, it is a particularly challenging learning process for us to not focus on the product but rather shine a spotlight on problem resolution – and to live our mission of ‘separating the useful from the harmful’ and creating value. This responsibility pushes us to improve existing solutions and show courage in developing and taking a chance with different approaches for different clients. The decisive factor is our key technology, filtration and separation, which gives us access to many markets. Consequently, we are not only growing our leading position but also, through our core competence, are creating added societal and ecological value for a more sustainable future.”



Thomas Fischer

Chairman of the Board
MANN+HUMMEL

Next level shopping

“This year, we advanced our strategy towards building the leading eCommerce ecosystem for Europe’s fashion and lifestyle market for our two growth areas, B2C and B2B. Taking the leap from a platform model to an eCommerce ecosystem allows us to serve an even greater share of the online market for fashion and lifestyle. In the B2C segment, we look to a quality offer for the entire customer journey. This also includes fast and reliable delivery and return options that are oriented towards the

needs of local customers. Logistics also plays a key role in our B2B offer. Our new B2B brand, ZEOS consolidates our skill set into an operating system for the fashion and lifestyle industry – from integration with different marketplaces to the processing of orders. This facilitates eCommerce transactions at and outside of Zalando.

And thanks to the comprehensive logistics expertise of our long-time partner, FIEGE we are on an excellent course and look forward to raising the shopping experience of our customers to the next level.”



David Schröder

Co-CEO
Zalando

We said jes, jes, jes

If you have a sweet tooth, you will know – and love – Katjes fruit gums and liquorice. The confectionary company from Emmerich am Rhein switched to a vegetarian, mostly even vegan production very early on and is one of the most popular brands in Germany's market for sweets. Katjes entrusted FIEGE with their logistics exactly 30 years ago – which has become a story of shared success.

Trick or treat – the Halloween classic is nothing to be feared at Katjes. The vegetarian and vegan fruit gums by the Emmerich confectionary company come in all shapes, colours and flavours. Especially well-known and popular are the little liquorice kittens whose original liquorice recipe came from Italian ancestors in Sicily.

The company's steady growth made Katjes look for a long-term partner with special expertise in contract logistics in the early 1990s. "As a pioneer in this field, FIEGE had already devised a viable concept that quickly convinced us. That's why we decided to switch our service provider in 1994", Roland Nieuwenhuis, Head of Logistics at Katjes recalls.

Logistics – homemade

At the time, the business volume reached a few thousand pallets and was first housed by FIEGE at its branch in Bocholt which is only thirty minutes from Emmerich. Markus Bruns, FIEGE's Project Manager for Katjes tells us: "Our location in Bocholt has always been a central hub for FMCG logistics in the World of FIEGE. Since we were also working for other food industry clients here, we were able to instantly raise valuable synergies for Katjes, for example by consolidating shipments."

The plan panned out and bore not only fruit gums, but also fruit. At the same time, Katjes continued their expansion drive. Next to a further rise in sales, also through the acquisition of known brands such as Villosa (SALLOS



and Hustelinchen), Frigeo (Ahoj sherbet powder) or VICKS cough drops. Nieuwenhuis adds: "Once the capacities in Bocholt started to reach their limits, FIEGE approached us with the idea of building a new logistics centre in direct proximity to our production site in Emmerich."

The sweets maker produces around 80 per cent of its entire product range at its head office in Emmerich. The first turf for the new building with a multi-user structure



A different approach: Katjes products are trending – amongst Alpaca fans, but also during the FIEGE Soccer Cup.



was cut in early 2019 – one year later, the first products moved in. Today, pallets with Katjes products take up around two-thirds of the building's entire surface area. The volume has more than tripled over the past three decades. "Next to warehousing, FIEGE also organises transportation in Germany and Austria for us. Value-added services like repacking, labelling, quality controls and display set-up come on top", Nieuwenhuis reports.

The scope of services keeps growing

Every day, around 15 shuttles deliver freshly made Katjes goodies from the production sites. The trucks need less than five minutes for the barely two kilometres between the two points. Bruns adds: "The geographic proximity allows us to hold routine on-site get togethers like monthly meetings and workplace inspections, also known as Gemba Walks. This spurs the partnership on because we can discuss issues and suggestions for improvement in a direct and straightforward manner – it's a win/win situation."

At the start of this year, Katjes and FIEGE expanded their collaboration to include eCommerce. "Our client has entrusted us with fulfilment services for its three online shops for Katjes, Ahoj sherbet powder and SALLLOS. With our decades of experience in eCommerce, we quickly added and integrated the handling with existing process flows", Bruns tells us. FIEGE sent out several thousand of these sweet packages in the first six months.

Snacking sustainably

To further increase the production volume in Emmerich, the family business made a double-digit million investment in April. And the sweets maker renewed their contract with FIEGE early. Nieuwenhuis adds: "The name Katjes combines tradition with innovative strength. It is a characteristic that we share with FIEGE. We want our entire value chain to become even more efficient – and for this, we need long-term planning certainty."

The confidential talks held between Katjes and FIEGE, according to Bruns, also saw automation and sustainability play a central role: "Optimising deliveries and running transportation at capacity are important items on our shared agenda. For short distances, we even use one of our zero-emission electric trucks to distribute Katjes." The Project Manager is thrilled about the anniversary of the collaboration and the tasks ahead: "We are extremely grateful for the trust that our client has been showing us for 30 years now. This is what makes our partnership." It seems as if Katjes and FIEGE are looking to grow old (or even older) together.



Artificial intelligence, real transformation



&



The sixth instalment of FAST & FORWARD is held at Von Greifswald, a former railroad depot. FIEGE invited around 250 international guests to their annual networking event in Berlin. This year's motto is Beyond the buzz: How Artificial Intelligence is changing industries. An eventful day filled with discussions, work and plenty of laughter came to an end, producing invaluable stimulus.

Our data. Our power. – set in big white letters on large, turquoise-coloured cubes suspended from the ceiling of the old railroad depot. And there is more: We innovate. We transform. The backdrop of Von Greifswald is picture-perfect for this. The Berlin venue which the logistics company FIEGE used for the sixth time now for its FAST & FORWARD event is just one good example of how transformation can become a winning formula when bravely pursuing new paths. In the past, goods were loaded here but today, it is where people meet, convene, and celebrate in a very special ambiance.

The motto of FIEGE's 2024 exchange format is Beyond the buzz: How Artificial Intelligence is changing industries. Right at the start, the direction of today's journey is mapped out. "FAST & FORWARD is our way of offering a networking and exchange platform where people from different areas and industries come together who usually might not even talk to each other", says the Co-CEO, Jens Fiege who manages the family business in unison with his cousin, Felix Fiege, during his welcoming address.

If these people worked together intensely for one day and shared their expertise in their respective fields, not only would this create valuable new contacts but also many exciting ideas, Jens Fiege explains. "This goes especially also for AI, which is a topic that affects all of us and has become an integral part of our world." Artificial intelligence will change many things, not just for FIEGE alone. It will change the market, the working world, products, and services. "AI is thus both: a challenge and a major opportunity. Today, we want to contribute our small share in making the most of this opportunity rather than missing out on it."



