



Spotlight: Interview with the

“doers” in the DARCO (Europe) Logistics Centre

The DARCO (Europe) E-Journal Editor, Alexandra Panizza, speaks with Enrico Gabriel, Head of Warehouse and Inventory Management

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The Warehouse and Inventory Management Department is a specialist department for the smooth running of all transport, storage and distribution processes for DARCO (Europe) GmbH, Raisting, Upper Bavaria, Germany. Department Head Enrico Gabriel's team coordinates shipping schedules, packing and unpacking, labelling, stacking, driving and documentation to meet the needs of all DARCO customers. Regardless of whether there are individual packages or pallets, sample shipments or bulk purchases, information flyers or a Christmas campaign, this department responds rapidly and reliably while ensuring and maintaining to quality, accuracy and flexibility. Our warehouse team manages inventory and supply availability together with the Purchasing and Customer Service Departments and ensures a fast and effective service for our customer base.

Editor: Mr. Gabriel, you will soon celebrate your 15th anniversary at DARCO (Europe). A lot has happened during that time. The product range and customer base have grown considerably, both nationally and internationally. As a result, the number of pallet sites has grown to an impressive number of 1.292. Warehouse areas have been modernised and work processes optimised. What has changed for you and your team in your operations?

Enrico Gabriel: In a nutshell there is more stock turnover and more storage volume as well as increasing demands in terms of quality assurance and special orders. The large number of new products such as SBi, Relief Insert® Walker and AllRoundShoe® as well as new distribution channels mean that our warehouse space needs to be reorganised and adapted on a continual basis. Also the need for increased mechanisation and reinforcement of the warehouse team is inevitable. Our Raisting site is a distribution point for shipping of all goods from and to Europe. The new DARCO subsidiary in the UK has helped to ease the situation. We are of course happy to support our British colleagues with our experience as all customers in the UK will now be supplied directly by DARCO UK.

Editor: How has assembly of the deliveries changed? Are there new systems for this, shorter processes?

EG: In Raisting, we rely on flexible storage location management. This allows us to respond faster and more reliably, nationally and internationally. In recent years, we have been able to send out 85 % of the orders within one day. Thanks to modern technical tools and strategic distribution of goods on the hg DARCO Group Campus, we will soon be able to increase this quota up to 95%. Of course this has an impact as customer satisfaction has the highest priority at DARCO. And loyal customers not only come back, they also recommend us.

Editor: Separate warehouses, a temporary warehouse at your German production site in Hainichen near Leipzig, that sounds „more complicated“, how do you get to grips with that?

EG: Organisation is crucial. We coordinate all deliveries and dispatches together with the Purchasing Department. As an ISO-certified company, every SOP is reviewed and quality control is our top priority. With such a large stock and multiple packages each day, every step must be correct. We know that DARCO distinguishes itself from the competition through quality. We deliver a premium service for this in the warehouse.

Editor:DARCO (Europe) is a member of the hg DARCO Group. What advantages does that give you?

EG: As a member of the hg DARCO Group, we now have a new logistical advantage. Our joint company premises are growing. Capacities can be outsourced at short notice. From a practical point of view, in a company like the hg DARCO Group, the DARCO forklift truck speeds across the yard to the high-bay storage area in the outdoor warehouse to quickly assemble deliveries. This not only results in satisfied customers, but also a friendly company atmosphere of which we are proud.

Editor: We are part way through 2019, but you are already looking at the future storage volume, so which factors are most important?

EG: Creating optimum storage conditions for our products is crucial. Factors such as quality and shelf life must be checked continuously. Another important factor is the planning, labelling and traceability of our products. Now our production facility in Hainichen near Leipzig also increases production considerably with “made in Germany” products. There will also be more interfaces here. We also shouldn’t forget the steadily growing number of events in which DARCO participates nationally and internationally. Again, we expect more preparation and logistical support for these.

Editor: Training initiatives – what are you currently involved in?

EG: Quality awareness is a key and vital goal for us. This applies on the one hand to the regular training of our team and on the other to compliance with regulatory requirements, e.g. ISO or correct documentation and archiving in terms of goods receipt and shipping. My team undergoes regular training at DARCO. The company recognises that our job is complex. Last but not least, employee safety and job satisfaction come first at DARCO. The work environment in our logistics centre is regularly reviewed to ensure full compliance in terms of safety standards and new requirements.

Editor: Thank you for your time!

