Universal Express profits from multi-dimensional measuring system APACHE

With branches in Aalst, Antwerpen, Zeebrugge and Brussels Airport, Universal Express has perfect locations for im- and export transportation, since 60% of the European purchasing capacity reside within 500 kilometers of the company. Furthermore the direct connections to highways and air- and sea ways pose a geographical advantage. Thanks to these factors the forwarder can reach any region in Europe within 24 to 48 hours and can deliver its service of partial and full loading as well as express deliveries and freight chartering. Even though the air and sea freight are a fixed component of their transport solutions, the core business is primarily focused on road transportation. Depending on the type of cargo specific vehicles are being used, which are suitable for hanging textiles, international relocations or the transport of trade show and displaying equipment. Parallel to this competence, logistics are a second pillar of the family-run forwarding company Ziegler Group which was founded in 1956.

Incorrect data creating trouble

Universal Express is one of the leading forwarding companies in Belgium, whereas the branch in Aalst is a central junction for France. On a daily basis approximately 55 deliveries with all types of cargo ranging from euro pallets to freight of up to 5 meters in length are handled. Every cargo has unique properties and dimensions taken by the sender are transferred, but in reality most measurements are incorrect. Shipments which were planned based on these incorrect measurements can result not only in loss of time but can have far more severe consequences in terms of costs. To eliminate these disadvantages Jean-Pierre Caignau, CEO of Universal Express searched for a system that could deliver precise data which could be used for billing purposes. A technical exchange with a colleague resulted in a recommendation for the multi-dimensional measuring system APACHE from AKL-tec GmbH. This lead to the demonstration of the system by AKL-tec's responsible account manager Joe Sidon, which immediately convinced the CEO of Universal Express.

Significantly quicker transaction

Thanks to its easy handling, the APACHE system for the automated detection of pallet characteristics simplifies the job for the workers significantly. The 5.3 meters long APACHE is mounted underneath the ceiling, so the forklift driver can place the cargo underneath the measurement system immediately after arrival. The logistician merely has to make sure the barcode label is placed on the left side of the cargo. After the employee has put the cargo down, a barcode reading system scans the barcode label automatically. As soon as the forklift has left the measuring zone, the dimension detection process begins. This is established by the use of two laser scanning heads, which scan the cargo three-dimensionally. This process is not influenced by shiny or black surfaces, which is quite common with packaging – all of it being type examined and certified.

The dimensions as well as the volume are precisely detected during this process. Additionally photos are taken of every measurement are taken and sent together with the measurement to the Shipping center. Thanks to this digital process, key figures can be shared with all Universal Express Partners in France, Spain and other countries. Overall the process from initial delivery, planning, loading and departure can be handled quicker and more efficient than ever before thanks to the use of the measuring system.

Quality and profitability have increased

"The use of APACHE offers us significant advantages, because we know the volume and the dimensions of the cargo to be sent 100% accurately. Therefore there are no excuses left for a client to open a dispute about a smaller transportation fee. Based on the gathered data we can better plan the loading of our trucks and can therefore completely use the loading capacity. This does not merely result in a more eco-friendly transportation, but our customers receive their delivery quicker, because cargo does not have to be reloaded onto another truck. Last but not least we are able to increase our quality and profitability of our business", explains Jean-Pierre Caignau and additionally praises the service of AKL-tec. Both companies are in regular contact with each other and in case of technical difficulties an AKL-tec employee is on site within 24 hours to provide a solution for the problem. Next to the location in Aalst another system is running in Gent. "We were able to prove an improvement in all areas of road transportation and are therefore thinking about putting APACHE to use in other facilities", summarizes the CEO.