Understanding fears to overcome them through information and explanation – that was the essence of Sascha Lobo's message.

Digital transformation alongside streams of data

Someone who knows a lot about opportunities inherent in AI is Sascha Lobo. The journalist, author and AI start-up founder takes the audience at the FAST & FORWARD event through the first part of the daytime programme which covers everything from keynotes to panel discussions, flagship presentations, hands-on sessions and start-up pitches. During his presentation, Lobo shares how artificial intelligence changes the world and what this change means within logistics, eCommerce and the working world. In his own words: "AI has the potential to disrupt entire industries and markets once new data streams have been created and evaluated with the help of AI. Our job is to find out which data streams offer such potential, how we can spot them and how, in the end, we can get to them."

A first important step, and a decisive factor in succeeding, is not to underestimate the transformation triggered by AI, which many still do. It is also about speed and flexibility, Lobo explains. "It is not possible for us to foresee the precise direction this will be taking, not even with the best, most comprehensive and costliest of preparation. This technology will even surprise AI experts time and again. All we can do is try to edge towards this AI transformation by developing a feeling, an instinct for it." Either way, the mission will be to want to always be a part of shaping this development. "We will have to

trial which AI possibilities will advance us – together with partners, employees, and clients. And we must be ready for specific, short-term investments and business models.” He is convinced: “ChatGPT was the iPhone moment in artificial intelligence. We are currently living through an incredible enthusiasm for data which has no natural limitations. The age of AI started long ago.”

The logical inference is that artificial intelligence will be integrated with almost all work processes of winning companies, Lobo says. More so: ultimately, the competitiveness of businesses as well as of Europe compared to USA and China depends on this. Lobo’s plea is clear: “Germany need not and must not be afraid of the AI transformation; instead, we must invest in it and encourage it.” After all, so Lobo, it is already apparent that there is more than economic profit that can be boosted with the help of AI. “Working with AI also comes with the opportunity of being happier, more productive and having employees in teams who are less likely to change their job or hand in their notice.”



FIEGE Board member Kenza Ait Si Abbou suggested that invitees approach AI with curiosity and a sense of adventure.

Combining the strengths of people and AI

A thesis that Kenza Ait Si Abbou would easily subscribe to. The FIEGE Director who has been overseeing Digital Services, IT and Data Driven Company since last September, explains in her keynote titled “The workplace 4.0: Humans and machines in sync?” that the fear of AI is poor advice. “It’s all about keeping the strengths that we already have and adding new strengths which we can harness with AI on top. The fear will then disappear on its own.” From a company’s perspective, it is “our responsibility to address our communication to specific audiences and empower our colleagues to actively partake in the AI transformation.”



After all, it takes openness and acceptance of technology by all employees to successfully transform a company in the age of AI, Ait Si Abbou says. “Technology drives value creation. That was the case yesterday and is the same today. What’s new is that the speed at which this is happening is growing exponentially. In the future, we will be dealing with tasks that we are not even aware of today. We will unlearn old and relearn new things.” Her approach is best summed up like this: “You don’t become a data-driven company overnight or by accident. If we, as a company, want to be driven by data in everything that we do, we will need to trigger a transformation process that is so far reaching that it can only succeed if and when every single colleague pitches in.”

Cooperation and partnership as the key to success

A point that Felix Fiege picks up again at the end of FAST & FORWARD. “We are at our best and our strongest as a team, both inside and outside of our company. Partnership and cooperation are what make us master future challenges. By combining a range of competencies, we add significant value.”

And for this very reason, the bottom line of the FAST & FORWARD event is nothing but positive for him: “My notepad is fuller than I would have ever thought possible when I set out this morning. A big thank you to our speakers and to the start-ups, for sharing this much knowledge and exchanging this many ideas. I take a lot of inspiration and valuable input with me for our day-to-day business and our strategic planning. Naturally, we don’t know today where artificial intelligence will work at FIEGE, and where it won’t. But we will edge closer and trial many things to tap the opportunities that AI has in store for us as best as possible.” Moving fast and forward into the future!



FIEGE

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The fabric that success stories are made of



Silver wedding anniversary: Bierbaum-Proenen and FIEGE celebrate a collaboration that spans 25 years. While paper packing lists only were used in the past, a robotic arm assists nowadays with the filling of a pouch sorter – yet it is not only in terms of technology that the partnership's productivity has been growing steadily.

Cologne-based Bierbaum-Proenen, a company with a long-standing tradition, is amongst the world's leading makers of workwear and personal work protection clothing. Buying BP®-branded attire is to rely on sustainably made products of special quality – from functional trousers for the trade to slip-on tunics and doctor's coats for the medical segment. To ensure the smooth operation of warehousing, production supply, order picking and distribution, a bespoke logistics concept is needed.

Since 1999, FIEGE has been responsible for this and to this day has been overseeing operations at the former head office in Greven-Reckenfeld. Gerrit Heinke, a clerk of the very first hour and today head of the BP® department at FIEGE, tells us: "We store all raw materials such as fabrics, yarn, buttons and zippers which we ship as needed around the world to Bierbaum-Proenen's production sites. Up to 65 individual 'ingredients' might be needed for a single pair of trousers."

The finished garments are then returned to Greven-Reckendorf, where they are stored, picked, packed and also shipped to BP® clients throughout the whole of Europe. And those clients can be anything from restaurants to transport operators and industrial businesses. “We store and manage almost 17,000 stock keeping units, or ready-to-sell product versions, for our clients – including especially work trousers and jackets. In all, that adds up to over 1.4 million items”, Heinke says.

More throughput, more depth

FIEGE and Bierbaum-Proenen have continuously expanded – and automated – their collaboration throughout the 25 years of their partnership. The ongoing rise in the volume of items and orders meant that it was no longer possible to sort everything manually. Michael Nüdling, Head of Logistics & Quality Assurance at Bierbaum-Proenen explains: “Logistics is also always a race against time. To stay flexible and maintain a high level of on-time delivery, we commissioned FIEGE at the end of the 2000s to devise an automated solution.”

At the time, FIEGE opted for a hanging pouch sorter which, suspended from the ceiling, has been meandering through the existing space at a length of around one kilometre since 2010. Heinke recalls: “Those storage and transport systems were hardly in use for flat-lying garments up until then. Together with Dürrkopp, we championed this challenge and devised a system which sorts orders thanks to a three-tier matrix in a way that the items in the dispatch box correspond exactly with the sequence as ordered.”

At the same time, Bierbaum-Proenen transferred more and more so-called value added services to FIEGE. Nüdling says: “The trust in our service provider has grown with each order that was placed, and every problem that got solved. That’s why we decided, over time, to outsource the respective finishing of the garments.” Specially trained FIEGE colleagues plot and patch the BP® products with logos, lettering or badges of their respective clients at a small clothes maker’s shop. Returns and quality controls have also become part of the responsibilities of FIEGE.



The atmosphere was great at the anniversary celebrations held at the logistics centre in Greven-Reckendorf, which Dr Hugo Fiege (l) and Heinz Fiege (centre), the two former Co-CEOs of the family business, also attended.

