

SGDS Gruppen moves to a new central warehouse with the help of smart cameras

In 2020, the plumbing and civil engineering wholesaler Dahl decided to build a new 72,000-square metre central warehouse in Bålsta, north of Stockholm, next to Dagab's huge facility. Three years later, the company now faces an extensive move from its old warehouse in Kallhäll, just outside Stockholm, to the new, modern and highly automated central warehouse. The new warehouse will be used by Dahl and other companies in SGDS Gruppen – Bevego, Kakelspecialisten, Konradssons Kakel and Optimera. To assist during the move, a system of smart cameras is being used to keep track of the logistics.

The new, modern and advanced warehouse facility is automated by SSI Schäfer. The solution includes an automated high bay warehouse for pallets, a shuttle system for storage and picking, goods-to-man stations for manual picking, and palletising robots that handle the final step before delivery.

“The move is now underway, and will take place in stages. We do not want to risk our delivery ability, so we will therefore run the old and new warehouse in parallel for a fairly long period in order not to risk anything”, says Jens Modin, who is SGDS Gruppen's process owner for transport logistics – a process that starts at the warehouse's loading area.

Intelligent video analysis

During both the move itself and the start-up of the new warehouse, SGDS Gruppen will use SiB Solutions' solution for intelligent video analysis. This solution is already being used in Kallhäll, and will also be installed in the new warehouse.

“In 2022, we did a pilot test of the system for intelligent video analysis, which is a solution that increases visibility and traceability in our logistics processes. As we were already working with manual goods tracking using standard surveillance cameras, it was not a huge step for us to take. We now have a smart camera system that makes it easy for us to keep track of the events in the warehouse in an effective manner”, explains Jens.

“In the warehouse support function, we have been using the old surveillance cameras for a long time, so we are used to this. Today, we work in almost the same way, although the searchability in the new system and the image resolution are much better now”, says Leif Larsson, who is responsible for warehouse support and customer claims at SGDS Gruppen.

Minimises and prevents logistics errors

The purpose of the video solution is to monitor what is happening and what has already happened in SGDS Gruppen's goods flow, and to minimise and prevent errors in a flow that consists of upwards of 15,000 packages per day.

“In all logistics management, various types of errors will occur – for example, picking errors or incorrect labelling – and these can cause the wrong package to be sent to the wrong recipient, often without being noticed. The camera solution enables us to see what went wrong, and makes it easier for us to locate goods that have disappeared”, explains Leif, who adds that a common error is that shipments are provided with the wrong label. With the video solution, this type of error can be caught and dealt with before the shipment leaves.

SGDS Gruppen subscribes to the video solution, and Jens and Leif do not think it has been difficult to justify the cost of this service.

“We compare this to the cost of damaged parcels and missing parcels, which are the most common reasons for customer claims. Although the standards are generally high, we see that this solution will enable us to be even better”, says Leif, who continues:

“A lot of the damage occurs when the transport companies’ staff load the goods, and here the video material is of great value in the discussions we have with our transport partners.”

Video-assisted move

The large, complicated move and start-up of the new central warehouse in Bålsta will also benefit from the investment in the smart cameras, says Jens.

“Our warehouse move is a process that will take a long time, with large quantities of goods being moved in parallel with the regular daily operations and deliveries to our customers. By registering all the goods that are moved, like with any other order, we get searchable videos of everything that is leaving the old warehouse in Kallhäll, and, at the same time, we also get video material of the goods entering the new facility in Bålsta.”

Bigger and more advanced

In the new, modern facility, the system will also be significantly more comprehensive and advanced.

“The warehouse in Kallhäll uses a solution with 25 cameras, but in the new warehouse the system will be significantly larger, and it will also be integrated with other systems in order to capture the events that take place. This will give us an overall picture of how different packages move”, says Jens, who adds that the advanced automation solutions in the new warehouse will also benefit from the video solution.

“With this system, we can visually see what happens at various critical points in the automation, and also show our automation partner what happens when something goes wrong. The same applies at our goods-to-man stations, where we plan to use the cameras to film the picking staff’s hands to see what has actually been picked in each individual box.”

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SGDS Gruppen (Saint Gobain Distribution Sweden) includes the companies Bevego, Dahl, Optimera, Kakelspecialisten and Konradssons Kakel. SGDS Gruppen has 3,000 employees and a turnover of just over SEK 19 billion, and is owned by the French industrial group Saint-Gobain, which is listed on the Paris Stock Exchange.