



Collaboration Is Key

In a globalized world, success in travel retail depends more than ever on a modern supply chain.

The Sustainability Summit at the Gebr. Heinemann logistics center in Hamburg-Allermöhe in April 2023 showed what successful collaboration looks like: Heinemann organized a collaborative workshop comprising freight forwarders, truck manufacturers, and innovative start-ups. The aim of the meeting was to brainstorm ideas and jointly develop action plans to significantly reduce CO₂e emissions. This is a burning issue for Gebr. Heinemann, as ambitious sustainability goals are a key part of the company goals. And the supply chain is responsible for a large part of the company's carbon footprint. Martin Borscheid, Director Logistics at Gebr. Heinemann, says: "The way we approach sustainability is the way we approach all our core logistics issues: with a very strong focus on collaboration between all stakeholders. Supply chains and logistics can only work if everyone involved acts as a team player. A shared vision and aligned goals are essential." Gebr. Heinemann also works closely with stakeholders in other areas. For example, more data is being shared. The company has extended the forecast from three to six months, which is an advantage for suppliers as it gives them greater planning security. This achievement is attributed to Gebr. Heinemann's improved data collection and evaluation capabilities.

Taking the Long View Again

“After the challenging years of the pandemic, when many goods were in serious shortage, 2023 was the first year in which we were able to take the long view again,” says Michael Meier, Vice President Global Supply Chain. “During the pandemic, our focus was on short-term crisis management. Now, we have shifted gears to proactively drive growth.” The overall goal is to create a global network that optimizes the flow of goods “end-to-end,” from production at the suppliers to the store shelf. To achieve this goal, the supply chain team constantly analyzes the flow of goods to ensure faster processes, quicker turnaround times, and high levels of efficiency. Sales, purchasing, and the supply chain work closely together on this. Gebr. Heinemann develops sophisticated models to explore various growth scenarios. These models analyze passenger numbers across regions, identify business opportunities, assess potential tender profits, and more. The insights from these models serve as the foundation for a long-term demand model and guide strategic decisions.

Efficiency and Automation in Logistics

Another key lever is efficiency and automation in logistics. A good example of optimized efficiency can be found at the logistics center in Hamburg-Allermöhe, which celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2023 and is still state-of-the-art. There, the warehouse management system was successfully changed to an integrated consistent system landscape. This new, extended warehouse management system now controls the entire flow of goods, from stock planning to storage, picking, and ship-

ping in one system, providing a significant increase in efficiency.

One more example of how Gebr. Heinemann is increasing efficiency can be found on the other side of the globe in Sydney, where more than 70 autonomous mobile robots (AMR) are currently being implemented. These AMRs operate autonomously, navigating around the warehouse and bringing the shelves to the workers. Gebr. Heinemann is also working on efficiency and automation in other areas. For example, the percentage of customer orders received electronically increased significantly in 2023 and now stands at an impressive 84 percent – an increase of about 20 percent over the previous year.

In addition to warehouse technology, the logistics network based on the two central warehouses in Allermöhe and in Erlensee is complemented by regional hubs to reduce transportation distances. In Norway, such a hub was put into operation at the end of 2022; in 2023, these measures proved

successful: not only did transportation in the Nordic region become faster, but hundreds of thousands of kilometers of transportation between Germany and Norway were saved. And, of course, a significant amount of CO₂e emissions. Other such regional hubs are planned, including in the Middle East and Africa region. This way, Gebr. Heinemann’s global network is being extended and expanded around the world.


Results from the Sustainability Summit Already Evident

A first notable development is the change in the fuel sources for trucks going from Allermöhe to Hamburg Airport and Norway. Previously reliant on diesel, these trucks now predominantly use hydro-treated vegetable oils (HVO), a second-generation biofuel derived from waste and used vegetable oil. This transition is expected to result in a remarkable 90 percent reduction in CO₂e emissions. Furthermore, the integration of e-trucks wherever feasible enhances the overall sustainability of the transportation system.

Significant changes are also underway in the ocean freight division’s refueling practices. Following the summit, a key service provider committed to a project using biofuel sourced from waste feedstocks. Employing a mass balance approach, this initiative aims to eliminate approximately 90 to 100 percent of CO₂e emissions associated with transportation routes. Ensuring transparency, fully traceable biofuel allocations to the cargo maintain the efficiency of the Gebr. Heinemann supply

chain while promoting environmental awareness. Notably, Gebr. Heinemann exported 783 TEUs in 2023, with a significant increase projected for 2024. Martin Borscheid comments: “These are important steps on an exciting journey that show that it is only possible through the power of collaboration.” Michael Meier adds: “We are focused on long-term growth for the future. To achieve this, we are working strategically with our various business partners.”

Watch now
 Follow the flow of goods in Gebr. Heinemann’s sophisticated end-to-end supply chain, including many technical inventions.




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