Top technology and shared goals

Around one year ago, the next evolutionary stage took place. To free up employees from the more repetitive tasks, FIEGE acquired a cutting-edge robotic arm. The well-rehearsed team was involved in the process from an early stage, as Heinke reports: “We have been working together for many years, so that there is strong trust between us. That is why it was important to us to clearly communicate the change within the team even if – or rather, because – the new colleague is an artificially intelligent robot.” Onboarding went down well: by now, Richard – that’s the name the team has given the robotic arm – is a reliable helper when it comes to filling the pouch sorter.

Still, there is no time to relax, because the view is already directed towards the future. Nüdling says: “As a seventh-generation owner-managed business, sustainability plays a decisive role for Bierbaum-Proenen.” A statement that FIEGE, a fifth-generation family business, would likewise willingly endorse. “We want to shape our supply chain as sustainably as possible, since our products already are today. And we believe that in FIEGE, we have just the right partner for this by our side”, Nüdling explains. So it cannot be ruled out that a pearl wedding anniversary celebration will be in order in five years from now.

Well-versed in logistics



“Servus, Grüezi” and “Grüß Gott”: FIEGE is growing in Austria and Switzerland. The logistics provider is expanding its existing facility in Vienna – in Bülach in Switzerland, this step has already been completed successfully. And FIEGE has already secured new clients for both new buildings.

Left: Kai Alfermann, Managing Director FIEGE Real Estate; Thomas Steinhart, Chairman of Simmering council; Michael Jahn, Managing Director FIEGE Austria; Peter Scherbel, Executive Board FIEGE and Heinz Fiege, former Co-CEO of the family business at the topping-out ceremony in Vienna (left to right).

Right: Kenza Ait Si Abbou, Executive Board member of the FIEGE Group; Mark Eberli, Mayor of Bülach; Carmen Walker Späh, member of the Government Council of the Canton of Zurich; Jens Fiege, Co-CEO of the FIEGE Group; Vinko Castrogiovanni, Managing Director of FIEGE Southern Europe & Alps; as well as Martin Heinrich, FIEGE Branch Manager in Bülach, opened the new logistics centre in Bülach (left to right).

After FIEGE celebrated its 150th company anniversary in 2023, yet another reason to celebrate popped up for employees working in Austria and Switzerland. In Vienna, the capital of Austria, a new FIEGE logistics centre is being built. The topping out ceremony took place in mid-October. Bülach in Switzerland is yet one step further. The new logistics, transportation and forwarding centre in the canton of Zurich launched with all the usual festivities at the end of August already.

“Our business has been recording highly positive growth these past years even though the economic framework has been rather challenging. By expanding our locations, we account for this development”, says Vinko Castrogiovanni who oversees transactions for FIEGE in Austria and Switzerland in the capacity of Managing Director. Both building projects are so-called brownfield developments and contribute to reducing land usage by repurposing industrial wasteland. “Sustainability is a central element of our corporate strategy. This applies naturally also to the construction and operation of our logistics properties”, Castrogiovanni explains.

Ideal access to Swiss market

In Bülach, less than a ten-minute drive from Zurich Airport, FIEGE has created an additional 17,000 square metres of logistics space. The add-on was officially opened with Carmen Walker Späh, member of the Government Council of the Canton of Zurich, in attendance. The Branch Manager Martin Heinrich says: “Our offer is primarily directed towards clients operating within eCommerce, fashion, FMCG and industrial whom we can offer a full range of services from typical warehousing to transportation to total peace-of-mind fulfilment.”

The two-storey building which meets the Gold standard of the German Sustainable Building Council (DGNB) was built in direct proximity to the already existing logistics centre which will remain in use. “This allows us to achieve valuable synergy effects that give our clients a special degree of flexibility”, Heinrich outlines. The multi-user structure and the various automation options further contribute to a flexibility that FIEGE is able to offer its clients.

Life simplified: Michael Jahn (l), Managing Director FIEGE Austria and Andreas Kuzmits, Managing Director Hisense Gorenje Austria are both excited about the new partnership.

Twice the logistics space at the gate to Eastern Europe

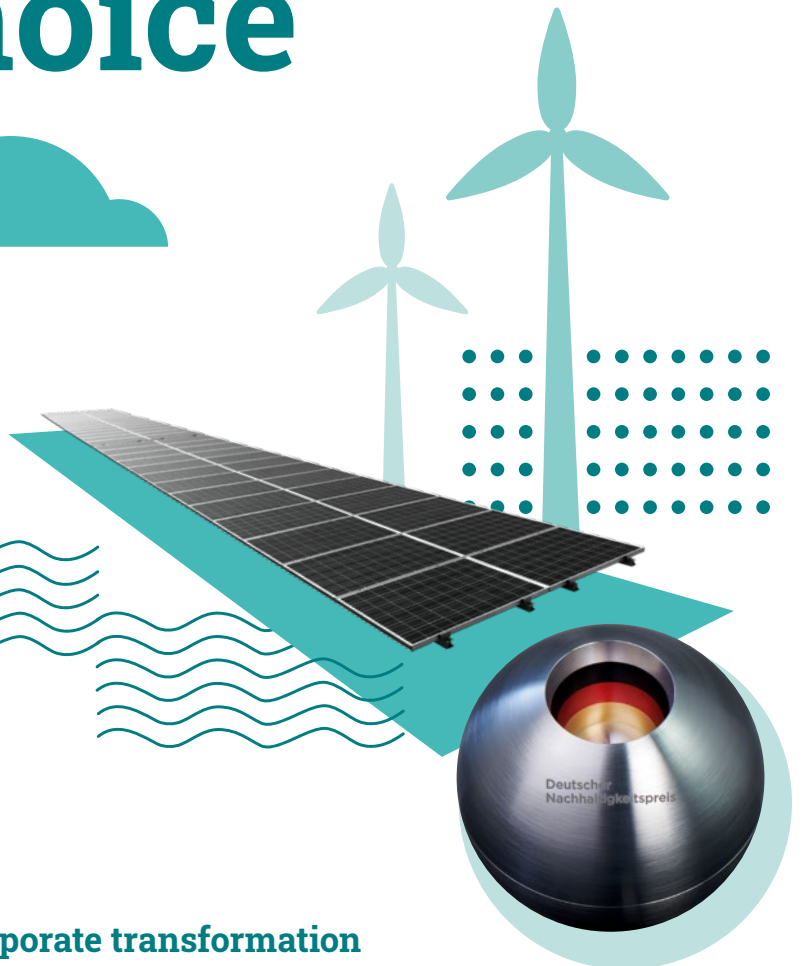
A good 700 kilometres further east, in Vienna, a new 20,000-square-metres-large logistics space is currently being built where the FIEGE Group is aiming to expand its service offering for the whole of Austria. Michael Jahn, Managing Director of FIEGE Austria comments: “There are not many who can offer flexible capacities this close to the city and of these dimensions. This makes our location especially attractive for businesses operating within fashion, healthcare and consumer products, whom we can offer all-in-one solutions for the whole of Europe from here.”

