

# CASE STUDY

## ABENA LOGISTIK A/S, DENMARK



### Increased system utilization for healthcare product producer

«The new solution has given us higher capacity and increased system utilization and the availability of goods has been maintained throughout the whole installation period.»

Jørn Petersen  
Warehouse Manager, Abena Logistik A/S

#### The customer and his requirements

The Abena group is a Danish, family owned company established in 1953.

Abena is among the market leaders in the protective healthcare business producing a wide range of incontinence products, baby nappies, sanitary towels and other healthcare-related disposable goods. Abena products are sold around the world through a distribution network of subsidiary companies and specialist distributors.

The company markets some 17 000 products not only to retail outlets and wholesalers, but also directly to various healthcare organisations.

swisslog



## The solution

Swisslog installed in 1994 a fully automated and integrated handling system at the Aabenraa site. As the company is growing rapidly, extensions of the system have been necessary in order for Abena to stay competitive and meet its customers' requirements.

Logistics and distribution are handled from this distribution center in Aabenraa with 45 000 pallet locations, 40 000 box storage locations and one 60 chute sorter.

There are three fully automated high-bay warehouses and one automated buffer storage for pallet handling and one fully automated miniload storage for box handling.

The two high-bay warehouses, built in 1994, are used exclusively for the storage of full pallet loads, which are retrieved either to meet customer orders or to feed the buffer store. The smaller one is used for part-load picking. From here pallets are fed to the adjacent picking stations. A conveyor system transfers the goods to the sorter, which sorts the goods according to their final destination and then further transportation to dispatch bays.

The miniload storage is used for box storing. Two picking stations depalletize full pallets into picking orders either for transportation on light goods conveyors to the sorter for shipment or into the miniload storage.

The two picking stations are equipped with tilting lifting devices enabling the staff to easily de-palletize the pallets in order to avoid strain injuries, which is in line with the Abena environmental policy. From the miniload storage, light goods conveyors are running close to the ceiling all the way to the sorter.

## LOGISTICS DATA

### 1994

#### High-bay Warehouse

Pallet locations	28 000
No of stacker cranes	9

#### Buffer Storage

Pallet locations	1 500
Number of stacker cranes	3

#### Pallet Conveyor System

Length	800 m
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#### Sorting System

Number of chutes	60
Throughput	2000c/h

#### Picking Stations

	4
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### 2004

#### High-bay Warehouse

Pallet locations	17 000
No of stacker cranes	6

#### Miniload Storage

Box locations	40 000
Number of miniload cranes	5

#### Pallet Conveyor System

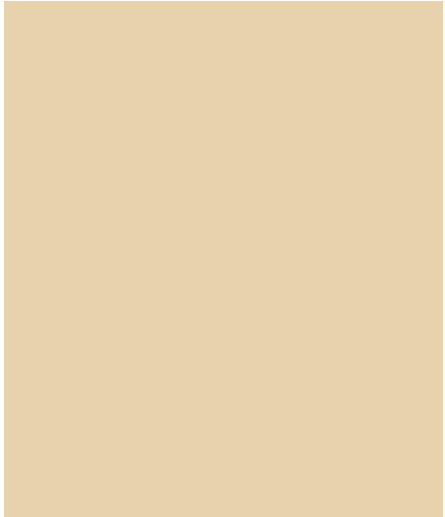
Length	650 m
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#### Light Goods Conveyor System

Length	300 m
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#### Depalletizing Stations

	2
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### The benefits

- > Greater throughput levels and higher utilization of the staff. This enabled Abena not only to keep delivery promises, but also to increase their turnover.
- > Swisslog is responsible for the system capacity of the total solution and it is much easier for the Abena engineers to work with proven technology from only one supplier.

### Swisslog's scope of supply

- > System design and development
- > Planning and implementation
- > Project management
- > Engineering
- > Health and safety
- > Supply of all material handling equipment
- > Stacker crane control system
- > Miniload control system
- > Light goods conveyor control system
- > Training

#### Company

The Abenda Group is a Danish, family-owned company established in 1953. The production facility is situated in Aebenraa, in southern Jylland close to the German boarder.

#### Products

Abena is among the market leaders in the protective healthcare business producing a wide range of incontinence products, baby nappies, sanitary towels and other healthcare related disposable goods.



[www.abena.com](http://www.abena.com)

## INTERVIEW WITH JØRN PETERSEN WAREHOUSE MANAGER, ABENA LOGISTIK A/S

### Why did you start looking for a new solution?

"The company is growing rapidly, so we are constantly in need of more space and higher capacity in order to be able to increase our production."

### How did you come into contact with Swisslog?

"When we originally installed our automated handling system, we worked with BT Systems - as Swisslog was formerly known as. So when it was time for a new project, it was only natural to contact Swisslog again."

### Why did you choose Swisslog as your supplier?

"We knew what we needed and Swisslog offered the best overall solution that few other companies could. Besides - through our previous co-operation and experience - we knew each other very well, which simplified the project and a lot of potential misunderstanding, was avoided."

However, the main reason was that Swisslog's solution ensured that all the storage facilities, various buildings and extensions were integrated and controlled by our host computer system."

### What was it like to work with Swisslog during the project and how has the transition period worked out?

"The co-operation is continuing very well. The latest project was carried out in two phases. First, we built the pallet storage and depalletization to the sorter and after that, we installed the miniload and light goods conveyors. All work has been carried out during normal production and we have not experienced any loss of productivity due to this extension."

In addition, we are very pleased that the Swisslog service engineers are Danish, making communication so much easier."

They have been working in the project from the beginning through the entire project and they are very helpful - we can call them at any time."

### What are the benefits of the new solution?

"The upgrading of the logistics system has resulted in greater throughput levels and higher utilization of our staff. This has enabled us not only to keep our delivery promises, but also to increase our turnover."

Another benefit is that Swisslog is responsible for the system capacity of the total solution and it is much easier for our engineers to work with proven technology from only one supplier. For example, we have had excellent support from Swisslog in moving old conveyors and integrating them with the new conveyor system, saving us money as well as improving performance."

### What has been the impact of the solution on your daily operations?

"We handle approximately 40% more orders, with the same personnel, than before the extension. Previously, the logistics system was the limiting factor for production and now it is the capacity of our staff. However, the miniload storage is complicated and, together with the "Box-control" software system, we regard it as a development project."

### What level of service do you offer your customers?

"We offer our Danish customers delivery of their orders the same day, if they are placed before noon."

**swisslog**

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