

KHT APOSTORE

celebrate 30 years anniversary

Text: Heidi Bahl

In 1985, after the watch production had been outsourced more and more to Japan, the company Peter Uhren was searching for a new business field. On a visit to a pharmaceutical wholesaler with his wife, a pharmacist, the then Managing Director witnessed how arduously the medicines had to be gathered together. Thus the idea of automating such storage systems and processes was born.

In 1986 KHT Kommissionierungs- und Handhabungstechnik GmbH was founded, a development team put together and the world's first picking robot constructed, which moved through the shelves at the wholesaler SCHARFE in Unna (now Gehe) and collected the medicines ordered – at least most of the time. The picking Peter was a really high-tech product. It was operated by servomotors, was made of aluminium and was able to locate the packets in a box using a camera and lift them using suckers.

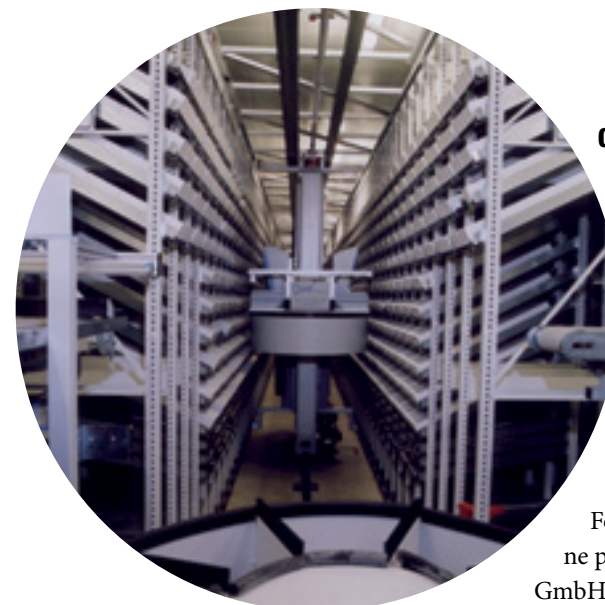
Using built-in weighing sensors, it was able to detect



when it had picked up more than one packet and drop excess packets by opening individual suckers.

But “highly sophisticated” also means care-intensive. And thus the KHT developers spent more time in Unna than at the company location in Gelsenkirchen.

Nevertheless, the interest was great, and we extended our range of applications to jewellery, glasses, automotive spare parts, folded textiles, reagents and shoes.



Continuous growth - global success

Successful companies are continuously evolving. KHT has earned itself a reputation on the market and is the market leader in automatic picking in many of the loaded industries.

For the special area of medicine picking, in 2000 APOSTORE GmbH was founded as a subsidiary. It developed the picking machine “APOSTORE” for process optimisation in pharmacies and has sold over 1000 systems in 16 countries. From South Africa to Iceland and from Siberia to Houston (USA), chemists continue to put their trust in the robustness and high efficiency of these systems.

Leading technology for your success

However, technology is never an end in itself. In practice, it only brings the customer success and satisfaction if it works reliably and completes the task in an intelligent way. From 1992 on, under the new Managing Director Dr. Jürgen Gefner, the solutions were then simplified and modularised. Each project starts with process analysis and the question as to the benefits which the respective customer wishes to achieve. From the numerous components which have been created over the years, a customer-specific solution is put together and supplemented with our own developments, new elements if necessary, and additional software modules. In this way, the success of the project is ensured.

Efficient warehousing at its best

KHT has not limited its success to automated small parts warehouses. Efficient solutions have been developed for industrial applications such as dimensional measuring devices with integrated scale (MultiScan) and measuring frames (ProfileScan) for optimum warehouse management.



The extremely fast and reliable “Robbies”, as they are fondly called by many customers, also set an example on a market that is far from straightforward: the unique APOSTORE technology is based on over 30 patents; the design has won awards; the shelves clean and

optimise themselves thanks to APOC-LEAN. Sustainability is, and always has been, an issue; the energy-saving function Greenline clearly reduces the operating costs, among other things. Diverse design prizes show that an automatic machine can also be good looking.

Such a success story and continuous further development would not have been possible to this extent without the now more than 100 employees, some of whom are even celebrating their 30th employment anniversary this year.



Outlook

Since 2014, KHT and APOSTORE have been part of the KNAPP Group - for the owner-managed companies the perfect background for sustainable and secure further development. Tradition and innovation, that means continuous further development, without losing the ability to change.