The shell construction of the new multi-user centre was completed in autumn – and the milestone thus achieved was celebrated accordingly. The building is expected to be completed in the summer of 2025, also to DGNB Gold certification standards. “Our most important sales arguments are flexibility and efficiency. Depending on the respective requirement, we can realise diverse automation systems to take our clients’ fulfilment to the next level”, Jahn explains.

Hisense Gorenje Austria was one of the clients who opted in. Next to procurement logistics, FIEGE will oversee both warehousing and order picking plus delivery of the complete product assortment for the market leader in quality electronics and household appliances. “We are excited to have gained yet another renowned client, who will benefit from long-term growth prospects due to our new building here in Vienna”, Jahn emphasises. A look over the Alps will therefore prove worthwhile even in the future: *Ade, Pfiat di and Auf bald!*



Duty and choice



FIEGE is driving its sustainable corporate transformation forward and published its second sustainability report this year. While currently still a voluntary discipline for most, the report will soon become mandatory in the context of the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD). For this reason, FIEGE is working towards ensuring efficient reporting for the family business and for its clients.

“You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today.” Abraham Lincoln, one of the most important US Presidents to this day, wrote this sentence in a letter in 1864. Even if circumstances back then are not comparable with ours today, those lines have lost little of their relevance with a view to corporate responsibility: “As a family business and employer to over 22,000 people around the world, we bear responsibility – not only for ourselves, but also towards society and our environment”, says Sandra Achternbusch, Executive Director Corporate Sustainability at FIEGE.

And a systemically important sector like logistics holds a key role in that regard. “As a global full-service provider, we are an important link within networks that are becoming more and more complex and that stretch the entire globe”, Achternbusch outlines. The tasks which FIEGE assumes for its clients cover everything from production supply to the express delivery of those very products right to the doorstep of consumers. The sustainability expert explains: “Depending on the type of order placed, we are deeply involved in the value chains. This implies that the impact we have, for example, on the CO₂e footprint of our partners is relatively big.”

Effort up, emissions down

Within the transport sector FIEGE, in cooperation with its clients, is already using different technologies which increase the climate compatibility of the vehicle fleet. This year, eight electric trucks have been driving under the FIEGE flag which charge green power at a growing number of fast charging stations. A further six second-generation vehicles have already been ordered. And this is not the sole alternative drive technology that FIEGE is experimenting with: "Next to bio-LNG, which is produced from regenerative methane, we are currently also trialling HVO100, a synthetic Diesel fuel for which residual and waste materials like old cooking oil is largely used", Achternbusch tells us. The advantage: a clearly improved climate footprint which is why there is no CO₂ tax on HVO Diesel.

Yet, not only on Europe's roads, but also within the network of locations comprised of 139 branches worldwide, FIEGE is working on lowering energy consumption with help from a range of measures. Achternbusch points out: "Thanks to the growing use of thermal pumps that are not reliant on gas as well as on-demand LED lights, we heat and illuminate our logistics centres with green energy which we generate ourselves through photovoltaic systems and, with a view to the future, also through wind energy." Ongoing progress is essential for FIEGE: "In the context of the Science Based Targets initiative, we pledged to comply with the 1.5°C target. And every kilowatt hour counts", Achternbusch emphasises.

Due care instead of duly worried

One topic that FIEGE has also been dealing with this year is the German Supply Chain Act (LkSG). The Act governs not only compliance with human rights in global supply chains, but also corporate responsibility for environmental protection. To reliably meet these duties of care, the Corporate Sustainability Team works closely with colleagues from Accounting, Legal, Risk Management and Procurement. Katharina Schwarzer, Director Procurement at FIEGE says: "A company like ours has thousands of suppliers who we commit through our declaration of principle and our Supplier Code of Conduct to complying with the governing law as well as our ethical standards."

With the help of close-knit analyses, FIEGE establishes possible risks using AI-based software to create so-called Risk Scores for all suppliers. "Whenever we detect anything suspicious, we check, rate and evaluate this. Following this we seek a close exchange with our partners and try to gain a comprehensive overview and resolve any issues in unison as we count on the entire supply chain to make progress", Schwarzer explains.

Should any suspicion be confirmed, they reserve the right to terminate the collaboration. This is how FIEGE makes sure it lives up to the responsibility across all supply chains not only for itself, but also for its clients. "Our clients must be able to count on us!"

Simultaneously, FIEGE has been working assiduously on creating the third sustainability report which for the first time will incorporate a complete CO₂e balance, including the relevant Scope 3 categories. Achternbusch explains: "For now, our reporting is still voluntary, even if extremely important to us. We are gathering invaluable experiences and are currently conducting a double materiality analysis with internal and external stakeholders. The aim is to be ready once the CSRD reporting duty applies to us, which is the case as from the financial year 2025."

German Sustainability Award

By persistently actioning its sustainability strategy, FIEGE is also being noticed beyond the company's confines – and at large at the end of November: "It makes us proud to have been awarded the German Sustainability Award a few days ago. This tells us that we are on the right path", Achternbusch adds. Despite this prestigious accolade, the sustainability expert keeps things humble: "To receive the title of an industry trailblazer is a great honour for us. But ultimately, it is not so much about the prizes and more about delivering a measurable outcome and supporting our clients with their sustainable transformation."



The electric trucks are funded by the Federal Ministry of Transport and Digital Infrastructure under the guideline for Climate-friendly commercial vehicles and infrastructure, or KsNI. The funding guideline is co-ordinated by NOW GmbH and applications are approved by the Federal Logistics and Mobility Office.



Logistics to keep you warm

Vaillant and FIEGE are birds of a feather. Both family businesses recently celebrated their 150th anniversaries. And both names stand for pioneering innovations that keep having a lasting impact on their respective industries to this day. Vaillant and FIEGE have been working together for 30 years – and are breaking new ground in various countries, including Slovakia.

There are many legends around why a bunny brings eggs at Easter. The true origine behind the folklore cannot be determined with certainty nowadays. What is certain, however, is what may seem surprising at first sight: that the bunny seems to know everything about heating, ventilation and air conditioning using renewable energy. After all, the Vaillant hare – a globally recognised trademark – is seen on resource-friendly heat pumps, gas boilers, ventilation systems, solar panels and hot water tanks in millions of households. Rabbit, rabbit, as they say to get lucky.

Right on track

A quick recap: to increase its competitiveness and focus on its core competence, the development of ultra-modern heating technology, the Remscheid-based family business decided to outsource its logistics in 1994. After an elaborate market survey, the contract was awarded to FIEGE as an 'innovative medium-sized company' with 'excellent market knowledge of the plumbing, heating and air-conditioning sector'. Philipp Debuch, Managing

Director of FIEGE's Industrial business unit, explains: "We founded the TechnoCargo Logistik joint venture at the time to consolidate warehousing and transportation for Vaillant's European subsidiaries and branches as well as for wholesalers, importers and consumers around the world."

As early as the 1990s, Vaillant greatly valued the responsible use of resources – which struck a chord with FIEGE. Debuch adds: "The clear expectation was for us to pool material flows, leverage synergy effects and harness railway and combined cargo carriage wherever possible. In doing so, we benefited from the concept of eco-logistics that FIEGE had recently developed." Today, more than 30 years later, TechnoCargo Logistik is fully owned by the Vaillant Group. However, the partnership between Vaillant and FIEGE continues, and nothing has changed about their approach to sustainability.

