

Offenau, August 2020

Automated process ultimately improve customer contact – Isfort Group

ISFORT Group expands logistics expertise with AutoStore systems from AM-Automation

Classic office supplies, furnishing concepts, document management or school supplies: the portfolio of the ISFORT Group is broadly positioned. Personal customer contact is at the top of the agenda for the Münster-based family business. More time for this is now provided by two AutoStore systems from AM-Automation.

“With the use of AutoStore systems, we are taking a logical step on the way to further developing our company”, says Daniela Isfort, who directs the fortunes of the ISFORT Group as managing director of several companies. In 1966, her father founded IBS Bürosysteme Karl Isfort GmbH & Co.KG in Münster, Germany, his first trading company for office supplies. In the meantime, this has grown into a group of companies active throughout Germany, with almost 200 employees at six locations and comprehensive offers for the office organization of B2B customers.

Wherever possible, ISFORT puts the proverbial customer proximity into practice. At the company's headquarters in Münster, the office supplies ordered are delivered within a radius of 50 kilometers not by classic parcel services, but by cargo bike and all-electric sprinter.

More time for customer contacts thanks to AutoStore

Personal customer contact requires time above all. The search for time resources that could be tapped led Daniela Isfort to the company's internal logistics processes. In ISFORT's logistics centers, more than 15,000 articles are kept ready on a total area of 8,000 m², which can be delivered within 24 hours

throughout Germany and Europe. In the past, the picking of ordered goods followed classic processes, i.e. the manual removal of individual items from traditional storage containers took a comparatively long time due to the long picking distances.

In order to reduce the effort and at the same time create reserves for the future, the ISFORT Group now invested in AutoStore:

“Thanks to AutoStore, we were able to increase our storage capacity by 50 percent without having to take up additional space”,

reports Daniela Isfort. Automatic picking via AutoStore has also led to a five-fold increase in productivity, combined with time savings previously spent on walking.

Ordered and promptly delivered

The ISFORT Group commissioned AM-Automation to implement the newly designed logistics processes. Within a few months, AM-Automation designed and implemented an AutoStore system with 18,000 bins and 28 robots at ISFORT's headquarters in the Roxel district of Münster, Germany, which holds the entire range of office supplies on call. The system allows more than 700 order items to be picked per hour, and ISFORT's Münster-based customers can receive the goods in most cases just a few hours after placing the order. And instead of covering the outside of the structure with red or gray MDF panels, as is usually the case, AM-Automation transformed the aluminum grid system into the first magenta-colored “girl AutoStore” at the customer's request.

ISFORT had AM-Automation set up another AutoStore system at the Laer site, 20 kilometers away. Around 9,500 storage bins can be filled with up to 20,000 schoolbags there. By default, the facility is equipped with three robots; however, towards the end of the summer vacations, when demand picks up significantly at the start of the school year, the picking capacity can be increased as needed via “borrowed” robots from the Münster logistics center.

“By using AutoStore systems and cooperating with AM-Automation, we were able to make our logistics processes absolutely sustainable,” says Daniela Isfort, “and because the energy required by the robots used is hardly greater than the operation of a few vacuum cleaners, we are also making a contribution to climate protection as it were as a side effect.”