No gas guzzling

Last year, Vaillant launched a particularly future-forward project in Senica, Slovakia. Not far from the Czech border, the heating technology specialist produces electric heat pumps in a 100,000-square-metres factory. FIEGE oversees the processes in the adjacent logistics centre, where the finished products are stored. Martin Pétery, Managing Director of FIEGE Slovakia explains: "We have been handling this job at the Vaillant plant which is just a few kilometres away, in Skalica, for ten years now. We know our client, and the trust has grown steadily on both sides. Thanks to the valuable experience we have gained during this time, we were able to hit the ground running when the new production facility in Senica started operations late in the summer of 2023."

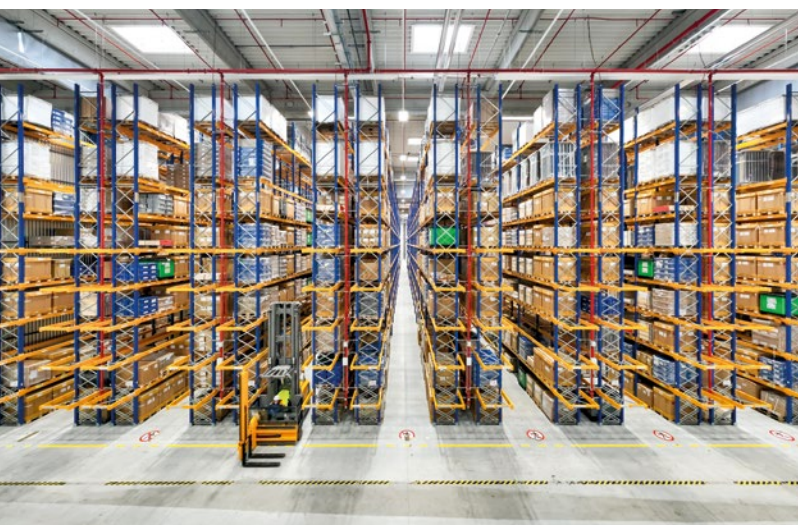
The state-of-the-art factory through which Vaillant is further advancing its transformation towards becoming a leading manufacturer of eco-friendly heat pump technology, is setting new standards. The giant production plant is BREEAM certified which vouches for sustainable construction and uses electric energy from renewable sources. The heating – as to be expected – is provided by heat pumps. "At full capacity, up to 300,000 heat pumps of various types can be produced here per year. As the logistics service provider, we not only handle warehousing, but also act as a regional distribution centre for Central and Eastern Europe", Pétery says. FIEGE also takes charge of the transportation to direct customers in Slovakia, Poland, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and North Macedonia. In the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Ukraine, most shipments go to local Vaillant warehouses.

The proximity between the production and the logistics centre also greatly benefits the relationship with the client, as Pétery explains: "When you work this closely together every day, boundaries become blurred. An open and respectful communication on a personal level ensures that we can have honest discussions that help us in taking decisions fast."

The future in view

This August, Vaillant celebrated its 150th anniversary – a milestone that FIEGE already reached the year before. And one and a half centuries after the coppersmith Johann Vaillant laid the foundation for the family business in Remscheid, his motto still applies today: "Be innovative, listen to your clients." This is why Vaillant has deliberately decided to focus on future-forward technologies such as heat pumps, to actively shape the energy transition.

As far as the cooperation with FIEGE is concerned, Vaillant is also looking ahead. The heating technology specialist is planning to also outsource its logistics for finished goods in Austria. FIEGE was able to convince Vaillant of its capabilities thanks to the long-standing and successful cooperation – and not least because of the new logistics centre in Vienna that is currently under construction. Philipp Debuch points out: "Our sustainable building allows us to provide optimised processes to our client and, above all, maximum flexibility for further growth. We are very grateful that Vaillant has also placed its trust in us in Austria." It seems as if Vaillant and FIEGE have indeed warmed up to each other over the course of the past 30 years.





Giro d'Italia

FIEGE Italy keeps growing. In the land where – as Goethe put it – lemons grow, FIEGE maintains its third-largest subsidiary after Germany and Poland. Over the past ten years, FIEGE has steadily expanded its logistics space, with a more than fivefold growth in size – and this year, too, some ribbons were cut to celebrate the launch of new spaces.

Football can be cruel at times. The Azzuri had to experience this twice in June of this year. While the defending champions from Nogarole Rocca (#TeamShakalaka) lost the women's final of the legendary FIEGE Soccer Cup by a narrow margin, Italy's men's national football team was knocked out in the round of 16 of the European Championships only a few days later. As they say in Italy: Così è la vita – that's life!

Our colleagues at FIEGE Italy, in turn, had plenty of reason to smile throughout the remainder of the year. Off the football pitch, things are going well. "Our business is growing steadily, and we are experiencing reliable growth

despite the strained economic situation. This makes it all the more important to have opened four new logistics centres and increased our total logistics space to around 600,000 square metres this year", says Alberto Birolini, who manages FIEGE's operations in Italy.



“Our business is growing steadily, and we are experiencing reliable growth despite the strained economic situation.”

Alberto Birolini, Managing Director
of the FIEGE business unit in Italy



Wide range of sectors in strategic regions

FIEGE's growth is primarily due to long-standing and trusting partnerships in Italy which especially include companies from the fashion & lifestyle, eCommerce, retail and FMCG sectors. FIEGE provides a number of services, from warehousing, shipping and transportation to returns handling as well as comprehensive value-added services. “One reason we have been capitalising on this positive trend over the past few years is the dedication from our 5,000+ colleagues, who deliver the best possible service for our clients with great vigour and team spirit, every single day”, Birolini explains.

Over the last twelve months, FIEGE has strengthened its presence in Nogarole Rocca (Verona), Castel San Giovanni (Piacenza), Mantua, the capital of the Lombard province that goes by the same name, and San Pietro in Casale, a municipality in the metropolitan city of Bologna. Birolini explains: “The Italian logistics market is evolving dynamically. We therefore expect demand for warehouse space to increase.” Which explains why FIEGE has been focussing its expansion plans on the key logistics regions in northern Italy. “There is still a great deal of uncertainty in the market. Some experts believe that, depending on geopolitical tensions, it is possible that the market will shrink even further. Nevertheless, we are investing now, for us to remain a dependable partner for our clients and to be ready for the future”, Birolini adds.

Focus on automation

To achieve this, lean management also plays a central role in Italy, as it does elsewhere in the World of FIEGE, Birolini says: “For us, it's all about offering our customers the best possible service. This only works if we constantly put ourselves and our processes to the test, in order to identify and leverage potential for improvement.” While there are still huge efficiency gains to be made through automation, Birolini believes that “nevertheless, it is important that we screen technologies very carefully and only use those that offer our clients real benefits while freeing our colleagues of repetitive tasks.”

Part of the recipe for success – and a genuine USP compared with other logistics providers in Italy – is that FIEGE operates under its own name at many of its locations. As part of this, FIEGE signs collective labour agreements with the respective branches. “These agreements go beyond generally applicable standards and are also based on location-specific conditions. This allows us to increase the number of permanent contracts, offer more social benefits and introduce performance-based bonus systems – many of these things are not a given in Italy”, Birolini says.



FIEGE Italy has repeatedly received awards for its ongoing efforts to improve working conditions and create a versatile working environment, including a prize presented by the UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR. Birolini adds: “We want to be a pioneer both as a logistics provider and an employer, within our industry and beyond. The awards show that we are headed in the right direction – and we are happy to have created a good foundation based on which we can continue on our path.”



Sharing the spotlight with the Euros

Big time setting, big time football: 3,000+ fans and players head to Lampertheim in Hesse for the 18th instalment of the FIEGE Soccer Cup. In the end, there were multiple reasons to celebrate: two firsts and the defending champion's repeat win. And again, a one-of-a-kind event which was about so much more than football alone.

The cheers that followed the final whistle brought to mind one word in particular: finally. They finally did it. After ranking as runners-up in 2022 and coming third last year, this summer was crowned by success: Team SkyBlues secured their first-time win of the FIEGE Soccer Cup during a high-quality women's final against the two-time winners from Italy, Team Shakalaka. The cup for the best women's team in the World of FIEGE will travel from Nogarole Rocca near Verona to Greven in Westphalia.



Third time's a charm: SkyBlues secured the women's title win.

The men's celebrations turned out to be even louder. Playing to a home crowd, the host and reigning champions, Kickers Biblis kept the upper hand in a thrilling final against LSL Lengerich, the winners in 2022. The cup went straight back to where it had come from – to nearby Biblis. This turned out to be a good thing for the after-kick party, where fans and players came together to celebrate. Once at the party tent, everyone agreed: ultimately, the FIEGE Soccer Cup is about so much more than football alone.

Everything your football heart desires

The framework for the 18th FIEGE Soccer Cup could hardly have been much better. The Adam Günderoth Stadium in Lampertheim proved to be the perfect setting for a huge football tournament, welcoming over 3,000 participants from ten countries. More than 100 teams went through the preliminary rounds on twelve smaller pitches. The fans enjoyed chips, bratwurst and cool beverages to help them fuel an excellent atmosphere alongside the pitch. Even short dips in the weather could



FIEGE Soccer Cup Aftermovie



not change anything about this. "Huge thanks go out to our organisational team from Biblis and the many volunteers from the region who lend a helping hand with this outstanding organisation", said Co-CEO, Jens Fiege. "It's exceptional what you managed to pull off here. We are thrilled to be celebrating a huge and colourful football tournament here today with these many colleagues from the entire World of FIEGE."

And Co-CEO Felix Fiege added: "A big thank you goes also to the City of Lampertheim which afforded us the opportunity to stage this event here right next door to our branch in Biblis. We wish to thank especially all our colleagues who travelled from all over Europe this weekend, at times over 1,000 kilometres, for many hours on busses, to be here. Year-on-year, we realise that this is not a given – and we are very proud of this incredible team spirit that we have here at FIEGE!"

A first for next year's organisation

During the major award ceremony at the tournament's tent where the second and first runners-up as well as the winners accepted their respective trophy, there was resounding applause for the winning teams. Once again, the Soccer Cup's headlining motto was all about coming together and the special culture at FIEGE. And the reigning champions, SkyBlues can expect yet another first following their first-ever Soccer Cup triumph: next year, the winners of the women's tournament will be in charge of organising the Cup for the first time. Finally, so to speak.

"Huge thanks go out to our organisational team from Biblis and the many volunteers from the region who lend a helping hand with this outstanding organisation."





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A perfect serve

Suntory Global Spirits: the name says it all. With a history that spans over 200 years, the company is one of the world's leading purveyors of spirits. Be it Kentucky Straight Bourbon, Scotch Single Malt from the Inner Hebrides or Japan's oldest Whisky: premium products deserve premium services. And since 2022, those services have been in the hands of FIEGE.

There is a time and place for everything. The FIEGE branch in Emmerich is proof of this. It is here, directly on the border with the Netherlands, that FIEGE handles the logistics for Suntory Global Spirits. "We were looking for a service provider that could offer both top notch fulfilment and flexible, long-term growth options", recalls André Marks, Senior Manager Supply Chain Fulfillment – Germany & Northern Europe at the family business that has US and Japanese roots.

Suntory Global Spirits found their match in FIEGE. During the very first chemistry talk, both sides really hit it off, as Marks remembers: "The FIEGE team and their many years of expertise in FMCG convinced us and gave us the feeling that they genuinely wanted us as a client. Add to this that on a personal level, everything was just right." The official start then followed in June 2022.

Central location in the heart of Europe

In the beginning, FIEGE handled operations from its FMCG location in Bocholt, Münsterland. In mid-2023, the logistical processing moved to the branch in Emmerich which back then had just been extended – and all of this took place while operations continued. Markus Pohle, the Branch Manager says: "Relocating at this level is almost like open-heart surgery. If anything goes wrong, it can easily become a logistical disaster because default contingency concepts do not work." Fortunately, however, everything went smoothly: "We were well pleased and also a little proud when the client pointed out that, had they not known anything about the move, we would not have realised it had taken place."

In the old Hanseatic town where roughly 70,000 square metres are dedicated to logistics across two multi-user centres, FIEGE oversees value-added services such as display set-up and finishing next to warehousing operations for around 9,000 pallets. "Our location here in Emmerich is ideal because our proximity to the container terminal near the river Rhine and the A3 motorway means



“In some places people drink Whisky, in other they prefer Whiskey. In the end, the decisive point for us is that our premium products are delivered to their destinations fast, safely and with a consistent quality of service.”



André Marks
Senior Manager Supply Chain Fulfilment –
Germany & Northern Europe at Suntory
Global Spirits

that we have multimodal connections to crucial European routeways”, Pohle explains. Moreover, there is an excise warehouse which operates under a FIEGE licence: “We bear the full responsibility for customs clearance and excise duty clearance so that our client can focus 100 percent on their core competence.”

Two partners that understand each other

Marks also appreciates the service: “FIEGE, like us, are market leaders in their respective industry, and in the FMCG sector in particular, their expertise is very comprehensive. That is paramount for us because, during peak situations, we must be able to count on maximum dependability in distribution.” FIEGE is also responsible for this in Germany and Austria – from central warehouse supply to sending out individual bottles from the high-value segment. “There are not many who can do that at this scope. Especially when it comes to parcel delivery”, Marks adds.

The result: Suntory Global Spirits and FIEGE have been gradually and continuously expanding their business transactions since 2022. Markus Pohle points out: “We partner up to work on pan-European projects such as delivery, to optimise stocks and tap potential savings. Moreover, we look for innovative possibilities to handle the logistics for our client just that little bit more efficiently.” After all, FIEGE’s ultra-modern facilities in Emmerich could easily accommodate various automation options: “Currently this is still a long way off for the handling of individual bottles. But Rome wasn’t built in a day either”, is how Pohle outlines the overall vision.

Reaping the rewards together

Both sides contribute to maintaining their solid interpersonal relationship which, if at all possible, has improved even further: “Our client recently staged an event to which our team was also invited. Suntory Global Spirits came up with a signature drink on this occasion, the FIEGE Sour, just for us”, Pohle tells us. For him and his colleagues, this is a very special token of appreciation.

Marks agrees and summarises things as follows: “In some places people drink Whisky, in other they prefer Whiskey. In the end, the decisive point for us is that our premium products are delivered to their destinations fast, safely and with a consistent quality of service. FIEGE is a highly reliable partner in this regard – and that is all the more reason to bring out a toast.”

“Operational excellence is our responsibility towards our clients”



Excellence is not a one-time operation but rather a fundamental approach – the Greek philosopher Aristotle came to the same conclusion. Operational excellence is to keep improving on the routines that are performed. What does that mean specifically for us as a service provider? Peter Scherbel, Executive Board member at FIEGE who also oversees Operational Excellence in the capacity of COO, has the answers.

How would you describe what Operational Excellence – or OpEx – means in a few words?

Operational Excellence plays a crucial role for us as a service provider. When a company decides to place their logistics in our (then strange) hands, it is taking a major leap of faith. After all, logistics is the pivot point, where everything comes together. The simple formula goes like this: there is no business without logistics. In turn, this also means that there is no way for us to bypass operational excellence in order to live up to our job as a service provider and our responsibility towards our clients. OpEx therefore forms the baseline for our success as a logistics company.

How do you define OpEx? What do you subsume under this keyword?

The straightforward answer is: OpEx covers everything that helps us to perform as best as possible for our clients. It is not quite that simple, of course, since operational excellence calls for many different cogs to engage with each other. This starts with our Quality Assurance team, since the protection of our 22,000+ colleagues around the world is our number one concern. The people working for us are our highest priority. For this reason alone, industrial safety or fire safety are very important to us. Security also plays a role beyond this in a range of different contexts: for example, when it comes to putting safeguards against theft in place. Therefore, our security team makes sure that our locations and thus the merchandise that our clients entrust to us are protected against criminal activities from the outside.

What else does this include?

A very central item is lean management. To internalise lean management means to screen all processes time and again, to avoid waste and achieve the highest possible efficiency. Even Aristotle was of the opinion that we accomplish excellence not through a single activity but through continuity, meaning ultimately, habit formation. So it is more about the fundamental approach of striving every day for the continuous improvement of our services in order to meet the demands and expectations of our clients.

What is the role of standardisation in all this?

We identify topics that go beyond areas like quality, security, and lean management. This encompasses strategic projects that refine our groundwork by standardising, automating and continually optimising processes. Building on quality, security and lean management, this is the next biggest lever for providing competitive logistical services and being successful.



Vouching for security, sorting flows, optimising processes: many cogs engage with each other to create a winning OpEx journey.

What does this mean specifically?

Even if our clients' expectations vary greatly at times, there are many processes within logistics that are identical from one client to the next. Therefore, there is no need to keep reinventing the wheel. We are aiming to devise a process kit – or something of a standardised modular kit – whose specifics merely need to be customised. This delivers twice the added value: on the one hand, we can shorten calls for tender, reduce costs and offer a higher, basic quality while on the other we can use the time thus gained to focus jointly with our clients on those topics that make up the respective difference in the individual case. If we manage to achieve this, we create a win/win situation that also benefits our clients and, consequently, us.

50 shades of green



FIEGE Real Estate is investing a lot of energy into an energy transformation project. Be it sustainable new building or optimisation of existing facilities – when it comes to developing real property, energy management plays a central role. With this in mind, FIEGE has been completely rethinking the logistics property of the future – and expanding its portfolio of services to incorporate Energy Solutions for third parties.

Warehouses used to be nothing but purpose-built edifices. Four walls. One roof. And a few rolling gates. All of which served the single use of storing all types of goods. But changing logistics frameworks – such as the invention of contract logistics, the evolving European Single Market, or digitalisation in retailing – come with added requirements that real property is expected to fulfil. Typical warehouses gave way to huge goods distribution centres, handling hubs, and dispatch points.

Today, modern logistics properties are complex, high-technology ecosystems. During the planning stage, the use of resource-friendly materials is just as important as energy efficiency is once fully operational. Kai Alfermann, Thoralf Schuster and – since mid-November – also Nikolaus von Blomberg as Managing Directors of FIEGE Real Estate explain: “The adjustments we can make go from CO₂-optimised and recycled construction materials to reduced soil sealing by building multi-storey buildings, to regenerative heating systems and the production of captive energy.”

Many hands make light work

An important premise for this is that FIEGE no longer thinks of its logistics centres as independent systems, Hartmut Entrup, Director Energy Solutions at FIEGE Real Estate adds: “Even though we are aiming to achieve the highest possible level of self-sufficiency, at the same time, we want to make our captive energy available to third parties.” FIEGE uses extensive photovoltaic systems and wind turbines for this and has been working intensely on storage solutions to turn real properties into small, sustainable power plants. Entrup adds: “By feeding excess energy into the grid, our logistics centres double as suppliers for the entire local power supply, which in turn makes us an active driver behind the turnaround in energy policy.”

The many ways logistics centres consume energy nowadays must be taken into consideration. “On the one hand, our properties keep becoming more and more energy efficient while on the other, due to the progressive electrification, the underlying need for electricity keeps growing”, Entrup points out. There are, after all, enough points of consumption within and around the warehouse: next to battery-powered floor conveyors and robots, this includes especially electric heat pumps and the charging infrastructure for electric vehicles and electric trucks. Entrup adds: “This trend will continue. A detailed energy concept is an absolute must nowadays.”



Expanding the infrastructure: more and more vehicles in the FIEGE fleet are charged using green power.

But as is often the case with major societal transitions – a successful turnaround in energy policies can only be created together! Therefore FIEGE Real Estate also offers its energy management expertise as a separate service: “We plan and develop commercial properties for third parties, but also support our clients through stand-alone energy solutions. The portfolio covers everything from consulting to project planning for photovoltaic systems, battery storage, LED lighting concepts and green heat all the way to assuming energy management at a company”, Entrup explains.



Creating space and something new

At the same time, FIEGE is advancing the development of new logistics spaces, Alfermann tells us: “Demand is tremendous – not only in Germany, but all around Europe. For us as a service provider it is important to push new projects even when times are economically demanding, so that we may offer maximum flexibility to our clients.”

The properties flaunt their strong focus on sustainability: in Vienna, FIEGE is building a two-storey logistics centre on a brownfield next to the existing location which stands out due to its air-to-water heat pump, a partly green façade as well as an office wing clad in wood. “Also, we are investing in a PV system which will cover the entire rooftop. The new multi-user centre which is close to Vienna is thus striving to meet the Gold standard of the German Sustainable Building Council”, Alfermann adds.

And even in Zülrich, where FIEGE has been operating a purpose-built logistics centre for healthcare since 2021, a second multi-user centre has been built on the adjoining piece of land. Schuster adds: “Due to its location in the centre of the tri-city area of Cologne-Bonn-Aachen, the facility is ideal for both Germany and all of Europe. Our new modern building completely does away with the use of fossil fuels and provides a good 50,000 square metres of logistics space for clients operating in a range of different sectors.”

FIEGE is developing a further project in Borna in Saxony which, compared to Vienna and Zülrich, is still in its early stages. “We are building the planned multi-user centre according to ultra-modern building and environmental standards. Once completed in autumn 2025, the building will offer 38,000 square metres spread across four units”, Schuster says. And even in the district city south of Leipzig all logistics and office spaces will be heated by non-gas heating systems, in line with sustainability. After all: the future of properties for logistics is green!

Building bridges

India is set to becoming a super-power. The BRICS state has the world's fifth-largest national economy and is a player in global trade whose relevance is growing by the day. Consequently, many businesses are shifting their attention towards the Indian market. With the Apollo Supply Chain joint venture, FIEGE has been working on a dependable bridge from Europe to Southeast Asia that can be accessed from both sides.

When talking India in Europe, the subject matter is often about aromatic spices, Masal Chai, cricket and yoga, or even the Taj Mahal. Not everyone will be mindful of the fact that by now, India has the highest population density on earth and the fastest growing national economy. While other economies are stagnating, if not regressing, India has been recording stable growth rates for many years – without any slowdown on the horizon.

“The International Monetary Fund forecasts further growth of up to seven per cent for India. No other industrialised country comes even close to that right now”, Joachim Stern says. The 58-year-old oversees FIEGE's Apollo Supply Chain joint venture via which FIEGE has been active in India's market since it was established in 2012. “Over time, we have grown to better understand our partners, the economic framework on site as well as India's culture. Our special thanks go out to the entire team of Apollo Supply Chain, for their outstanding collaboration.”

Mutual sharing of knowledge

According to Stern, FIEGE's goal pursued by the joint venture is to make the leap from Europe to India easier for existing and prospective clients, in addition to the

already existing offer in China and South Asia. Next to FIEGE's logistical partnership, general trading relationships between the two continents have in fact intensified over the past decade: “For Indian businesses, Europe as a sales market is becoming increasingly interesting. The EU was India's biggest trading partner in 2023. And this bridge is no longer just a one-way road”, Stern explains.

FIEGE aims to provide the necessary know-how for success in foreign markets jointly with its Indian partners in both directions. To achieve this, operations are to be intertwined even more closely. Stern tells us: “Whether automotive, industrial, high-tech electronics retail or eCommerce: India is a domestic market, production site and knowledge bearer all in one. And we aim to make this potential more easily accessible for our clients and provide global supply chain solutions to them.”

Especially for businesses that are not yet operational in India's market or that lack the required structures there, Apollo Supply Chain and FIEGE provide integrated supply chain analyses. The team harnesses proven tools and methods for this, such as AI-based route optimisation or centre of gravity analyses. Joachim Stern sums everything up like this: “We want to assist businesses from day one in accessing India's market, for them to rely on robust supply chains right from the start.”



BeNeLux good

FIEGE has been active in both the Netherlands and Belgium for over 25 years. Their geographic location and global accessibility through the container ports in Rotterdam and Antwerp make the Benelux countries a key region for logistics. Last year, FIEGE expanded operations to create even more in-depth value for a number of clients from different sectors.



Ralph Hendrix, Managing Director FIEGE Benelux

In December 2008, the then heads of government of Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands signed a joint political statement with the Minister-President of North Rhine-Westphalia, Jürgen Rüttgers. The goal was to consolidate business transactions between the Benelux union and North Rhine-Westphalia and institutionalise it as a “partnership of privilege”.

In the Münsterland region – in Greven in Westphalia to be precise – this idea came about a good ten years before. “By acquiring a family-owned transport operator, FIEGE formed a Dutch subsidiary at the end of the 1990s”, Ralph Hendrix recalls. The 54-year-old logistics expert has been in charge of a team of 300+ colleagues since October 2023, guiding the destiny of FIEGE’s business in BeNeLux. He explains: “Our USP is to combine the strengths of a global family business with the in-depth knowledge of a market by our local teams.”

At the gates of Amsterdam

The central location of FIEGE in the Netherlands is in the municipality of Zaanstad north of Amsterdam. "We opened a further multi-user centre in Westzaan at the end of 2022 which is close to our logistics centre in Zaandam and which doubled as our head office for many years. The ultra-modern building houses many of our Consumer Products clients, including interior furniture brands like Zuiver and POLSPOTTEN as well as international kitchen and household appliance makers such as Magimix and Solis", Hendrix adds. Favourably located on the northern bank of the North Sea Canal, both Amsterdam's port and Schiphol airport are only a few minutes away.

From the province of Noord Holland, the view is directed towards the future – and increasingly towards the south. "Rotterdam is one of the world's biggest seaports from where many flows of goods head south-bound along what is known as the Blue Banana. Needless to say, for us as a logistics company, it is pivotal that we are present where our clients need us", Hendrix explains. As a result, FIEGE is specifically looking out for ways to create additional storage capacities in the south of the Netherlands in the short-to-medium term.

Growing in Belgium

In looking to grow their storage capacities, FIEGE made a find in neighbouring Belgium. "Our longtime location in Puurs in the tri-city area of Brussels-Ghent-Antwerp is strategically an ideal spot – in fact, so much so that this spring, we opened a second logistics centre in Boom, which is merely six kilometres down the road", Hendrix tells us. FIEGE uses the added capacities to further expand their services offering and create bespoke fulfilment solutions for their clients even beyond the river Meuse.

The roughly 25,000 square metres-large logistics centre launched in April of this year. In certain areas of the space in Boom, FIEGE handles the spare parts logistics for Develon, one of the world's largest makers of construction machinery. "Moving the logistical handling from Germany to Belgium is a crucial milestone for our business. The location of our facility is strategically ideal for our longtime client and allows us to offer an optimum of service", Hendrix notes.



Logistics all the way to the patients

The depth of the value creation which FIEGE offers in the Benelux countries for clients operating in the health-care industry is particularly impressive. Hendrix outlines: "Healthcare logistics are often considered the Champions League of logistics. The regulatory requirements are so high that only the best of the best play at this level." The list of necessary certifications that FIEGE has is about as long as a six-year-old's Christmas wish list: from GMP and GDP to DIN ISO 13485, to CEIV Pharma. "We are even licenced to store and transport radioactive drugs – known as radiopharmaceuticals – and the respective substances", Hendrix explains.

The transport routes go all the way to the doorstep and ultimately even right up to the patient's bedside. "We have more than 50 vehicles that are fitted with different temperature zones plus colleagues who receive special training in driving as well as service delivery to safeguard an uninterrupted cold chain", Hendrix says. Specialized pharmacies like APPO tap this broad offer. With support from FIEGE, they supply thousands of clients in the Netherlands with medication and infusion therapy in the home-environment of the client. "Our fast and professional deliveries contribute to securing the medical supply of clients, for some of whom the deliveries are lifesaving. That is an important job – and it's a really great feeling to be the one doing it!"

LOGISTICS HEALTHCARE

We all need a shoulder to lean on.

It takes FIEGE less than four hours to supply hospitals across the whole of Germany with essential medical products. When it comes to a patient's precious life, we deliver everything that's needed, when it's needed.

**You may not always see us.
But we are always there.**



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